

HOLOCAUST TIMELINE CREATION

Name:

In your group, you will receive several events. Your first task is to read through all events and identify the (5) most significant events that gave rise to the Holocaust. Note important direct quotes that best describe how the Holocaust fits our definition of genocide and why your group feels they are significant. What element of a genocide emerges from the events provided? Discuss the different events with your group mates and use the chart below to make notes. Together, you will create a visual time line that shows the progression of how the Holocaust was shaped into what we know today. It should be chronological.

Event/Date	Why it is most significant to occurrence of Holocaust?	Direct Quote	Element of Genocide that Emerges	Direct Quote
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

TRACKING GENOCIDE IN THE PAST AND PRESENT

Name: _____

Genocide is any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Summarize (3) ways each country is being affected by the genocide taking place in their homes in the boxes below. Remember, to write in **complete** sentences!

<p>Burma:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.	<p>Sudan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.
<p>Congo:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.	<p>Bosnia:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.

Claim Creation (Complete the following claim): Genocides are continuing to occur in the world because_____.

One example to support this _____.

WWI Ends

World War I (1914–1918) devastated Europe and created new countries. The years that followed saw the continent struggle to recover from the death or injury of tens of millions of soldiers and civilians, as well as catastrophic damage to property and industry. In 1933, over 9 million Jews lived in Europe (1.7% of the total population)—working and raising families in the harsh reality of the worldwide economic depression. German Jews numbered about 500,000 or less than 1% of the national population.

New Leader

Jan. 30th, 1933-- The National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*; NSDAP), more commonly known as the Nazi Party, assumes control of the German state when German President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler as Chancellor at the head of a coalition government. The Nazis and the German Nationalist People's Party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*; DNVP) are members of the coalition.

Establishment of Dachau

March 22nd, 1933-- Outside the town of Dachau, Germany, the SS (*Schutzstaffel*, Protection Squads) establishes its first concentration camp to incarcerate political opponents. Between 1933 and 1945, concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager*, KL or KZ) were an integral feature of the Nazi regime. The number of prisoners incarcerated in Dachau during these years exceeded 188,000. The number of prisoners who died in the camp and its subcamps between January 1940 and May 1945 was at least 28,000, to which must be added more who died there between 1933 and the end of 1939, as well as an undetermined number of unregistered prisoners. Dachau was the only concentration camp to remain in operation during the entire period of Nazi power. It is unlikely that the total number of victims who died in Dachau will ever be known.

Boycotting Begins

April 1st, 1933-- Less than 3 months after coming to power in Germany, the Nazi leadership stages an economic boycott targeting Jewish-owned businesses and the offices of Jewish professionals. The boycott was presented to the German people as both a reprisal and an act of revenge for the bad international press against Germany since the appointment of Hitler's government in January, 1933. The Nazis claimed that German and foreign Jews were spreading "atrocious stories" to damage Germany's reputation. Nazi Storm Troopers stood menacingly in front of Jewish-owned department stores and retail establishments, and outside the offices of Jewish professionals, holding signs and shouting slogans such as "Don't Buy from Jews" and "The Jews Are Our Misfortune." Although the national boycott campaign lasted only one day and was ignored by many individual Germans who continued to shop in Jewish-owned stores and seek the services of Jewish professionals, the boycott marked the beginning of a nationwide campaign by the Nazi Party against Jews in Germany that would culminate in the Holocaust.

Law for Restoration of the Professional Civil Service

April 7th, 1933--The German government issues the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*), which excludes Jews and other political opponents of the Nazis from all civil service positions. The law initially exempts those who had worked in the civil service since August 1, 1914, those who were veterans of World War I, or those with a father or son killed in action in World War I. The German government also issues a new law concerning membership in the bar, which mandates the disbarment of non-“Aryan” lawyers by September 30, 1933. Exempted from this provision are Jewish lawyers practicing law since August 1, 1914, or Jewish lawyers who are German veterans of World War I.

Book Burnings

On May 10, 1933, university students burn upwards of 25,000 “un-German” books in Berlin’s Opera Square. Some 40,000 people gather to hear Joseph Goebbels deliver a fiery address: “No to decadence and moral corruption!” As part of an effort to align German arts and culture with Nazi ideas (*Gleichschaltung*), university students in college towns across Germany burned thousands of books they considered to be “un-German,” heralding an era of state censorship and cultural control. Students threw books pillaged mostly from public and university libraries onto bonfires with great ceremony, band-playing, and so-called “fire oaths.” The students sought to purify German literature of “foreign,” especially Jewish, and other immoral influences. Among the authors whose works were burned was Helen Keller, an American whose belief in social justice encouraged her to champion disabled persons, pacifism, improved conditions for industrial workers, and women's voting rights.

