

# This week in Holocaust History - May 17 to 23

## 1934

May 17, 1934 - Jews in Germany are not allowed national health insurance.

May 18, 1934 - At New York's Madison Square Garden, thousands attend a pro-Nazi rally sponsored by Members of the Friends of the New Germany, forerunner of the German-American Bund.

## 1935

May 21, 1935 -The "Defense Law" (*Wehrgesetz*) is issued and bans Jews from the armed forces by stipulating that only "Aryans" could serve; it also formalizes the introduction of the general compulsory military service for "Aryans" from 1 October 1935.

## 1938

May 20, 1938 - The Nuremberg Laws went into effect in annexed Austria.

## 1940

May 20, 1940 - The Nazi German concentration camp and killing center Auschwitz-Birkenau, opens in occupied Poland near the town of Oświęcim. Between May 1940 and January 1945, around 1.1 million people were killed there.

## 1941

May 20, 1941 - Jews in France are prohibited from wholesale and retail trade, neither can they own banks, hotels, or restaurants.

The Central Office of Emigration in Berlin notifies all German consulates that Hermann Goering has banned emigration of Jews from France and all other occupied territories. The directive quotes Goering's mention of the "doubtless imminent final solution," the first official Nazi reference to a scheme for mass extermination of all Jews in Europe.

In occupied France, German authorities open the internment camp Pithiviers, to incarcerate both French Jews and foreign Jews residing in France.

May 21, 1941 - The SS Inspectorate of Concentration Camps opens Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp in France, near Strasbourg.

## 1942

May 16 or 18, 1942 - In occupied Poland, Sobibor killing center became fully operational and began mass gassing operations. The camp is fitted with three gas chambers using carbon monoxide piped in from engines, but will later substitute Zyklon-B.

May 18, 1942 - *The New York Times* reports on an inside page that Nazis have machine-gunned over 100,000 Jews in the Baltic States, 100,000 in Poland and twice as many in western Russia.

May 21 1942 - The I.G. Farben synthetic-rubber and petroleum plant opens at the "Buna detachment" (later Monowitz), using Jewish forced laborers from the Auschwitz camp.

May 23, 1942 - Hitler gave an address to senior Nazis in which he said that concentration camps were the main bulwark against an uprising.

## 1943

1943 - May 19, 1943 - German Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels declared that, after 60 days of work, Berlin was now *Judenfrei* —free of Jews. In truth, about 2,000 to 3,000 Jews were in hiding in Berlin, while another 18,000 Germans of mixed Jewish heritage were living in Berlin legally.

May 21, 1943 - The government of Bulgaria, under pressure from its Axis partner, Germany, agreed to surrender the 25,000 Jewish residents of Sofia for deportation to concentration camps. Within three days, massive protests were organized and the plan was foiled.

## 1944

May 15, 1944 to July 8, 1944 - 438,000 Jews deported from Hungary to Auschwitz. The Auschwitz Album documents the arrival of one Hungarian transport at Birkenau.

May 20, 1944 - Transport no. 74 departed Drancy and arrived at Auschwitz on the 23rd of May. 1200 Jews were sent on this transport: 565 men and 632 women including 191 children up to the age of 18. On arrival at Auschwitz, 221 men and 247 women passed the selection; the remainder, 732 people, was sent straight to the gas chambers.

## 1945

May 19, 1945 - Nazi functionary Dr. Alfred Rosenberg is captured. Rosenberg is considered one of the main authors of key Nazi ideological creeds, including its racial theory, persecution of the Jews, *Lebensraum*, abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles, and opposition to what was considered "degenerate" modern art.

May 23, 1945 - Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS, assistant chief of the Gestapo, and architect of Hitler's program to exterminate European Jews, commits suicide one day after being arrested by the British.

May 23, 1945 - Julius Streicher, the fanatical anti-Semitic publisher of the Nazi periodical *Der Stürmer*, disguised as a painter, is captured by U.S. troops near Waldring, Bavaria. Indicted on charges of war crimes before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, Streicher is found guilty on October 1, 1946, of crimes against humanity and is sentenced to death by

hanging.