





Concentration/Extermination Camp Timeline – A teacher’s resource from **Tikvah**

<p>Auschwitz</p>  <p>The notorious arrival platform</p>	<p>Bergen-Belsen</p>  <p>Josef Kramer (the “Beast of Belsen”) under arrest</p>	<p>Mauthausen</p>  <p>Heinrich Himmler on the “Stairway of death”</p>	<p>Nazi history</p>  <p>Nazi party congress at Nuremberg</p>
			<p>1933</p> <p>Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor, the leader of the German government.</p> <p>Hitler’s government organises a boycott of Jewish shops, doctors and lawyers. The Nazis say that ‘real’ Germans must not buy from Jews.</p> <p>Hitler’s government bans all other political parties. Now Hitler and his party are in total command. Germany has become a dictatorship.</p> <p>The Concentration Camp at Dachau was opened 22 March 1933 to house people regarded as political or other threats to German society.</p> <p>Prisoners were identified by badges of different colours, for example, homosexuals wore pink badges and Jehovah’s witnesses wore violet.</p>
	<p>1935</p> <p>The <i>Wehrmacht</i> (German armed forces) began to build a large military complex close to the town of Bergen in Northern Germany.</p> <p>The construction workers are housed in camps which later are to become the base for</p>		<p>1935</p> <p>Hitler’s government introduces Race Laws. German Jews have their rights taken away from them. Jews and non-Jews are no longer allowed to get married.</p>

	Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp.		
		<p>1938</p> <p>The Mauthausen concentration camp was established in the summer of 1938 and became the main Nazi camp on Austrian territory.</p> <p>It was erected on the basis of plans by the SS to establish a special Austrian concentration camp for men and to create greater detention capacities in preparation for the impending war.</p> <p>It was built near an abandoned stone quarry, along the Danube River, about 12.5 miles southeast of Linz.</p> <p>The first prisoners (approximately 300) arrived on 8 August 1938 from the concentration camp in Dachau. They were mostly Austrians and virtually all convicted repeat offenders or persons whom the Nazi regime classified as "asocials". Their task was to begin construction of the new camp. By the end of 1938, Mauthausen held nearly 1,000 prisoners.</p>	<p>1938</p> <p>After a prolonged period of economic problems and intense Nazi propaganda within Austria, German troops entered the country on March 12, 1938. They received the enthusiastic support of most of the population. Austria is now incorporated into Germany.</p> <p>At a conference in Evian to discuss the plight of the Jews nearly all the nations attending are unwilling to take in Jewish refugees.</p> <p>In November, the Nazis destroy Jewish synagogues, shops and homes throughout Germany. More than 30,000 Jewish men are arrested, and 200 Jews are murdered. Later this night becomes known as Kristallnacht: the 'Night of Broken Glass'.</p>
		<p>1939</p> <p>By December 1939, the number had increased to over 2,600 prisoners, primarily convicted criminals, "asocials," political opponents, and religious conscientious objectors, such as Jehovah's Witnesses.</p>	<p>1939</p> <p>Hitler publicly forecasts the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe should war come.</p> <p>Germany occupies Prague.</p> <p>Germany invades Poland. Britain and France declare</p>