New Leadership

August 19th, 1934-- German President Paul von Hindenburg dies. With the support of the German armed forces, Hitler becomes President of Germany.

Later that month Hitler abolishes the office of President and declares himself *Führer* of the German Reich and People, in addition to his position as Chancellor. In this expanded capacity, Hitler now becomes the absolute dictator of Germany; there are no legal or constitutional limits to his authority. Only months later, Hitler abolishes the office of President and declares himself *Führer* of the German Reich and People, in addition to his position as Chancellor. In this capacity, Hitler’s decisions are not bound by the laws of the state. Hitler now becomes the absolute dictator of Germany; there are no legal or constitutional limits to his authority.

Nuremberg Race Laws Enacted

Sept. 15th, 1935-- The German parliament (*Reichstag*) passes the Nuremberg Race Laws. The Nuremberg Race Laws consisted of two pieces of legislation: the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor. A special session of the Nazi-controlled *Reichstag* passed both laws at the Party’s rally in Nuremberg, Germany. These laws institutionalized many of the racial theories underpinning Nazi ideology and provided the legal framework for the systematic persecution of Jews in Germany. The Nuremberg Race Laws did not identify a “Jew” as someone with particular religious convictions but instead as someone with three or four Jewish grandparents. Many Germans who had not practiced Judaism or who had not done so for many years found themselves still subject to legal persecution under these laws. Even people with Jewish grandparents who had converted to Christianity could be defined as Jews.

Buchenwald Opened

July 15th, 1937-- SS authorities open the Buchenwald concentration camp for male prisoners in east-central Germany. Together with its many satellite camps, Buchenwald was one of the largest concentration camps established within German borders. Women were not part of the Buchenwald camp system until late 1943 or early 1944. An electrified barbed-wire fence, watchtowers, and a chain of sentries outfitted with automatic machine guns, surrounded the main camp. The SS often shot prisoners in the camp stables and hanged other prisoners in the crematorium area. Most of the early inmates at Buchenwald were political prisoners. However, in 1938, in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, German SS and police sent almost 10,000 Jews to Buchenwald where the camp authorities subjected them to extraordinarily cruel treatment and many died. The SS also interned recidivist criminals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), and German military deserters at Buchenwald.

Berlin Olympics

August 1st, 1936--The Olympic Games were a propaganda success for the Nazi government, as German officials made every effort to portray Germany as a respectable member of the international community. They removed anti-Jewish signs from public display and restrained anti-Jewish activities. In response to pressure from foreign Olympic delegations, Germany also included one part-Jew, the fencer Helene Mayer, on its Olympic team. Germany also lifted anti-homosexuality laws for foreign visitors for the duration of the games. Eighteen black athletes represented the United States in the 1936 Olympics. African Americans dominated the popular track and field events. Many American journalists hailed the victories of Jesse Owens and other blacks as a blow to the Nazi myth of "Aryan" supremacy. Goebbels's press censorship prevented German reporters from expressing their prejudices freely, but one leading Nazi newspaper demeaned the black athletes by referring to them as "auxiliaries." The African American athletes who competed in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin won 14 medals. The continuing social and economic discrimination black athletes faced after returning to the United States emphasized the irony of their victory in racist Germany.

Evian Conference

Evian, France, July 13, 1938. Delegates of 32 countries assembled at the Royal Hotel in Evian, France, from July 6 to 15, 1938, to discuss the problem of Jewish refugees. The refugees were desperate to flee Nazi persecution in Germany, but could not leave without having permission to settle in other countries. The Evian Conference resulted in almost no change in the immigration policies of most of the attending nations. The major powers--the United States, Great Britain, and France--opposed unrestricted immigration, making it clear that they intended to take no official action to alleviate the German-Jewish refugee problem.

