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HISTORICAL EVENTS

ADOLF HITLER APPOINTED CHANCELLOR OF GERMANY



- In the November 1932 German elections, the Nazi Party won 33 percent of the vote, more than any other party.
- German President Paul von Hindenburg (*left*) appointed Adolf Hitler (*right*), the head of the National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi Party), as the new chancellor of Germany.
- Conservative politicians thought they could control Hitler and his followers.

JANUARY 30, 1933

DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP OPENS



- Dachau was the first concentration camp established by the Nazi government. It was originally intended to incarcerate political opponents of the new regime.
- By the end of 1933, Dachau held 4,800 prisoners. Almost all of them were imprisoned for political reasons: for being a socialist, a communist, a Social Democrat (a political party opposing the Nazis), or an advocate of trade unions.

MARCH 22, 1933

BOYCOTT OF JEWISH BUSINESSES



- The Nazi Party launched a one-day nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses.
- They claimed that German Jews and Jewish communities elsewhere were spreading “atrocity propaganda” in newspapers worldwide to damage Germany’s reputation.
- The boycott marked the beginning of Nazi efforts to drive Jews from the German economy.

APRIL 1, 1933

BURNING OF “UN-GERMAN” BOOKS



- Pro-Nazi university students throughout Germany burned thousands of books from school, public, and private libraries. They carried torches and paraded through the streets.
- The students targeted “un-German” books—books that included anti-Nazi ideas or were written by Jewish authors. These included books by Sigmund Freud, Helen Keller, Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque, and others.

MAY 10, 1933

HITLER BECOMES FÜHRER



- On this day, German President Paul von Hindenburg died, aged 86.
- With the support of the German military, Hitler became the new president of Germany, in addition to being chancellor.
- On August 19, Hitler abolished the office of the president and announced that he was the *Führer*, or supreme leader of Germany.
- There were no limits or restraints on Hitler's authority. Germany became a complete dictatorship.