			<p>war on Germany. The war in Europe has begun. Mass killings of anyone in Poland thought to be influential and a possible threat to the Nazis.</p> <p>Hitler authorises secret programme (T4) for the killing of people with disabilities.</p>
<p>1940</p> <p>The concentration camp was established by the Germans, in the suburbs of Oswiecim, a Polish city that was annexed by the Nazis. Its name was changed to Auschwitz.</p> <p>The first and oldest camp, the so-called "main camp" (later also known as "Auschwitz I") was established on the site (and in the 22 brick buildings) of pre-war Polish barracks.</p> <p>Mass arrests of Poles were increasing beyond the capacity of existing "local" prisons to cope.</p>	<p>1940</p> <p>German military authorities establish Bergen-Belsen as a prisoner-of-war camp in the former construction workers' camp.</p> <p>In June 1940, Belgian and French POWs start to arrive.</p>	<p>1940</p> <p>After the fall of France in June 1940, Vichy French authorities turned over to the German SS and police thousands of Spanish refugees, virtually all of whom had fought against General Franco's rebel troops during the Spanish Civil War, and who had fled to France after Franco overthrew the Spanish Republic in 1939.</p> <p>The SS and police incarcerated the overwhelming majority of the Spanish Republicans, more than 7,000, in Mauthausen in 1940 (and 1941).</p>	<p>1940</p> <p>The German army attacks Denmark and Norway and invades the Low Countries and France.</p> <p>France surrenders to the German forces.</p> <p>Italy enters the war on the side of the Nazis.</p> <p>Germany, Japan and Italy make a treaty. They promise to help each other in attacking the United States.</p> <p>The Vichy Government in France issue anti-Jewish laws.</p> <p>The Warsaw ghetto is isolated.</p>
<p>1941</p> <p>The second development was the Birkenau camp also known as "Auschwitz II" This was the largest part of the Auschwitz complex. The Nazis began building it on the site of the village of Brzezinka, 3 kilometers from Oswiecim. The Polish civilian population had been evicted and their houses confiscated and demolished.</p>	<p>1941</p> <p>This first installation was significantly expanded from June 1941 becoming an independent camp. It was intended to hold up to 20,000 Soviet POWs.</p>	<p>1941</p> <p>In January 1941, SS General Reinhard Heydrich, the chief of the Reich Main Office for Security (<i>Reichssicherheitshauptamt</i>; RSHA), designated Mauthausen as a category III concentration camp, in which the SS would incarcerate only those prisoners whom the RSHA deemed to be "severely incriminated, especially previously</p>	<p>1941</p> <p>Germany invades Greece and Yugoslavia.</p> <p>Germany attacks Russia supported by the armies of Hungary, Italy and Romania.</p> <p>Mobile killing units of the Einsatzgruppen murder thousands of communists and Jews (including women and children).</p> <p>Over 3 million Soviet prisoners of war are forced</p>

The idea of founding a camp in Brzezinka is connected with Heinrich Himmler's first inspection of Auschwitz on March 1, 1941. Original plans called for the POWs who would be imprisoned there to build the camp themselves. 10,000 Soviet POWs were brought from other camps for this purpose in October 1941 and they were to build a facility to house 125,000 POWs.

Soviet POWs were the first prisoners in Auschwitz to be tattooed with numbers.

The greater part of the apparatus of mass extermination was built in Birkenau and the majority of the victims were murdered here.

The decision was now made to locate mass extermination facilities adjacent to the camp that was under construction in Birkenau—gas chambers for the mass killing of Jews brought to Birkenau as part of the Third Reich leadership's plans for the complete extermination of the Jews of Europe.

The first victims of Zyklon B gas in Auschwitz are 600 Soviet POWs and 250 Polish and other prisoners in the cellars of block 11.

convicted criminals and asocials—that means protective detainees who have only remote potential for reform."

Inmates in the punishment group were forced to carry heavy stone blocks up 186 steps from the camp quarry. The steps became known as the "Stairway of Death."

into temporary camps and the majority die over the next year.

In Germany, all Jews aged six or older must wear a yellow Star of David.

Japan bombs the American fleet in Pearl Harbour. The next day America declares war on Japan, as does Britain. Germany supports Japan with a declaration of war against the United States.

Over 30,000 Jews are shot in a massacre at Babi Yar close to Kiev.

Over 44,000 Jews many of whom who had been deported by the Hungarian government as "aliens" were killed at Kamenets-Podolsk in the Ukraine.