Pearl Harbor

December 7, 1941--Japan launches a surprise attack on the United States Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, severely damaging the fleet. The attack prevents, at least for the short term, serious American interference with Japanese military operations. In response to the attack, the United States declared war on Japan. Following Germany's declaration of war on the United States, the United States also declared war on Germany. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan attacked and occupied Guam, Wake, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, and Burma. Only in mid-1942 were Australian and New Zealander forces in New Guinea and British forces in India able to halt the Japanese advance. But the turning point in the Pacific war came with the American naval victory in the Battle of Midway in June 1942. The Japanese fleet sustained heavy losses and was turned back. Allied forces slowly gained naval and air supremacy in the Pacific.

Forced Name Changes

August 17th, 1938-- The Executive Order on the Law on the Alteration of Family and Personal Names requires German Jews bearing first names of “non-Jewish” origin to adopt an additional name: “Israel” for men and “Sara” for women. The government required Jews to identify themselves in ways that would permanently separate them from the rest of the German population. In the new August 1938 law, authorities decreed that by January 1, 1939, Jewish men and women bearing first names of “non-Jewish” origin had to add “Israel” and “Sara,” respectively, to their given names. All German Jews were obliged to carry identity cards that indicated their heritage, and, in the autumn of 1938, all Jewish passports were stamped with an identifying red letter “J”. As Nazi leaders quickened their war preparations, antisemitic legislation in Germany and Austria paved the way for more radical persecution of Jews.

Kristallnacht

Nov. 3rd 1938- Nazi Party officials, members of the SA and the Hitler Youth carry out a wave of violent anti-Jewish pogroms throughout Greater Germany. The rioters destroyed hundreds of synagogues, many of them burned in full view of firefighters and the German public and looted more than 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses and other commercial establishments. Jewish cemeteries became a particular object of desecration in many regions. Almost 100 Jewish residents in Germany lost their lives in the violence. In the weeks that followed, the German government promulgated dozens of laws and decrees designed to deprive Jews of their property and of their means of livelihood even as the intensification of government persecution sought to force Jews from public life and force their emigration from the country. After the pogroms, the implementation of German anti-Jewish policy was gradually concentrated in the hands of the SS. Thus, *Kristallnacht* figures as an essential turning point in Nazi Germany's persecution of Jews, which culminated in the Holocaust, the attempt to annihilate European Jews during the war.

Auschwitz Established

May 20, 1940-- SS authorities establish the Auschwitz camp.

The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was the largest of its kind established by the Nazi regime. It included three main camps, all of which deployed incarcerated prisoners at forced labor. One of them also functioned for an extended period as a killing center. The camps were located approximately 37 miles west of Krakow, near the prewar German-Polish border in Upper Silesia, an area that Nazi Germany annexed in 1939 after invading and conquering Poland.

Ghetto Sealed

November 15, 1940-- German authorities order the Warsaw ghetto in the to be sealed. It is the largest ghetto in both area and population, confining more than 350,000 Jews (about 30 percent of the city's population) in an area of about 1.3 square miles, or 2.4 percent of the city's total area. At times, before the deportations of July 1942 began, the actual population in Warsaw ghetto approached 500,000. In the following year, other ghettos would be established including Krakow Ghetto. Between 15,000 and 20,000 Jews were forced to live within the ghetto boundaries.

Euthanasia Killings

August 24, 1941--Responding in part to the public protest of the Catholic Archbishop of Münster, Clemens von Galen, Adolf Hitler orders the cessation of centrally coordinated "euthanasia" killings.

Up to this date, German health care professionals murdered approximately 70,000 people at "euthanasia" facilities. The killing operations continued, however, involving both adults and children with physical and intellectual disabilities. Among the methods used were starvation, lethal injection, and deliberate failure to treat serious disease.

Hitler's call for a halt to the T4 action did not mean an end to the "euthanasia" killing operation. The child "euthanasia" program continued as before. Moreover, in August 1942, German medical professionals and healthcare workers resumed the killings, albeit in a more carefully concealed manner than before. More decentralized than the initial gassing phase, the renewed effort relied closely upon regional exigencies, with local authorities determining the pace of the killing.

German Invasion of Poland

September 1, 1939--Germany invades Poland, initiating World War II in Europe. German forces broke through Polish defenses along the border and quickly advanced on Warsaw, the Polish capital. Hundreds of thousands of refugees, both Jewish and non-Jewish, fled the German advance hoping the Polish army could halt the German advance. But, after heavy shelling and bombing, Warsaw surrendered to the Germans within a month of the German attack. Soviet forces quickly annexed most of eastern Poland, while western Poland remained under German occupation until 1945. Britain and France, standing by their guarantee of Poland's border, declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939. After the defeat of Polish forces, German authorities began enforcing their racial policies in the occupied territories. They required Jews to identify themselves by wearing white armbands with a blue Star of David and conscripted them for forced-labor. They expelled hundreds of thousands of Poles from their homes and settled more than 500,000 ethnic Germans in their place.