AUGUST 2, 1934

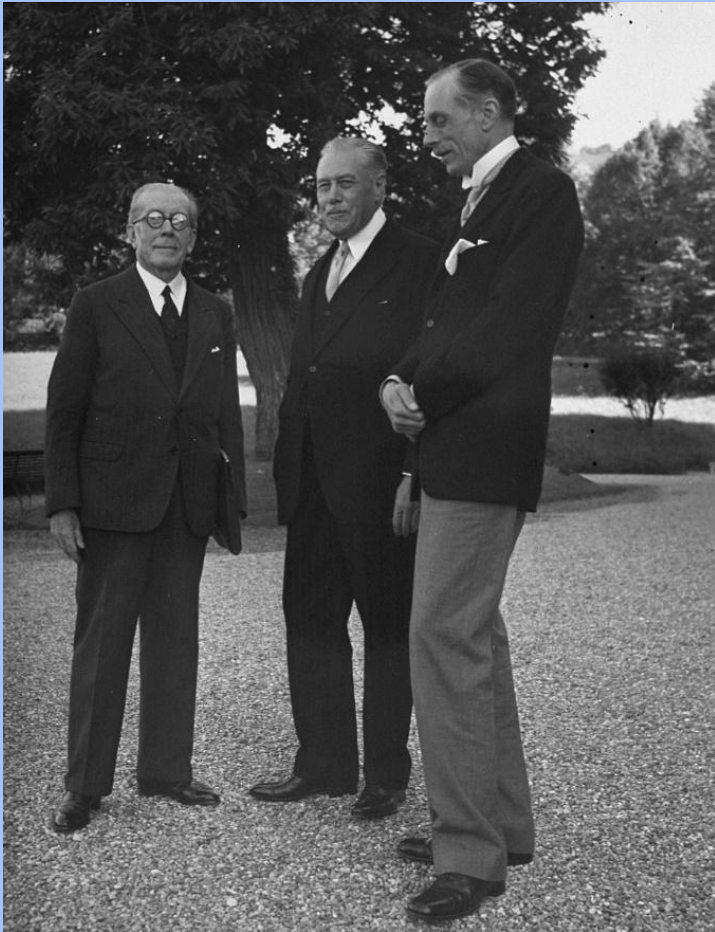
GERMANY ANNEXES AUSTRIA



- German troops entered Austria on March 12, 1938. The next day, Germany officially annexed the country and incorporated Austria into the Third Reich. This event is called the *Anschluss*.
- Most Austrians were very supportive of the *Anschluss* and cheered Hitler's arrival in Vienna.
- In 1938, 185,000 Jews lived in Austria. They were immediately subjected to the Third Reich's antisemitic laws.

MARCH 12, 1938

EVIAN CONFERENCE ON REFUGEES



- After Germany annexed Austria, a refugee crisis began. Tens of thousands of German and Austrian Jews applied to immigrate to countries outside Europe.
- President Franklin Roosevelt called an international conference to discuss the crisis. Diplomats and representatives from 32 countries met in Evian-les-Bans, France, in July 1938.
- Most of the representatives said that their country was sympathetic but would not admit more refugees. Some claimed that an increase in immigration would hurt their economy, while others stated that they did not want Jews.

JULY 6-15, 1938

SUDETENLAND CEDED TO GERMANY



- In September 1938, Hitler threatened war unless Czechoslovakia allowed Germany to annex part of the country called the Sudetenland. The Sudetenland was home to many ethnic Germans.
- In the “Munich Agreement,” Great Britain and France agreed to the German annexation of the Sudetenland in order to avoid war. Czechoslovakia was not included in the negotiations.
- Tens of thousands of Jews fled the Sudetenland into unoccupied Czechoslovakia.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1938

POLISH JEWS DEPORTED FROM GERMANY



- Nazi Germany expelled about 17,000 Jews from Germany in 1938. Most of them had lived in Germany for years but were Polish citizens.
- Poland was unwilling to accept the Jews, so they were put in a “no-man’s land” between the countries and eventually into refugee camps.
- This photograph shows Jews at the Zbaszyn refugee camp’s soup kitchen.

OCTOBER 28, 1938

KRISTALLNACHT ATTACKS



- After learning that his family had been deported from Germany, a Polish-Jewish teenager shot a German diplomat in Paris. In retaliation, Nazi supporters launched a coordinated attack on Jewish-owned stores, synagogues, and homes across the Third Reich.
- The attacks became known as *Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass.”
- Approximately 30,000 Jewish men and boys were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Hundreds of synagogues (including this one in Aachen, Germany) and more than 7,000 businesses were damaged or destroyed.
- Nazi Germany fined the Jewish community one billion Reichsmarks (\$72 billion today) to pay for the damage.

NOVEMBER 9-10, 1938

FIRST *KINDERTRANSPORT* ARRIVES



- The *Kindertransports* were efforts to bring Jewish children from Nazi-controlled territory to safety.
- Jewish parents voluntarily sent their children on organized transports to live in children's homes, with foster families, or with distant relatives in Great Britain, the Netherlands, or France.
- *Kindertransport* children sent to Great Britain were generally safe during World War II, but children sent to western Europe were in danger again when Nazi Germany invaded those countries in 1940.
- Between 9,000 and 10,000 children left Nazi territory on *Kindertransports*. This photo was taken of a Jewish girl who arrived on the first *Kindertransport* to England.

DECEMBER 2, 1938

GERMANY ANNEXES CZECHOSLOVAKIA



- Six months after annexing the Sudetenland, Nazi Germany invaded and occupied the areas of Bohemia and Moravia in Czechoslovakia.
- The rest of the country was split up. Some of it was annexed to Hungary, and the rest became the independent, pro-Nazi country of Slovakia.
- This photo shows Nazi troops entering Prague.