Several thousand Jews are murdered in Iasi in Romania and the government begins deportations of Jews from Bessarabia (now Moldova) and Bukovina (now in Ukraine) to Transnistria (Romanian-occupied Ukraine). Many thousands die in mass executions and from starvation/disease.

<p>1942</p> <p>Birkenau opened as a branch of Auschwitz in March 1942, and served at the same time as a center for the extermination of the Jews.</p> <p>Two provisional gas chambers, known as bunkers 1 and 2, went into operation next to the Birkenau construction site in 1942, when Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss was entrusted with carrying out part of the campaign to exterminate the Jews.</p> <p>They were adapted farmhouses that previously belonged to expelled Poles. The first began operating in early 1942, probably in March, and the second in mid-year.</p> <p>The construction of a complex of four gigantic gas chambers and crematoria began in mid-1942. The Germans estimated that 1.6 million people a year could be killed and cremated there.</p> <p>Heinrich Himmler gives the order to transport all Jews in concentration camps in Germany to Auschwitz extermination camp.</p> <p>From mid-1942 the camp was occupied mainly by Jews, Poles, and Gypsies</p> <p>More than 40 sub-camps, exploiting the prisoners as slave labourers, were</p>	<p>1942</p> <p>By the end of March 1942, some 41,000 Soviet POWs had died in these camps of starvation, exhaustion, and disease.</p>	<p>1942</p> <p>Other than four Yugoslav women whom the SS brought to Mauthausen with 46 men to be shot in April 1942, the first female prisoners in Mauthausen were two dozen women from Ravensbrück, whom the SS transferred to provide sex for favoured male prisoners. The women arrived in June 1942 and lived in the first bordello established in the Nazi concentration camp system.</p>	<p>1942</p> <p>High-ranking Nazis come together in a secret meeting (Wannsee Conference). They discuss how to carry out a decision which Hitler had already taken in 1941: to kill all 11 million Jews in Europe. Adolph Eichmann discusses plans to deport the Jews from France, Belgium and the Netherlands.</p> <p>Deportations from ghettos to camps are accelerated.</p> <p>The Warsaw ghetto is almost emptied by deportations. Over 700,000 Jews are murdered by gassing in Treblinka in 5 months.</p> <p>The German army retreats from North Africa after it is defeated in Egypt by British troops led by Montgomery.</p>
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<p>founded, mainly at various sorts of German industrial plants and farms, between 1942 and 1944. The largest of them was called Monowitz/Buna (with ten thousand prisoners) and was opened by the camp administration in 1942 on the grounds of the Buna-Werke synthetic rubber and fuel plant 6 kilometers from the Auschwitz camp.</p>			
<p>1943</p> <p>On November 1943, the Buna sub-camp became the seat of the commandant of the third part of the camp, Auschwitz III, to which some other Auschwitz sub-camps were subordinated.</p> <p>The deportation to the camp of the Sinti and Roma began in February 1943 and continued until July 1944. The Sinti and Roma imprisoned in the camp came primarily from Germany, Austria, the Protectorate of Bavaria and Moravia, and Poland, with smaller groups arriving from France, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia/Croatia, Belgium, the USSR, Lithuania, and Hungary. There is also mention of Sinti and Roma citizens of Norway and Spain.</p> <p>The women's camp (opened in August 1942) expanded in July 1943. Over 10,000 women of various ethnic origins (the majority of them Jews, but also including Poles, Germans, and others)</p>	<p>1943</p> <p>SS persuade the army to hand over to them part of the prisoner of war camp.</p> <p>In July 1943 the first inmates of the Bergen-Belsen detention camp were received.</p> <p>This camp was designed to be different. It was created to house Jews and others who were valuable alive and who might be exchanged for money or captured German nationals.</p> <p>On 7 July the first transport of Jewish prisoners arrives in the "special camp" (<i>Sonderlager</i>) from Poland.</p> <p>This was followed in August by a transfer from Greece of Jewish prisoners from neutral countries—Spain, Portugal, Argentina, and Turkey arriving in the "neutrals camp" (<i>Neutralenlager</i>).</p> <p>The SS establishes the "star camp" (<i>Sternlager</i>) when the first transport of Jewish prisoners arrives from the Netherlands.</p> <p>In October the SS and German police deport</p>	<p>1943</p> <p>The concentration camp fulfilled two functions for the SS: to restrain political and ideological opponents of Nazism by interning, torturing and killing them and to act as a deterrent; and also to exploit their labour to the utmost.</p> <p>Until 1943 the extermination of "opponents" was the most important priority.</p>	<p>1943</p> <p>The German army surrenders at Stalingrad after a battle lasting 5 months.</p> <p>Warsaw ghetto uprising in May/June.</p> <p>75,000 American Jews demonstrate in New York. They want their government to help the Jews in Europe.</p> <p>The Allies begin night bombing of Berlin.</p> <p>Italy surrenders. German occupation of Rome following Mussolini's fall from power.</p> <p>Danish Jews are largely saved by escaping to Sweden with the help of the Danish people.</p> <p>Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, the leaders of the 3 largest Allied countries, meet in Tehran (Iran) to discuss how they can defeat Germany and Japan. They also make plans for a peace organisation to be set up after the war.</p> <p>Start of daylight raids by allied bombers on German cities.</p>