Jewish Badge

September 1, 1941-- Reinhard Heydrich decrees that all Jews over six years of age in the Reich, Alsace, Bohemia-Moravia and the German-annexed territory of western Poland (called the *Warthegau*), are to wear yellow Star of David on their outer clothing in public at all times. The word "Jew" is to be inscribed inside the star in German or the local language. During the Nazi era, German authorities reintroduced the Jewish badge as a key element of their larger plan to persecute and eventually to annihilate the Jewish population of Europe. They used the badge not only to stigmatize and humiliate Jews but also to segregate them, to watch and control their movements, and to prepare for deportation.

Occupation of Kiev

September 19, 1941 --Almost three months after the initial German attack, German forces enter Kiev, the capital of the Soviet Ukraine. Before the war about 160,000 Jews resided in the city, comprising about 20 percent of Kiev's population. Approximately 100,000 Jews fled the city in advance of the Germans. During the first days of the German occupation, two major explosions, apparently set off by Soviet military engineers, destroyed the German headquarters and part of the city center. The Germans used the sabotage as a pretext to murder the remaining Jews of Kiev. On September 29-30, 1941, SS and German police units and their auxiliaries murdered the Jewish population of Kiev at Babi Yar, a ravine northwest of the city. As the victims moved into the ravine, Einsatzgruppe C detachments shot them in small groups. According to reports by the Einsatzgruppe to headquarters, 33,771 Jews were massacred in two days. In the months following the massacre, German authorities stationed at Kiev killed thousands more Jews at Babi Yar, as well as non-Jews including Roma (Gypsies), Communists, and Soviet prisoners of war. It is estimated that some 100,000 people were murdered at Babi Yar. This was one of the largest mass murders at an individual location during World War II.

Operation Reinhard

October 15, 1941--The Operation Reinhard team was ultimately responsible for the murder of approximately 1.7 million Jews, most of them Polish Jews. The overwhelming majority of victims in the Operation Reinhard killing centers—Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka—were Jews deported from ghettos in Poland.

Once the killing centers were operational, German SS and police forces liquidated the ghettos and deported Jews by rail to those killing centers. The victims of Belzec were mainly Jews from the ghettos of southern Poland, and included German, Austrian, and Czech Jews held in the Piaski and Izbica transit ghettos in Lublin District. Jews deported to Sobibor came mainly from the Lublin area and other ghettos of the eastern Generalgouvernement; this killing center also received transports from France and the Netherlands. Deportations to Treblinka originated mainly from central Poland, primarily from the Warsaw ghetto, but also from the Districts Radom and Krakow in the Generalgouvernement, from District Bialystok, as well as from Bulgarian-occupied Thrace and Macedonia.

U.S. Enters War

December 8, 1941--President Franklin D. Roosevelt asks the US Congress to declare war on Japan following the previous day's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. In his speech to Congress, Roosevelt states: "Yesterday, December 7th, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, [the] United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan. ... The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions, and well understand the implications for the very life and safety of our nation. With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph so help us God [applause]. I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7th, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire."

Pearl Harbor

December 7, 1941--Japan launches a surprise attack on the United States Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, severely damaging the fleet. The attack prevents, at least for the short term, serious American interference with Japanese military operations. In response to the attack, the United States declared war on Japan. Following Germany's declaration of war on the United States, the United States also declared war on Germany. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan attacked and occupied Guam, Wake, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, and Burma. Only in mid-1942 were Australian and New Zealander forces in New Guinea and British forces in India able to halt the Japanese advance. But the turning point in the Pacific war came with the American naval victory in the Battle of Midway in June 1942. The Japanese fleet sustained heavy losses and was turned back. Allied forces slowly gained naval and air supremacy in the Pacific.

