

# THE HOLOCAUST

## IT HAPPENED! NEVER AGAIN!

Why we mark Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January...

As educators UCU members recognise our unique responsibility to tell the truth about our past to ensure the lessons are learnt for our future. The millions who died at the hands of the Nazis and their allies during the Holocaust must be remembered not just as the victims of an unparalleled man-made tragedy – but also as a warning that we must never allow it to happen again. We must continue to educate our children against the dangers of anti-Semitism, fascism and racial discrimination. Encouraging them – and us – to take a stand against hatred and intolerance wherever they find it is the best way to ensure a just, democratic and tolerant society where all can live free from fear.

**Sally Hunt**, UCU general secretary

**The Holocaust** was a “specific genocidal event in the twentieth-century history; the state sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation” of 6 million Jews, “...by Nazi Germany and collaborators.”

**The Nazi Party**, formed in 1920s by Hitler, organised the Holocaust. They won power on the back of German defeat in World War One, promising to create jobs in the midst of the 1929 world wide economic depression, and a “racially pure” Germany.

**6 million Jews** were murdered in the Holocaust.

**Millions** of other “undesirables” were killed by the Nazis.

**Estimated 39 death camps** across Europe.

**4 million people** (mainly Jewish) were murdered in 6 death camps alone – Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzab, Majdanek, and Auschwitz.

**90% of Polish Jews** were killed in the Holocaust.



### JAN. CHANCELLOR

Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

### FEB. NO MORE TRADE UNIONS

The property of communists and pacifists is confiscated. Independent trade union buildings are attacked and trade unions banned two months later.

### MAR. OPPONENTS PUT AWAY

Thousands of Jews, church people, homosexuals, and communists are sent to the growing Dachau concentration camp.



### APR. UNLAWFUL BOYCOTT

Jewish establishments are boycotted by Nazis across Germany. Jews are expelled from universities. In the following weeks books are burnt.

### JULY STERILISATION

People with “genetic defects” are forcibly sterilised. Four months later beggars, the homeless, alcoholics and the unemployed are sent to concentration camps. Homosexual people in Germany, especially Berlin, had enjoyed a higher level of freedom & acceptance than anywhere in the world until the Nazis took power. Homosexual organisations were banned and homosexuals within the Nazi party murdered. Scholarly books about homosexuality, or sexuality in general, were burned.

### RACE LAWS

The Nuremberg race laws are passed which mean Jews lose their German citizenship and are forbidden relationships with non Jews. Jews are then barred from cinema ownership.

### DIVISION OF DEATH

A special division, SS Death's-head unit, guards concentration camps. By the end of 1936 thousands of Jews leave Germany fleeing relentless persecution.

### AUG. COMBATING HOMOSEXUALITY

An Office for Combating Homosexuality and Abortions is established. Soon after 25% of all Jewish wealth is taxed.

### HEALTH

Jews can no longer get National Health insurance, and are banned from getting legal qualifications.

### MAR. TAKE OVER

The Nazis seize Austria. Adolf Eichmann later establishes an office for Jewish immigration in Vienna. Jews lose the right to property; employment; the right to enter parks.

### APR. REGISTER

Jews are forced to register all wealth and holdings. Later in the year Jews over 15 are forced to apply for identity cards. Jews can no longer practice medicine.

### JUNE BUSINESS

Jewish businesses must register with special ministry.

### JULY EVIAN

32 countries meet in Evian, France to consider the plight of Jews escaping Hitler. No country accepts them.

### AUG. MORE REPRESSION

Nazis destroy the Great Synagogue in Nuremberg. Jewish women must add Sarah to their names, and men Israel on all legal documents. A month later, Jews cannot practice law and their passports are stamped with J in red.

### OCT. ARRESTED

17,000 Polish Jews are arrested in Germany. They are expelled to Poland which refuses them entry leaving them with nowhere to go.



### NOV. KRISTALLNACHT

Thousands of Jewish businesses and synagogues were attacked and 30,000 Jewish men arrested by Nazis. Jews are later fined 1 billion marks for damages arising from Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass). Jews are expelled from non Jewish German schools.

### DEC. GORING

It is decreed that all Jewish businesses must be aryanised.

### JAN. SPEEDY DEPORTATION AND THREATS

The deportation of Jews increases. The following month Jews must give their gold and silver to the state.

### MAR. CZECHOSLOVAKIA TAKEN OVER

The Nazis take Czechoslovakia. Following this, the Slovaks pass the equivalent of the Nuremberg laws in Germany (see 1935).

### JUNE NAZIS INVADE THE SOVIET UNION

In the course of the war the Nazis let 5 million soviet prisoners die of starvation. The Nazis unleashed a wave of genocide against the millions of Jews living in the Soviet Union.

### MAY ST LOUIS

930 Jewish refugees leave Europe on board the St Louis for the Americas. They are forced to return to Europe after being refused entry. Two months later, Jews lose the right to hold government jobs in Germany.