<p>were transferred to Birkenau from Auschwitz I, where they had been held temporarily.</p>	<p>around 1,800 prisoners from the “special camp” to Auschwitz.</p>		
<p>1944</p> <p>Auschwitz I was the main camp in Oświęcim. In August 1944, it held about 16,000 prisoners (mainly Jews and Poles). This was the location of the SS garrison administration (SS Standortverwaltung)</p> <p>The vast majority of the victims of Auschwitz Camp died in Birkenau - approximately a million people. More than nine out of every ten, were Jews. A large proportion of the more than 70,000 Poles who died or were killed in the Auschwitz complex perished in Birkenau as were approximately 20,000 Gypsies, in addition to Soviet POWs and other prisoners.</p> <p>In the Czech or Terezín “family camp” (within Auschwitz) the in-mates were kept together. Then, on March 8 and 9, 1944, the family camp was “liquidated” through the murder of its inhabitants.</p> <p>In October 1944, a camp for several thousand women prisoners employed producing artillery-shell fuses in the Union-Werke factory opened in the new blocks in the so-called camp extension (Schutzhaftlagererweiterung).</p> <p>In the last two months of its existence, after the</p>	<p>1944</p> <p>The SS closes the first section of the “prisoners' camp,” which housed non-Jewish prisoners whom the SS authorities had brought to Bergen-Belsen to construct the “residence camp.”</p> <p>The SS authorities release around 365 Jewish prisoners from the “neutrals camp,” dispatching them to the border of Spain.</p> <p>The “prisoners' camp” begins serving as a collection camp for sick and injured prisoners from other concentration camps. This section becomes known as the “recuperation camp” (<i>Erholungslager</i>).</p> <p>222 Jewish prisoners from the “star camp” are permitted to leave for Palestine in exchange for German citizens held on British territory.</p> <p>The SS establishes the “Hungarian camp” (<i>Ungarnlager</i>) when the first transport of over 1,600 Hungarian Jews arrives in Bergen-Belsen.</p> <p>Within the “prisoners' camp” the SS erects the “tent camp” (<i>Zeltlager</i>), to which they move sick female prisoners, after the “recuperation camp” becomes overcrowded.</p> <p>The SS permits the first transport of Hungarian Jewish prisoners (around 300) from the “Hungarian camp” to leave for Switzerland in return for cash payment.</p>	<p>1944</p> <p>During the war, forced labour using concentration camp prisoners became increasingly important to German armaments production. In the summer and autumn of 1944, sub-camps under the administration of Mauthausen were established near armaments factories throughout northern Austria. The staff at Mauthausen administered more than 60 subcamps, including Gusen, Gunskirchen, Melk, Ebensee, and Amstetten. Thousands of prisoners were worked to death</p> <p>With the arrival of more women in 1944, the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps classified Mauthausen as a women's concentration camp (<i>Frauen-Konzentrationslager</i>) on September 15, 1944. By the end of September 1944, 459 women were in the main camp: 392 political prisoners (non-Jewish), 38 Jehovah's Witnesses, and 29 so-called “asocials”.</p> <p>In March 1944, the German Armed Forces High Command (OKW) issued a decree (so-called “Bullet Decree” or “Operation K”) mandating the transport of escaped and recaptured prisoners of war, other than British and US prisoners, to</p>	<p>1944</p> <p>The Allies bomb Germany, using 7,000 aircraft.</p> <p>Hungarian support for Germany weakens so German troops take control of Hungary in March.</p> <p>In May and June Hungarian Jews (outside of Budapest) are put in ghettos and deported to Auschwitz.</p> <p>In July an assassination attempt on Hitler led by Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg fails.</p> <p>Romania declares war on Germany in August and joins with Soviet forces.</p> <p>Soviet and Romanian forces encircle Budapest.</p>

