

## This week in Holocaust History - 3 May to 9 May

**1933**

### May 6

In a prelude to mass book burnings in Germany, a gang of morally outraged students destroyed the work of Magnus Hirschfeld, burning the contents of the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sex Research) in Berlin. Hirschfeld was out of the country at the time and would never return to Germany. He died in 1935 at age 67.

### May 9

The Nazi Party presented its plan for a German national church, based in Wittenberg, that would be limited to "Aryan Christians" and would recognize the sovereignty of the Nazi state.

**1938**

### May 3



Flossenbürg concentration camp took in its first prisoners. The camp's initial purpose was to exploit the forced labor of prisoners to produce granite for Nazi architecture. Unlike other concentration camps it was located in a remote area, in the Fichtel Mountains of Bavaria, adjacent to the town of Flossenbürg and near the German border with Czechoslovakia. In 1943, the bulk of prisoners switched to producing Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter planes and other armaments for Germany's war effort.

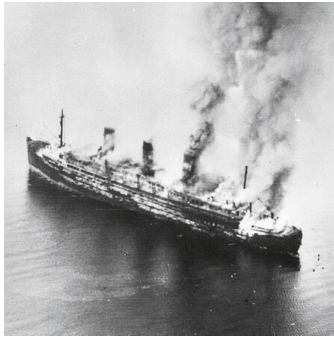
**1943**

### May 5

The Vatican Secretary of State sent a request to the government of the Nazi-controlled Slovak Republic, requesting the exclusion of Jews "who have entered the Catholic religion" from the list of persons to be deported to Nazi concentration camps. The office of Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka gave its response on May 28, pledging that converts would be kept in local concentration camps, separate from other Jews, "and given every opportunity to fulfill their Christian religion."

**1945**

**May 3**



The German ocean liner Cap Arcona was sunk by British warplanes in the Bay of Lübeck with 5,000 concentration camp prisoners aboard. Over 400 SS personnel made it to lifeboats and were rescued, but only 350 of the prisoners survived.

RAF commanders ordering the strike believed that a flotilla of ships was being prepared in the Bay of Lubeck to accommodate leading SS personnel fleeing to Norway.

**May 4**

Soviet troops liberated Oranienburg concentration camp, one of the first detention facilities established by the Nazis in the state of Prussia when they gained power in 1933.

**May 8**



Victory in Europe Day - the formal acceptance by the Western Allies of World War II of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on 8 May 1945.

Adolf Hitler, the Nazi leader, had committed suicide on 30 April during the Battle of Berlin and Germany's surrender was authorized by his successor, Reichspräsident Karl Dönitz.



The act of military surrender was first signed at 02:41 on 7 May in SHAEF HQ at Reims, and a slightly modified document was signed on 8 May in Berlin.