MARCH 15, 1939

ST. LOUIS SAILS



- The German passenger ship *St. Louis* left Hamburg for Havana, Cuba, carrying 937 mostly Jewish refugees. Most of the refugees planned to wait in Cuba until they obtained visas to immigrate to the United States.
- The Cuban government refused to allow most of the passengers to land, claiming they did not have the right paperwork. The United States and Canada also refused to admit them.
- The passengers were sent to England, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Two-thirds of them survived the Holocaust.
- The *St. Louis* was the only refugee ship “turned away” from the United States.

MAY 13, 1939

NAZI-SOVIET PACT



- German communists were some of the first prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. German antisemitic propaganda linked Jews with communism and depicted the Soviet Union (a communist country) as the enemy.
- Despite this, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed a secret pact, vowing not to attack each other for 10 years.
- In a secret protocol of the pact, the two countries agreed to divide eastern Europe.

AUGUST 23, 1939

GERMANY INVADES POLAND



- The German army invaded Poland using a quick, decisive attack with a massive military force. This style of war was called *blitzkrieg* (lightning warfare).
- Great Britain and France (“the Allies”) had an alliance with Poland. On September 3, they declared war on Germany. The United States vowed to remain neutral. World War II in Europe began.
- On September 17, the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland between them. Poland surrendered in October 1939.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

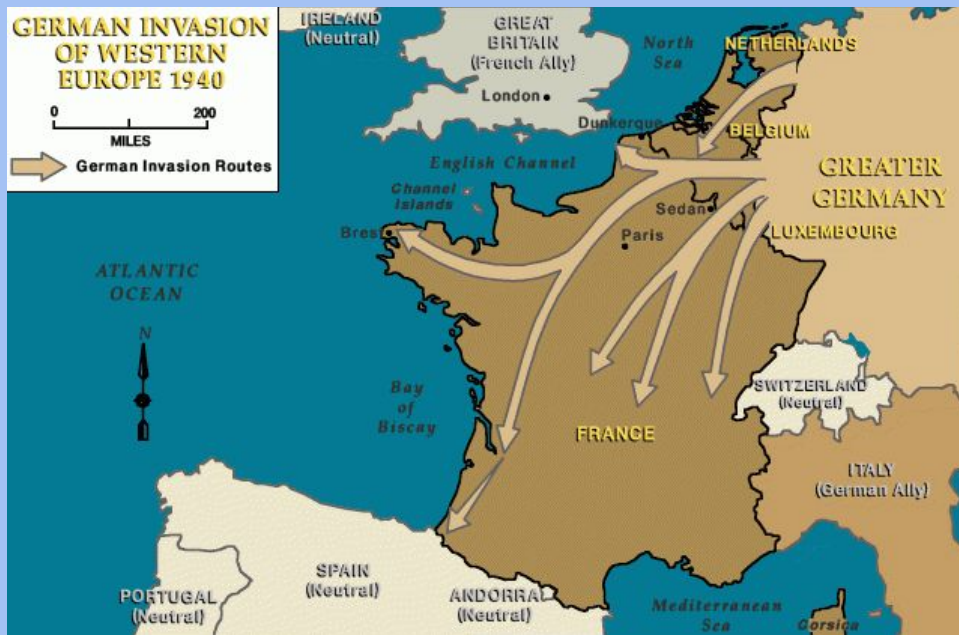
GERMANY INVADES NORWAY AND DENMARK



- Nazi Germany invaded Norway and Denmark to obtain more naval bases on the North Sea and prevent a British blockade of Germany.
- Both countries were forced to surrender almost immediately.

APRIL 9, 1940

GERMANY INVADES WESTERN EUROPE



- Even though World War II had begun eight months earlier, there had not been much fighting following the Polish surrender until Germany launched a surprise invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France.
- These countries surrendered within six weeks. France was split in two. Germany occupied the north, and a collaborationist French government controlled the south.
- Hundreds of thousands of Jews in western Europe were now under Nazi control.

