

Chronology of Events 1918-1938

1918: Czechoslovakia is established after the fall of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire following the First World War. The country is made up of two groups of Slavic peoples, the Czechs and the Slovaks.

1920: The Treaty of Versailles, in which Germany is held responsible for World War I and its consequences, is signed. The treaty deals harshly with a defeated Germany and includes territorial, military, financial and general provisions, including the demilitarization and 15-year occupation of the Rhineland (area between France and Germany), limitations on German armed forces and reparations of 6,600 million pounds.

1921: Adolf Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist German Workers (Nazi) Party.

1923: Beer Hall Putsch (Hitler's attempt to overthrow regional government in Munich) is unsuccessful and Hitler is jailed.

1925: *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), Hitler's book, is published.

1933: Japan attacks China. The Nazi party gains majority in the German Reichstag and Hitler is named Chancellor. The Reichstag building burns in a "mysterious" fire and all other political parties are abolished. Hitler denounces the Treaty of Versailles. There are public book burnings in Germany. Anti-Jewish laws are passed in Germany: no kosher butchering, no Jewish Civil servants, no Jewish lawyers, quotas for Jews in universities. Any Germans holding non-Nazi political meetings are subject to arrest and imprisonment in concentration camps (the first is Oranienburg, outside of Berlin). Dachau is built as concentration-work camp (specific death camps not yet built, but elderly, those who were very young, disabled or sick have difficulty surviving harsh conditions of camps).

1934: Von Hindenburg, president of the Weimer Republic, dies; the offices of president and chancellor are united and Hitler assumes both, taking the title of Fuehrer. Hitler has murderous birthday party ("Night of Long Knives") that results in the murder of Ernst Rohm, head of German S.A. (Stormtroopers) and several hundred of his men.

1935: The Nuremberg Laws are passed in Germany: Jews are declared non-citizens; civil rights removed; Jews cannot employ non-Jews; no marriage between Jews and non-Jews; no licenses for Jewish doctors, dentists or lawyers. Hitler creates the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) and introduces conscription to build a German army, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

1936: Italy invades Ethiopia. The Spanish Civil War begins. Germany re-militarizes the Rhineland and Hitler re-arms Germany. During the Olympic Games in Berlin, Hitler refuses to

place gold medal around African-American Jesse Owens' neck. (A monument to Jesse Owens can be found on the University of Michigan campus.)

1937: Hitler aids Franco's efforts in Spain by "loaning" him use of the German Air Force to bomb Loyalist strongholds like Guernica. The Japanese seize Peking (now Beijing) and Franklin Roosevelt gives his "Quarantine Speech" (separating the United States from an "epidemic of world lawlessness"). The Buchenwald concentration camp is built near Weimar, Germany.

1938: Germany "annexes" Austria. 750,000 cheering Austrians line the streets of Vienna to welcome Hitler.

September 1938: The Munich Conference is attended by the heads of state of Great Britain (Neville Chamberlain), France (Daladier), Italy (Mussolini) and Hitler. Britain and France agree to Germany's annexing the Sudeten Region of Czechoslovakia in order to "buy peace in our time."

October 1938: Approximately 17,000 "stateless" Jews are deported from Germany to Poland.

November 1938: Kristallnacht, the night of the broken glass, occurs when "spontaneous" demonstrations against Jews all over Germany are ordered by Josef Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda, in response to a young Jewish student in Paris, who after hearing his parents had been deported, kills a German official. 30,000 Jews are placed in concentration camps for "protective custody." 190 synagogues are destroyed. Jewish cemeteries are desecrated. Jewish businesses and homes are smashed. The United States withdraws its ambassadors in Germany in protest. Bank accounts' of Jews are frozen. Jewish children are forbidden to attend public schools and Jews are given a limited number of hours a week to buy food.

British immigration laws allow more Jews to immigrate – no other country takes these measures. The "Refugee Children's Movement," a subsidiary group of the "Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief," is formed. This group begins "Operation Kindertransport" to get children from Germany and Austria out of danger.

December 1938: Parks, theaters, and museums are closed to Jews and radios and telephones are taken away.

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