Deportations

October 15, 1941-- After Adolf Hitler's authorization in September 1941, German authorities began deporting German, Austrian, and Czech Jews from the Greater German Reich to ghettos, shooting sites, concentration camps, and killing centers, primarily in German-occupied Poland, the German-occupied Baltic States, and German-occupied Belarus, but also eventually to Theresienstadt in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. From October 15, 1941, until October 29, 1942, German authorities deport approximately 183,000 German, Austrian, and Czech Jews to ghettos, transit ghettos, killing centers, and killing sites in the Baltic States, in Belorussia, in the Generalgouvernement, and the Lodz ghetto. The European rail network played a crucial role in the implementation of the Final Solution. Jews from Germany and German-occupied Europe were deported by rail to extermination camps in occupied Poland, where they were killed. The Germans attempted to disguise their intentions, referring to deportations as "resettlement to the east." The victims were told they were to be taken to labor camps, but in reality, from 1942 onward, deportation meant transit to killing centers for most Jews.

Wannsee Conference

January 20, 1942--Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), convenes the Wannsee Conference in a villa outside Berlin. At this conference, he presents plans to coordinate a European-wide "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" to key officials from the German State and the Nazi Party. The "Final Solution" was the code name for the systematic, deliberate, physical annihilation of the European Jews. At some still undetermined time in 1941, Hitler authorized this European-wide scheme for mass murder. Heydrich convened the Wannsee Conference. The attendees did not deliberate whether such a plan should be undertaken, but instead discussed the implementation of a policy decision that had already been made at the highest level of the Nazi regime.

Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp Established

March 1, 1942-- The Inspectorate of Concentration Camps opens a second camp at Auschwitz, called Auschwitz-Birkenau or Auschwitz II. The first prisoners were 945 Soviet prisoners of war and a few Polish prisoners from Auschwitz I. Auschwitz-Birkenau was originally designated for imprisoning large numbers of Soviet prisoners of war. Although it continued to serve as a concentration camp, it also functioned as a killing center from March 1942 until November 1944

Continued Deportations

July 15, 1942-- German authorities begin the deportation of Dutch Jews from the Westerbork, Amersfoort, and Vught camps in the Netherlands to killing centers and concentration camps in Germany and German-occupied Poland. By September 3, 1944, around 100 trains have carried more than 100,000 people to Auschwitz, Sobibor, Theresienstadt, and Bergen-Belsen, including about 60,000 Jews to Auschwitz and about 34,000 Jews to Sobibor.

Death Penalty for Aiding Jews

September 5, 1942-- Jews in hiding and their protectors risked severe punishment if captured. In much of German-occupied eastern Europe, such activities were deemed capital offenses. This September 1942 German poster, issued during mass deportations to the Treblinka killing center, threatens death to anyone aiding Jews who fled the Warsaw ghetto.

Germany Surrenders

February 2, 1943-- After months of fierce fighting and heavy casualties, German forces (numbering now only about 91,000 surviving soldiers) surrender at Stalingrad on the Volga.

Jewish Uprising

OCTOBER 14, 1943-- Jewish prisoners at the Sobibor killing center begin an armed revolt. About 300 escape. SS functionaries and police units, with assistance from German military units, recapture about 100 and kill them. During the Sobibor prisoner uprising, Selma Wijnberg and Chaim Engel, who had fallen in love at the camp, escaped together. Two weeks later, in hiding in a barn, Selma began her diary describing their escape, their fears in hiding, and their love for each other.

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

April 19, 1943 --Organized armed resistance was the most forceful form of Jewish opposition to Nazi policies. German forces intended to liquidate the Warsaw ghetto beginning on April 19, 1943, the eve of the Jewish holiday of Passover. When SS and police units entered the ghetto that morning, the streets were deserted. Nearly all of the residents of the ghetto had gone into hiding, as the renewal of deportations of Jews to death camps triggered an armed uprising within the ghetto. Though vastly outnumbered and outgunned, individuals and small groups of Jews hid or fought the Germans for almost a month.

Hungarian Jews Targeted

In April 1944, Hungarian authorities ordered Jews living outside Budapest (roughly 500,000) to concentrate in certain cities, usually regional government seats. Hungarian gendarmes were sent into rural regions to round up Jews of all ages and send them to the cities. The urban areas in which the Jews were forced to concentrate were enclosed and referred to as ghettos. Sometimes the ghettos encompassed the area of a former Jewish neighborhood. In other cases the ghetto was merely a single building, such as a factory. From May 15 to July 9, 1944, Hungarian gendarmerie officials, under the guidance of German SS officials, deported around 440,000 Jews from Hungary.