MAY 10, 1940

ITALY DECLARES WAR ON BRITAIN AND FRANCE



- Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (seen here with Hitler) signed a treaty of friendship with Nazi Germany in 1936 and agreed to a military alliance in 1939.
- By declaring war on Great Britain and France, Italy officially entered World War II on the “Axis” side, fighting with Germany.
- Despite the alliance—and antisemitic legislation limiting the rights of Italian Jews—Italian-occupied areas were relatively safe for Jews. Italian authorities refused to deport or murder Jews.

JUNE 10, 1940

FIRST PRISONERS ARRIVE AT AUSCHWITZ



- The SS opened a large concentration camp near the town of Oswiecim, in Nazi-occupied Poland. They called the camp “Auschwitz.”
- The first prisoners of Auschwitz were German and Polish men (both Christian and Jewish). Most of them were imprisoned as political opponents of the Nazis.
- This mugshot shows 18-year-old Zbigniew Matys, a Polish prisoner. He was prisoner number 71.

JUNE 14, 1940

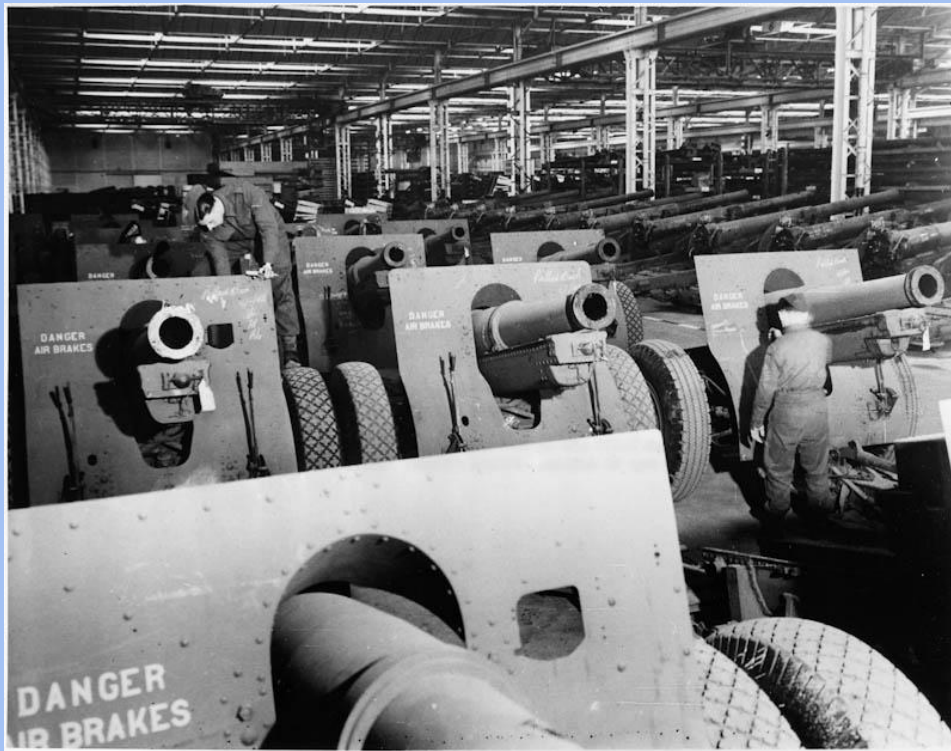
AXIS ALLIANCE FORMED



- Nazi Germany, Japan, and Italy signed a Tripartite Pact. These three countries were known as the Axis Powers.
- The three countries agreed that Nazi Germany would control most of Europe, Italy would control the Mediterranean Sea, and Japan would control East Asia and the Pacific.
- Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Croatia later signed the Tripartite Pact.

SEPTEMBER 27, 1940

ROOSEVELT SIGNS LEND-LEASE ACT



- Although the United States was officially neutral, and many Americans did not want to fight in World War II, the country supported the Allies. After France was defeated, Great Britain needed American aid to continue to fight Nazi Germany.
- President Roosevelt had already supplied weapons to Great Britain in exchange for money and for military bases in British territories.
- The Lend-Lease Act allowed the United States to “lend” weapons, food, and oil to the Allies.