### SEP. POLAND AND WAR

The Nazis invade Poland. Jews are put into ghettos in preparation for the “final goal.” England and France declare war. Jews in Germany cannot be on the streets after 8pm (winter) and 9pm (summer). It is now illegal for Jews to own radios in Germany.

### OCT. EUTHANASIA

All sick and disabled people are rounded up extermination by the Nazis in Germany.

### NEW GHETTOS, NEW MASSACRES, NEW CAMPS

New Jewish Ghettos were established in occupied territories e.g. Minsk, Lvov, and Bialystok in Russia. 3,800 Jews are murdered in pogrom in at Kovno, Lithuania. Also, 33,771 Jews are murdered at Babi Yar in Kiev, Russia. A new camp is established in Majdanek in Poland.

### AUG. MADAGASCAR

A plan is proposed to deport all European Jews to an island near East Africa, Madagascar. Nazi-occupied France passes severe measures against its Jewish populations deporting thousands. The Nazis begin to seal off Jewish ghettos from the world e.g. the Krakow ghetto in Poland.

### NEW SITE FOR MURDER

New camp called Auschwitz established in Poland. European Jews are deported to Poland. The Nazis take over Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg.

### DEC. YET MORE CAMPS

The Chelmno camp is opened in Poland. Jews are gassed in mobile gas vans. Victims include 5,000 gypsies.

### FINAL SOLUTION

Hitler meets Hess, Auschwitz commandant declaring “The Führer has ordered the Final solution of the Jewish question... I have... chosen Auschwitz for this purpose.” Later that year Zyklon B (poison gas) is used at Auschwitz for the first time.

### MAY SOBIBOR DEATH CAMP

Fitted with three gas chambers, this camp would later become the scene of the most heroic instances of resistance to the Nazis. The New York Times reported the same month that as many as 400,000 Jews had been machine gunned in Nazi-occupied territory.

### JUNE YELLOW STARS

Jews in a number of occupied territories forced to wear a yellow star.

### EFFICIENCY

Nazis hold a special meeting to co-ordinate Jewish deportations. Later that month, a new gas chamber is opened at Auschwitz. Sterilisation experiments begin at Auschwitz the following month.

### LEAKS

News of the death camps is leaked to the British and American governments. Dutch and French Jews are sent to Auschwitz the same month. Later that year, they will be joined by German Jews.

### CAMP OPENING AND OPPOSITION

A new camp called Treblinka is opened in Poland. It has 10 gas chambers (200 persons per chamber). At Sachsenhausen camp, however, the SS meet stiff Jewish resistance. Belzec extermination camp is closed after killing an estimated 600,000 Jews. The Nazis try to hide its existence. Meanwhile, sterilization experiments are tested on women in Birkenau.

### RESISTANCE

Jews mount serious resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. This comes at a time when the Nazis send Gypsies to extermination camps.

### STALINGRAD

The Nazis are defeated by the Russian army at Stalingrad in Russia.

### AUSCHWITZ EXPANDED

The Nazis open 4 new gas chambers at Auschwitz. Jews are deported to the camp from Italy and Austria. It is reported later that 106 castrations were performed there by December 1943.

### TREBLINKA EXTERMINATIONS CEASE

Two hundred Jews manage to escape Treblinka death camp soon after the extermination, but 870,000 were killed there.

### FIRST WARNINGS ABOUT AUSCHWITZ

An escapee from Auschwitz, Rudolf Vrba, gives one of the first accounts of what has happened there. Jews from Hungary and Greece deported to Auschwitz. By the end of June half of Hungary's Jews were at Auschwitz.

### BAD TRADE

The Nazis offer to trade Jews for trucks and other commodities with Western Allies.

### HIGHEST DAILY MURDER RATE EVER RECORDED

9,000 people a day are gassed or burned at Auschwitz-Birkenau during the summer. A revolt by some Jewish inmates leads to the destruction of one the crematoriums.

### OCT. TRANSPORT

The last transport of Jews was to Auschwitz. A little later people were gassed there for the last time. Himmler later ordered the destruction of the crematoriums in Auschwitz.

### POLITICAL OPPONENTS.

Millions of political “undesirables” ranging from communists, trade unionists, members of the boy scouts, to pacifists were killed by the Nazis. Any freedom of expression or difference was crushed along with elections and other political parties.

### JAN. AUSCHWITZ LIBERATED

The Red Army liberates Auschwitz on 27 January, and Majdanek camp the previous year. The Red Army also liberates Warsaw and Budapest.

### APR. HITLER KILLS HIMSELF

The Allied armies liberate numerous death camps like Buchenwald and Dachau in defeating the Nazi war machine.

### MAY GERMANY SURRENDERS

Some, but not all, of the people who were involved in perpetrating the Holocaust are put on trial.