Attempted Assassination of Hitler

July 20, 1944-- German military officers attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler in his East Prussian headquarters at Rastenburg. Colonel Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg left a bomb in a briefcase near Hitler during a military briefing on the deteriorating military situation on the eastern front. In addition to disaffected military officers, the plot against Hitler involved traditional right-wing conservative politicians, police officials, and diplomats. They hoped Hitler's violent death would signal a popular anti-Nazi revolt. Hitler, however, survived the blast, and the coup attempt failed. Roland Freisler, chief justice of the People's Court in Berlin, presided over the trial of those implicated in the plot. Invariably, the defendants were convicted and most were executed at Berlin's Plötzensee prison.

Death March at Auschwitz

January 17, 1945-- As Soviet troops approach, SS units begin the final evacuation of prisoners from the Auschwitz camp complex, marching them on foot toward the interior of the German Reich. These forced evacuations come to be called "death marches." In mid-January 1945, as Soviet forces approached the Auschwitz concentration camp complex, the SS began evacuating Auschwitz and its subcamps. SS units forced nearly 60,000 prisoners to march west from the Auschwitz camp system. Thousands had been killed in the camps in the days before these death marches began. Tens of thousands of prisoners, mostly Jews, were forced to march either northwest for 55 kilometers (approximately 30 miles) to Gliwice (Gleiwitz), joined by prisoners from subcamps in East Upper Silesia, such as Bismarckhütte, Althammer, and Hindenburg, or due west for 63 kilometers (approximately 35 miles) to Wodzislaw (Loslau) in the western part of Upper Silesia, joined by inmates from the subcamps to the south of Auschwitz, such as Jawischowitz, Tschechowitz, and Golleschau. SS guards shot anyone who fell behind or could not continue. Prisoners also suffered from the cold weather, starvation, and exposure on these marches. At least 3,000 prisoners died on route to Gliwice alone; possibly as many as 15,000 prisoners died during the evacuation marches from Auschwitz and the subcamps.

US Liberates Buchenwald

April 11, 1945-- In early April 1945, as US forces approached, the Germans began to evacuate some 28,000 prisoners from the Buchenwald main camp and an additional several thousand prisoners from the subcamps of Buchenwald. About a third of these prisoners died from exhaustion en route or shortly after arrival, or were shot by the SS. The underground resistance organization in Buchenwald, whose members held key administrative posts in the camp, saved many lives. They obstructed Nazi orders and delayed the evacuation. On April 11, 1945, in expectation of liberation, starved and emaciated prisoners stormed the watchtowers, seizing control of the camp. Later that afternoon, US forces entered Buchenwald. Soldiers from the 6th Armored Division, part of the Third Army, found more than 21,000 people in the camp.

Hitler Commits Suicide

APRIL 30, 1945-- As Soviet forces near his command bunker in central Berlin on April 30, 1945, Adolf Hitler commits suicide alongside his wife in his flat. Berlin falls to the Soviets within days.

Nuremberg Trial Verdicts

October 1, 1946--The International Military Tribunal (IMT) issues verdicts against leading Nazis at Nuremberg. It sentences 12 leading Nazi officials to death for crimes committed during the Nazi regime. Each of the four Allied nations—the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France—supplied a judge and a prosecution team to the IMT for the trial of selected German officials representing a cross-section of Nazi diplomatic, economic, political, and military leadership. The IMT indicted the defendants on charges of crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Three of the four judges were needed for conviction. In the end, 12 defendants were sentenced to death, among them Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hans Frank, Alfred Rosenberg, and Julius Streicher. They were hanged, cremated in Dachau, and their ashes dropped in the Isar River. Hermann Goering, second only to Hitler in the Nazi regime, escaped the hangman's noose by committing suicide before his execution. The IMT sentenced three defendants to life imprisonment and four to prison terms ranging from 10 to 20 years. It acquitted three of the defendants. Despite a series of postwar trials, many perpetrators of Nazi-era criminality have never been tried or punished.

UN Convention on the Prevention of Genocide

January 12, 1951-- The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide enters into force. Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish jurist, was born in 1900 on a small farm near the Polish town of Wolkowysk. Lemkin was determined to see “genocide” added to international law and began lobbying for this at early sessions of the United Nations. He was a critical force for bringing genocide before the nascent United Nations, where delegates from around the world debated the terms of an international law regarding the subject. On December 9, 1948, the final text was adopted unanimously. The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide entered into force on January 12, 1951, after more than 20 countries from around the world ratified it.