MARCH 11, 1941

GERMANY INVADES YUGOSLAVIA AND GREECE



- Yugoslavia was aligned with Nazi Germany. But when Yugoslavia refused to honor an agreement to let German troops travel through the country to invade Greece, Nazi Germany invaded both countries.
- Yugoslavia was split up. Some areas were annexed to Nazi-collaborating countries, and other areas formed new pro-Nazi countries.
- Greece was divided among Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria.

APRIL 6, 1941

GERMANY INVADES THE SOVIET UNION



- Breaking the August 1939 non-aggression pact, Nazi Germany launched a surprise invasion of the Soviet Union and the areas occupied by the Soviet Union (including Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia).
- Mobile killing squads, called *Einsatzgruppen*, followed behind the German lines, murdering Jews and other victims by shooting and gassing in gas vans. Approximately two million Jews died this way.
- Although the German military captured millions of Soviet POWs, the Soviet Union did not surrender. The United States began supplying the Soviet Union through the Lend-Lease Act.

JUNE 22, 1941

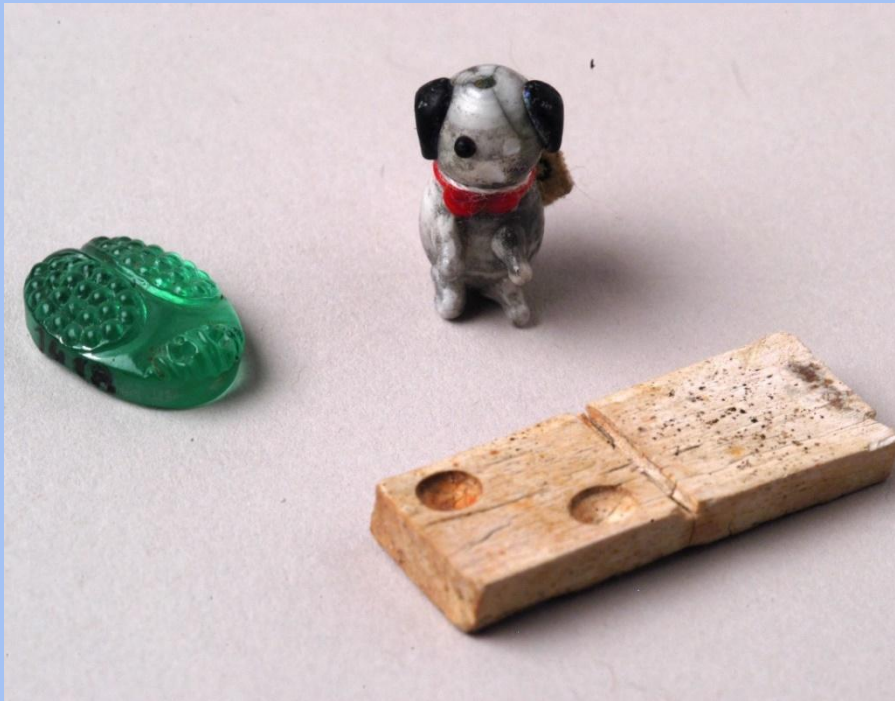
U.S. ENTERS WORLD WAR II



- The United States imposed economic sanctions on Japan and cut off Japan's supply of oil. In retaliation, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- The United States declared war on Japan.
- On December 11, Nazi Germany declared war on the United States.
- The United States officially entered World War II and joined the Allies.

DECEMBER 7, 1941

MASS MURDER BEGINS AT CHELMNO



- The SS and police authorities opened the Chelmno killing center to kill Jews, Poles, Soviet POWs, and Roma in Nazi-occupied Poland.
- Chelmno was the first stationary facility where the Nazis used poison gas for mass murder. At least 172,000 people were murdered at Chelmno.
- These toys were excavated from the grounds of Chelmno.