### NOV. NUREMBERG TRIALS

Some, but not all, of the people who were involved in perpetrating the Holocaust are put on trial.

**References and acknowledgements**

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**UCU**  
University and College Union

## Blackshirts, Brownshirts & Leagues

### A short history of far right street movements

**20<sup>th</sup> Century League hits the streets**  
The British Brothers' League is formed by Captain William Stanley Shaw with a strong following amongst pub landlords in east London. At its first meeting in 1902, 4,000 attended. The BBL's anti-semitism becomes clear as marches and rallies were filled with anti-Jewish immigrant speeches. It claimed to have 12,000 members. The BBL closed down in 1905.

**1919**  
**Mussolini's Blackshirts formed**  
The first fascist dictatorship is established by Mussolini in Italy in 1922, with help of his squadre d'azione (fighting squads) – also known as the Blackshirts. They physically attacked opponents such as socialists and trade unionists. In one attack in 1920, they killed 55 people. When Mussolini took power their violent nature made them hard to manage during his reign.

**1921**  
**Hitler's Brownshirts hit the streets**  
Hitler's SA, or Brownshirts, played an important role in his rise to power. Formed and led by Ernst Röhm, they were modelled on Italy's Blackshirts and engaged in violent acts against Jewish people, trade unionists and others. When Hitler came to power in 1933 they set up mini concentration camps in cinemas and docks to incarcerate “enemies”. Hitler had the leadership of the Brownshirts shot in 1934, perceiving them as a danger to his rule.

**1936**  
**British blackshirts and the battle of Cable Street**  
Leader of the newly established British Union of Fascists, Oswald Mosley, announces a march through the poorest part of London, the East End, where he hopes to build a base. The BUF targets Jewish people. Mosley attempts to build a fascist street movement called the blackshirts. He is met by 100,000 anti-fascists and can't pass Cable Street. The police call off the march. The fascists never recover.

**1945**  
**43 Group**  
Jewish ex-servicemen and anti-fascists in the 43 Group smash BUF rallies as it tries to regroup itself after the Second World War.

**1977**  
**Lewisham**  
The National Front tries to march through an area with a high black and Asian presence. They are met by thousands of anti-fascists and, like the BUF in the 1930s, are pushed back. Two years later, Blair Peach is killed by police at an anti-fascist march in Southall.

**1993**  
**BNP win first seat**  
BNP win first seat – described as an “openly Nazi Party” by a European committee on racism – wins first council seat on the Isle of Dogs, east London. They are associated with Combat 18 – an avowedly racist, violent organisation.

**2009**  
**Blocked by mass movement**  
60,000 anti-fascists march on the BNP headquarters. 40,000 people march against the BNP in East London on a demonstration organised by the TUC. A giant anti-Nazi League carnival is held in Brockwell Park. First BNP councillor loses his seat. Later, Unite Against Fascism and Hope Not Hate are formed to stop the BNP, the English Defence League and similar organisations.

**2010**  
**Blocked in Bolton and stopped in Stoke**  
The EDL mobilises 800 members to be met by 3,500 anti-fascists. They cannot enter the town centre. A few months earlier an EDL demonstration is cancelled in Stoke-on-Trent.

**2011**  
**532 Halted in Tower Hamlets**  
On the eve of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street, the EDL attempts to march through east London. Unable to negotiate at Liverpool Street station due to the action of rail workers, the 600 EDL marchers fail to march through Tower Hamlets. The thousands of trade unionists, people of all races, religions and communities who have come out to show opposition to the EDL march claim victory.

**2012 & beyond**  
**NEW Hate targets**  
The EDL attacks the North West regional HQ of the trade union, Unite. They are driven back with help of fellow trade unionists. One hundred and seventy EDL members are arrested after threatening to attack the Occupy London protest camp. A splinter group threatens to attack picket lines during 30 November one-day strike.

**2012 & beyond**  
**TOWER HAMLETS NO PLACE FOR HATE**

“The Yids, the yids, we gotta get rid of the Yids”  
British Union of Fascists chant, 1936

“Muslim scum off our streets”  
English Defence League chant, 2010



“21<sup>st</sup> Century League hits the streets

Capitalising on a series of events in Luton, far right extremists and hooligans rampage through its streets, attacking a mainly Asian area. The English Defence League is formed and seems to combine BNP members and football hooligans. Where the BBL and BUF violently targeted Jewish people in the 1930s, the EDL targets Muslims today. In the next 2 years they would organise an estimated 71 “protests”.

AUG The EDL tries to repeat its Luton success in Birmingham. They are outnumbered by anti-fascists this time.

As the world wide economic crisis deepens the threat from groups like the EDL both in the UK and Europe is not likely to go away.

The examples of Cable Street (1936); Lewisham (1977); Welling (1993); and Tower Hamlets (2011) leave a rich legacy for all those who oppose the politics of hatred, intolerance and violent scapegoating.