BOSNIA

In the Bosnian silver-mining town of Srebrenica in July 1995, one of the most notorious modern acts of genocide took place. While the international community and U.N. peacekeepers looked on, Serb forces separated civilian men from women and killed thousands of men en masse, or hunted them down in the forests.

The events at Srebrenica mark the climax of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the most vicious and genocidal battlefield in the Balkans conflict. The conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina began in 1992 and featured large-scale genocidal and genocidal atrocities from the first. These are dealt with in a separate Bosnia case study. One of the largest massacres of the early part of the war took place at a gymnasium in the village of Bratunac in April 1992, when an estimated 350 Bosnian Muslim men were tortured to death and massacred by Serb paramilitaries and special police. Bratunac lay just outside Srebrenica, and would again serve as a killing ground when the city fell to Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995.

In spring 1992, fighting erupted between Bosnia and Serbia, both formerly parts of Yugoslavia. 'Ethnic Cleansing' by Serb military and paramilitaries in eastern Bosnia forced thousands of Muslims into three main enclaves: Zepa, Gorazde and Srebrenica. On April 16 1993, the UN declared Srebrenica and its surroundings a safe area to be left free of any armed attacks.

On or about July 6 1995, units of Drina Corps of the Bosnian Serb army (VRS) shelled and attacked the Dutch manned UN observation post in the safe area. The attacks continued until July 11 when Serb forces entered Srebrenica.

Several thousand women, children and some, mainly elderly, men gathered at the UN compound at Potocari where they sought the protection of Dutch peacekeepers.

On July 13 all the civilians were taken from this area on buses and trucks by the VRS. A second group of approximately 15,000 Bosnian Muslim men with some women and children fled west, through the woods towards the town of Tuzla. About one third of this group were armed.

On July 18, VRS forces had systematically executed thousands of these two groups. The remainder were deported from the area westwards into Muslim-held territory. The Muslim population of Srebrenica had been murdered.

The Red Cross lists 7,079 dead and missing at Srebrenica. Other estimates range as high as 8,000 or 10,000. David Rohde notes that the massacre "accounts for an astonishing percentage of the number of missing" from the brutal Balkans conflict as a whole. "Of the 18,406 Muslims, Serbs and Croats reported still missing ... as of January 1997, 7,079 are people [men] who disappeared after the fall of Srebrenica. In other words, approximately 38 percent of the war's missing are from Srebrenica." By any standard, it was one of the worst and most concentrated acts of genocide in the post-World War II era – and the worst massacre of any kind in Europe for fifty years.

SUDAN

In one of the worst campaigns of mass slaughter since World War II, more than 2.5 million civilians have been killed in Sudan over decades of brutal conflict between north and south, in Darfur in the west, and in other regions. Since the 1950s, the Arab-dominated government of Sudan, centered in the capital Khartoum, has tried to impose its control on the country's African minorities living along the nation's periphery. The result has been a deadly mix of ethnic, religious, and politically motivated conflicts.

Though the north-south civil war is over and [South Sudan](#) gained its independence in July 2011, violence has continued. Citizens in Darfur and the border areas between the two countries remain at risk, and violence in South Sudan threatens to destabilize the newly independent country. The Sudanese government led by Omar al-Bashir and the National Islamist Front (NIF), which was transformed in 1998 to the National Congress Party (NCP), governed over war in the south and west. The conflicts produced several peaks of violence against civilians: militia raids into Bahr al Ghazal, 1986-89; the Nuba Mountains attacks that began in 1992 and continue today; systematic targeting in the late 1990s of entire civilian groups who lived in areas where oil was discovered; and genocide in Darfur 2003 - 2005.

Entire ethnic groups were targeted by the north, including the Dinka and Nuer in the south, and the Nuba of central Sudan. Fighting in 1991-92 between factions of the SPLA also caused significant civilian losses and displacement. In Darfur, the primary victims were the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit.

The Sudanese government established a pattern of assaults against civilians, killing, torturing, raping and displacing millions. Assault tactics included:

- Use of mass starvation and mass forcible displacement as a weapon of destruction;
- Obstruction of humanitarian aid;
- Harassment of internally displaced persons;
- Bombing of hospitals, clinics, schools, and other civilian sites;
- Use of rape as a weapon against targeted groups;
- Employing a divide-to-destroy strategy of pitting ethnic groups against each other, with enormous loss of civilian life;
- Training and supporting ethnic militias who commit atrocities;
- Enslavement of women and children by government-support militias;
- Impeding and failing to fully implement peace agreements.