DECEMBER 8, 1941

WANNSEE CONFERENCE



- German government officials and Nazi Party officials held a conference at the Wannsee Villa in a suburb of Berlin. They discussed the logistics of the “Final Solution.”
- The “Final Solution” was a code name for the mass murder of European Jews.
- The mass murder of Jews had already begun by the time the conference took place. At the Wannsee conference, the Nazis discussed how to coordinate the expansion of the killing.

JANUARY 20, 1942

OPERATION REINHARD BEGINS



- Operation Reinhard was the code name for the plan to murder approximately two million Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*, or German-occupied Poland.
- Although the Nazis began planning the operation in 1941, it was named after Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the office responsible for organizing the deportations and murders, who was assassinated in 1942.
- Nazis murdered at least 1.5 million Jews at the Operation Reinhard killing centers: Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor. The Belzec killing center began gassings on this day.

MARCH 17, 1942

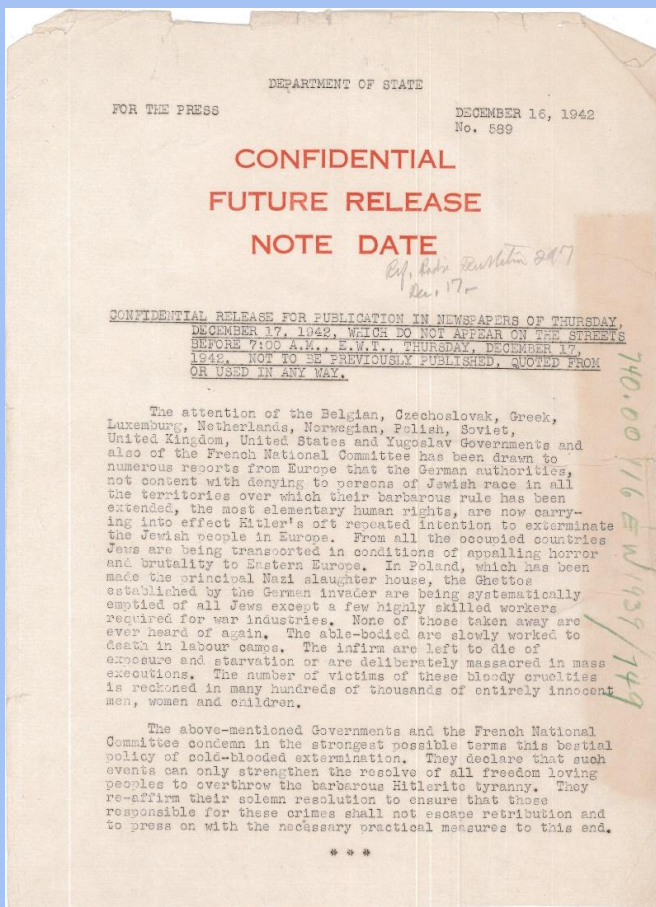
ALLIED FORCES INVADE NORTH AFRICA



- Allied forces launched several surprise landings on the coast of North Africa.
- They wanted to defeat the military forces of Germany, Italy, and collaborationist France in North Africa. This would prevent the Axis powers from controlling the Mediterranean Sea.
- In retaliation, Nazi Germany occupied southern France.
- American and British troops fought in North Africa for six months before defeating the Axis there.

NOVEMBER 8, 1942

ALLIES CONDEMN MASS MURDER



- News of the “Final Solution” was reported in American newspapers in late November 1942.
- The United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and eight Allied governments-in-exile (the official governments that had escaped when Nazi Germany occupied their countries) issued a declaration.
- The declaration condemned the Nazi policy of “cold-blooded extermination” and vowed that the perpetrators of the atrocities would not escape punishment after the war.

DECEMBER 17, 1942

GERMAN DEFEAT AT STALINGRAD



- The German military surrendered after battling for seven months to capture the Soviet city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd). There were many factories producing military supplies in Stalingrad, and the city was a gateway to Soviet oil fields.
- Soviet victory at the battle of Stalingrad marked a turning point in World War II. Soviet forces began to push the German military back.
- Historians estimate that 800,000 Axis soldiers and 1.1 million Soviet soldiers were killed in the battle.

