

This week in Holocaust History - April 26 to 2 May

1933

April 26



The Gestapo (Geheime staatspolizei, or Secret State Police) was created by Hermann Göring to control political dissent within the German state of Prussia. On April 20, 1934, it would become the secret police force for all Germany. Historian William Shirer later wrote that "An obscure post office employee who had been asked to furnish a franking stamp for the new bureau... unwittingly created a name the very mention of which was to inspire terror first within Germany and then without."

April 30

Fritz Haber, Director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Physical Chemistry, resigned in protest over the order to dismiss Jewish faculty from the Institute. Although he was Jewish, he was exempt from the order because he was a veteran of World War I.

May 2

The day after the International Labor Day, Nazi Germany's SA or "Brown Shirts" invaded the offices of trade unions, labor banks, consumer cooperatives and other "Marxist economic organizations" that had been affiliated with the Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund in cities across the nation.

1934

May 2

Nazi Germany created a new high court, the People's Court, empowered to mete out death sentences for high treason. Under Roland Freisler, the Court became part of the Nazi system of terror, condemning tens of thousands of people as "Volk Vermin" and thousands more to death for "Volk Treason." The Court tried and sentenced to death White Rose members in February 1943 and those accused of complicity in the attempt to kill Hitler in July 1944.

1938

April 26

Nazi Germany enacted the Order for the Disclosure of Jewish Assets, requiring Jews to report all property in excess of 5,000 Reichsmarks.

1940

April 27

Reinhard Heydrich ordered the deportation of 2500 German Sinti to the General Government.

Heinrich Himmler ordered the creation of a new concentration camp at Oświęcim, known in German as Auschwitz.

May 1

The Łódź Ghetto was sealed. It was the second-largest ghetto in all of German-occupied Europe after the Warsaw Ghetto. The ghetto was transformed into a major industrial center, manufacturing war supplies for Nazi Germany and especially for the Wehrmacht.

1941

April 27

Heinrich Himmler inspected Mauthausen concentration camp, one of the first of the labor camps to be established in Austria and at the time of his visit being used for the 'extermination through labor' of Polish intelligentsia. The camp was one of the largest during the Second World War and was infamous for the "Stairs of Death". Prisoners were forced to climb 186 steps to the top often carrying blocks of stone weighing as much as 50 kilograms at the camp near Linz, Austria.

May 1

Gross-Rosen became an independent concentration camp. It had originally been set up in the summer of 1940 as a satellite camp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp from Oranienburg.

May 2

The Romanian government established the National Center for Romanianization, which was mainly tasked with expropriating Jewish properties and distributing them to Romanians.

1942

April 29

All Jews in Nazi-occupied Netherlands ordered to wear the yellow badge. The order came into effect on 5 May 1942. Every Jew from age 6 had to wear the star on his/her clothes when going outside, visible for everybody. Jews who were caught without the badge were arrested and detained for six-week periods.

April 30

About 1,000 to 1,200 Jews were murdered by German authorities in the Kurpieszce forest near Dzyatlava in present-day Belarus during the liquidation of Zdzięcioł Ghetto.

1943

April 27

Because of German labor needs occasioned by World War II, Himmler directed concentration camps to avoid killing those persons who were able to work, and to make it a priority to put to death "the mentally ill who could not work".

1945

April 27

U.S. troops liberated Dachau sub-camp at Kaufering and found thousands of corpses.



April 29



U.S. 45th Infantry Division entered the main Dachau concentration camp complex. As they neared the camp, the Americans found more than 30 railroad cars filled with bodies in various states of decomposition. Inside the camp there were more bodies and 30,000 survivors, most severely emaciated.

During the Dachau liberation reprisals, German prisoners of war were killed by U.S. soldiers and concentration camp internees at the Dachau concentration camp on April 29, 1945, during World War II. It is unclear how many SS members were killed in the incident but most estimates place the number killed at around 35–50.

May 2

A Holocaust death march from Dachau to the Austrian border is halted under two kilometers west of Waakirchen by the segregated, Japanese American all-Nisei 522nd Field Artillery Battalion of the U.S. Army in southern Bavaria, saving several hundred prisoners.