Individually, each action had devastating, often deadly consequences for its victims. Together, these actions threatened the destruction of entire groups of people. Amongst the most intense campaigns against civilians who remain in the north today were the assaults against the Nuba in Kordofan and campaigns against the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit in Darfur.

BURMA

Long considered one of the world's most persecuted peoples, the Muslim Rohingya have no legal status in Burma and face severe discrimination, abuse, and escalating violence. In 2012, violent attacks, fanned by a campaign of virulent anti-Muslim hate speech that continues today, destroyed numerous Rohingya communities and displaced well more than 100,000. Today, the Rohingya in Burma are forcibly isolated, cut off from nearly all goods and services, and unable to provide for themselves. According to the United Nations, crimes against humanity have been, and continue to be, perpetrated against the Rohingya. Their treatment, combined with statements by government, political, and religious leaders indicate that the Rohingya are being subjected to ethnic cleansing. While the Burmese government has signaled its intention to alleviate the plight of the Rohingya, little has as yet been done to address the fundamental causes of their suffering. Burma's democracy movement has been largely silent about the treatment of the Rohingya.

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority in Rakhine (also called Arakan) State, which borders Bangladesh and has a Buddhist majority that is ethnically Rakhine. Although Rohingya have resided in Arakan for at least several centuries, Burma's 1982 citizenship law does not include them among the country's officially recognized ethnic groups, effectively denying them any right to citizenship. The Burmese government classifies the approximately 800,000 Rohingya as "Bengalis" and insists that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Since Burma's independence in 1948, the Rohingya have been subjected to periodic campaigns of violence and continue to face various forms of official and unofficial persecution, including:

- **Limits on the right to marry and bear children:** Rohingya must obtain official permission to marry and in some areas have been prohibited from having more than two children. As a result, some 60,000 Rohingya children born in violation of these restrictions cannot be registered and are thus ineligible for all government services, including education.
- **Limits on movement:** Rohingya must obtain official permission to travel even to a neighboring village. Applications for travel permits require long waits, payment of fees and bribes, and intrusive scrutiny. The travel restrictions effectively deny the Rohingya access to post-primary education, markets, employment opportunities, and health care.
- **Forced labor:** Rohingya in Northern Rakhine State have regularly been required to work without pay for government and military authorities. Children frequently perform this labor, which is required exclusively of the Rohingya in Rakhine State.
- **Denial of due process:** Rohingya are routinely subjected to confiscation of property, arbitrary arrest and detention, physical and sexual violence, and even torture at the hands of authorities.
- **Segregation:** Rohingya are barred from the teaching, medical, and engineering professions. Many health care facilities will not treat them and few businesses will hire them other than for manual labor.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)—known as Zaire until 1997—has suffered two wars since 1996. The first war in 1996 began as a direct result of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The second began in 1998 and involved the armed forces of at least seven countries and multiple militias. According to the International Rescue Committee, since 1998, an estimated 5.4 million people have died, most from preventable diseases as a result of the collapse of infrastructure, lack of food security, displacement, and destroyed health-care systems.

In 2006, DRC held its first multi-party elections in over 40 years, and over 25 million citizens participated. The elections signified the end of a three-year transition period during which time the country moved from intense war to a system of power sharing between the former government, former armed forces, opposition parties, and civil society. Elections were held again in 2011. However, national and provincial structures remain incapable of ensuring basic security for communities, providing transparent management of resources and wealth, and addressing entrenched problems of corruption, poverty, lack of development and heightened ethnic and regional tensions.

In the eastern part of the country, the war never conclusively ended. A range of armed forces, including the Congolese military, the FARDC, continue to perpetrate violence against the civilian population, including forced displacement, abductions, looting, forceful recruitment and use of child soldiers, and massive sexual violence. Ostensibly tasked with safeguarding the Congolese people, the FARDC has been accused of committing widespread atrocities and establishing criminal networks in eastern Congo. According to the United Nations, 27,000 sexual assaults were reported in 2006 in South Kivu Province alone, a figure that represents only those assaults that were officially reported. Ethnic hostility, much of it echoes from the Rwandan genocide, and fed by inter-group violence, has produced an environment where groups fear their entire existence is under threat and engage in pre-emptive attacks against each other. In this complex situation, multiple armed forces, including the national armed forces and various militias engage in armed conflict and prey on the civilian population. Among the most brutal of the armed forces are the FDLR, a group whose leadership is associated with the perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.