FEBRUARY 2, 1943

FIRST TRANSPORT OF SINTI/ROMA TO AUSCHWITZ



- The first transport of Sinti/Roma from Germany arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau. They were originally kept together and placed in a “family camp” for “gypsies.”
- Approximately 23,000 Sinti and Roma were sent to Auschwitz during the Holocaust and 85 percent of them were killed there.
- This photograph shows Anne Schneck, a German Roma woman, with her children. They were murdered at Auschwitz.

FEBRUARY 26, 1943

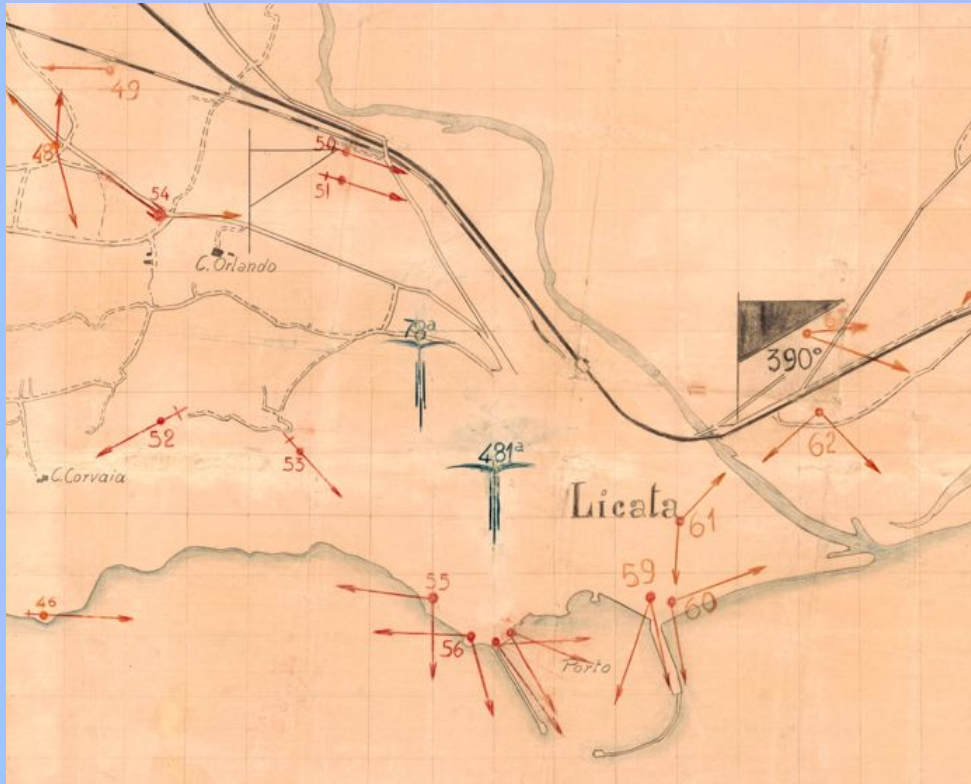
WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING BEGINS



- In summer 1942, Nazi authorities deported approximately 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto and murdered them in the Treblinka killing center.
- When German troops entered the ghetto to deport the remaining Jews, armed Jewish resistance fighters attacked. The Nazis greatly outnumbered them.
- Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto fought for nearly a month using makeshift weapons before they were defeated by the Nazis.

APRIL 19, 1943

ALLIED FORCES INVADE SICILY



- American, British, and Canadian forces launched an aerial and amphibious invasion of the island of Sicily, Italy.
- By mid-August, the Allies controlled the island.
- An American officer created this map to help plan the invasion.