<p>closing of the gas chambers in October 1944 in connection with the critical military situation of the Third Reich and the expected Soviet offensive, the camp entered the phase of final liquidation, which ended with the evacuation of the prisoners.</p> <p>In the second half of 1944 (and the first 2 weeks of January 1945) about 65,000 prisoners, including almost all the Poles, Russians, and Czechs remaining in the camp were evacuated to various industrial plants in the depths of the Reich.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>After a storm destroys the “tent camp,” camp officials establish the “small women's camp” (<i>Kleines Frauenlager</i>) within the “prisoners' camp” and transfers the surviving prisoners of the “tent camp” to the “small women's camp.”</p> <p>The WVHA officially designates the Bergen-Belsen camp complex a concentration camp.</p> <p>SS Captain Josef Kramer replaces Adolf Haas as the commandant of Bergen-Belsen.</p> <p>The SS permits the second transport of Hungarian Jewish prisoners (around 1,300) to leave for Switzerland in return for cash payment. An additional 4,200 Hungarian Jews arrive in the “Hungarian camp” from Hungary shortly thereafter.</p>	<p>Mauthausen to be shot. The decree applied to all recaptured officers and those recaptured non-commissioned officers deemed no longer capable of work. The SS imprisoned the recaptured soldiers in barrack 20 in Mauthausen and shot some of them, while beating or starving others to death. The SS incarcerated and killed approximately 5,000 recaptured prisoners of war in Mauthausen within the framework of “Operation K.”</p> <p>Approximately 85 percent of the recaptured prisoners were Soviet soldiers; the remainder included Polish, Yugoslav, Dutch, French, and Belgian soldiers.</p>	
<p>1945</p> <p>With the continuing approach of Soviet troops, from January 17 to 21, the Germans marched approximately 56,000 prisoners out of Auschwitz and its sub-camps in evacuation columns mostly heading west, through Upper and Lower Silesia.</p> <p>The main evacuation routes led to Wodzisław Śląski and Gliwice, where the many evacuation columns were merged into rail transports.</p> <p>Many prisoners found themselves at Bergen-Belsen or Mauthausen.</p>	<p>1945</p> <p>In January 1945, the German authorities dissolve the POW camp in Bergen-Belsen and establish the “large women's camp” (<i>Grosses Frauenlager</i>) for female prisoners evacuated from other concentration camps.</p> <p>A German-American exchange allows 136 Jewish “star camp” prisoners with Central- and South-American papers to leave for Switzerland.</p> <p>In January 1945, the SS took over the POW hospital and increased the size of Bergen-Belsen. As eastern concentration camps were evacuated before the</p>	<p>1945</p> <p>On March 31, 1945, the SS reported 2,252 female prisoners in the Mauthausen system. The majority were non-Jewish political prisoners with Jewish women being the second largest. Others included Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, so-called “asocials”, Spanish Republicans and convicted criminals.</p> <p>Prisoners evacuated by train, by truck, and by forced march from Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, and Gross-Rosen began arriving at Mauthausen in early 1945 creating</p>	<p>1945</p> <p>Finally in February, Budapest falls.</p> <p>Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin meet at Yalta (Ukraine) to discuss how to deal with Germany after the war.</p> <p>Turkey declares war on Germany and Japan.</p> <p>The Soviet and American armies meet up at the river Elbe in Germany.</p> <p>Resistance fighters kill Benito Mussolini, the Italian dictator who supported Hitler.</p> <p>Adolf Hitler commits suicide.</p>