JULY 9-10, 1943

ITALY SURRENDERS



- After the Allies invaded Sicily, the Fascist Grand Council in Rome issued a vote of no confidence in Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's leadership. Italy's king used the vote as an excuse to arrest Mussolini and appoint a new prime minister.
- Italy's new prime minister secretly negotiated with the Allies, and Italy officially surrendered.
- Nazi Germany immediately invaded and occupied northern and central Italy. Within a few months, they began to arrest and deport Jews in those areas.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1943

DANISH JEWS BEGIN ESCAPE



- In August 1943, Denmark's government resigned in opposition to German demands. Germany declared martial law and prepared to arrest and deport Danish Jews.
- On September 28, a German diplomat, Georg Duckwitz, warned the Jewish community of the impending roundups.
- Over the next three weeks, 7,200 Jews (more than 90 percent of Denmark's Jewish population) escaped by boat to Sweden with the help of the Danish resistance and Danish citizens.

SEPTEMBER 29, 1943

SOBIBOR UPRISING



- In the fall of 1943, the Treblinka killing center shut down, and the few prisoners forced to work there were murdered.
- Prisoners at Sobibor realized they would soon be murdered too and planned an uprising.
- Sobibor prisoners killed a dozen German and Ukrainian guards, and 300 prisoners escaped the camp. Many were later captured or killed. Approximately 58 Sobibor prisoners, including these men, survived the Holocaust.

OCTOBER 14, 1943

FDR CREATES WAR REFUGEE BOARD



- In response to pressure from Congress, the public, and inside the government, President Roosevelt created a new government agency responsible for trying to rescue and provide aid to European Jews.
- The War Refugee Board streamlined humanitarian aid, helped Jews escape, and tried to protect Jews in Nazi territory.
- By the end of the war, the WRB had saved tens of thousands of lives and helped hundreds of thousands of people.

JANUARY 22, 1944

GERMANY OCCUPIES HUNGARY



- Nazi Germany invaded and occupied Hungary to prevent the country from leaving the Axis and joining the Allies.
- Hungary had the largest Jewish population remaining in Europe.
- Within two months of the invasion, Nazi authorities and Hungarian police began deporting approximately 440,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz.
- This photograph shows a transport of Hungarian Jews arriving at Auschwitz.

MARCH 19, 1944

D-DAY INVASION



- American, British, and Canadian naval and air forces invaded the beaches of Normandy, France.
- The opening of the long-awaited “second front” put tremendous military pressure on Nazi Germany and gave a psychological boost to the Allies.
- Although German troops fought back, the D-Day invasion was ultimately successful. By late August, the Allies had liberated Paris.

JUNE 6, 1944

SOVIET TROOPS LIBERATE AUSCHWITZ



- In mid-January 1945, the SS evacuated nearly 60,000 prisoners from Auschwitz, on foot and in open train cars. As many as 15,000 of the prisoners died during these forced marches into Germany.
- Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz and found 6,000 sick and starving prisoners, including children, who had been left behind.
- Auschwitz was the last operating Nazi killing center. Belzec, Treblinka, Chelmno, and Sobibor had already been closed by the Nazis.

JANUARY 27, 1945

AMERICAN TROOPS LIBERATE BUCHENWALD



- The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union liberated many concentration camps, including Buchenwald, in April and May 1945.
- On April 12, General Dwight Eisenhower, the commander of the western Allied forces, toured Ohrdruf, a subcamp of Buchenwald.
- Eisenhower ordered all Allied troops near newly liberated concentration camps to tour them. He wanted to ensure that the horror of the Holocaust could not be called propaganda.

APRIL 11, 1945

GERMAN FORCES SURRENDER



- At the end of April, Soviet forces encircled Berlin, Germany's capital. Adolf Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945.
- German officials unconditionally surrendered on May 7, 1945.
- The next day, as the war in Europe formally ended, the Allies celebrated "V-E Day" (Victory in Europe).
- More than two million Europeans, including 250,000 Jews, were displaced persons. The Allies opened camps for them until they could return home or immigrate.

MAY 7, 1945