<p>The SS set about their final steps to remove the evidence of the crimes they had committed in the camp. They made bonfires of documents on the camp streets. They blew up crematoria II and III, which had already been partially dismantled, on January 20, and crematorium V, still in operational condition, on January 26.</p> <p>On January 23, they had set fire to “Kanada II,” the complex of storage barracks holding property plundered from the victims of extermination.</p> <p>About 7,000 prisoners awaited liberation in the Main Camp, Birkenau, and Monowitz.</p> <p>Soldiers of the 60th Army of the First Ukrainian Front opened the gates of Auschwitz Concentration Camp on January 27, 1945.</p> <p>But in the relief of Auschwitz and the city of Oświęcim over 230 Soviet soldiers died in combat.</p>	<p>advance of the Red Army, at least 85,000 people were transported in cattle cars or marched to Bergen-Belsen (“death marches”).</p> <p>By early 1945, prisoners would sometimes go without food for days; fresh water was also in short supply.</p> <p>Shortly before British forces liberate Bergen-Belsen the SS and police authorities “evacuate” the remaining prisoners from all four subcamps of the “residence camp” (the “special camp,” “neutrals camp,” “Hungarian camp,” and the “star camp”) in the direction of Theresienstadt.</p> <p>British forces liberate Bergen-Belsen on 15 April 1945 with little resistance.</p> <p>The trial of Josef Kramer the Camp commandant and 44 others began in a gymnasium in Luneburg on September 17 1945 and 11 were sentenced to death, including Kramer.</p>	<p>extreme overcrowding. Dreadful conditions deteriorating still further. Thousands of prisoners died from starvation or disease (in particular, typhus).</p> <p>Mauthausen's gas chamber remained operative and the SS murdered nearly 3,000 prisoners from the infirmary on April 20, 1945 and eight days later the victims were 33 Upper Austrian Social Democratic and Communist opponents of the regime.</p> <p>On May 3, 1945, the SS abandoned the camp to the custody of a guard unit of 50 Viennese firefighters. Members of an “International Committee” formed by the prisoners in the last days of April ran the camp from within until US troops liberated Mauthausen on May 5, 1945.</p> <p>An estimated 197,464 prisoners passed through the Mauthausen camp system between August 1938 and May 1945. At least 95,000 died there. More than 14,000 were Jewish.</p>	<p>Europe is liberated from Nazi Germany. This day is known as VE Day, the day of victory in Europe.</p> <p>The United Nations Charter is signed in San Francisco.</p> <p>The American air force drops an atomic bomb on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan surrenders.</p> <p>Leading Nazis are brought to trial in Nuremberg.</p>
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Acknowledgments

We thank Yad Vashem for the use of images. We also acknowledge the use of materials from the various camp websites.

We are grateful to Professor Dan Stone of Royal Holloway, University of London for giving freely of his advice. Any errors that remain are entirely our own.

We are also grateful to our funders:

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance



Bernard Charitable Trust

British Embassy Bucharest



British Embassy
Bucharest

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