

This week in Holocaust History - April 19th to 25th

1933

April 20

Adolf Hitler's 44th birthday was celebrated for the first time as a national holiday across Germany, with parades and special church services in his honor.

April 21

Nazi Germany effectively outlawed the Jewish practice of shechita, the ritual slaughter of animals in the preparation of kosher food. The German law did not refer to the Jewish religion but required that animals be anaesthetized with electric shock or stunned with a special hammer, counter to Jewish practice.

April 24

Jewish physicians were officially excluded from being paid by Germany's public health insurance system. Soon afterward, private German insurance companies followed suit. By July, half of the Jewish physicians in the nation had given up their practices.

Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nazi Germany began with the seizure of the Bible Students' office in Magdeburg.

April 25

The Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning was issued, limiting the number of Jewish students in public schools to 1.5% of the total enrollment, ostensibly based on the percentage of the German population who were non-Aryan.

1935

April 25

Reich Press Leader Max Amann signed a decree completing Nazi control over all press in Germany. Amann empowered himself to shut down any newspaper he wished and made the appointment of all publishers and editors subject to his approval. Additionally, no newspaper could serve interests other than those of the government.

1937

April 20

B'nai B'rith was banned in Nazi Germany because of individual members spreading "communist propaganda".

1938

April 22

Nazi Germany decreed that Jewish-owned businesses were forbidden from changing their names.

1943

April 19

Fourteen German citizens of the White Rose anti-Nazi resistance group were found guilty and later three were executed for crimes against the Nazi regime. Previously, on February 22, 1943, Sophie Scholl, her brother, Hans, and their friend, Christoph Probst, had been found guilty of treason and were executed by guillotine.



At 8:00 am, SS General Jürgen Stroop began the final destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto and breaking of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, with SS troops fighting the Jewish resistance. The operation would not be completed until May 16. The Jewish ghetto-fighters would kill 16 Germans and wound 85.

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The escape of 233 Belgian Jews from a train bound for Auschwitz was made possible by a raid by the Belgian resistance movement. The train was halted shortly after it had departed the concentration camp at Mechelen with 1,631 internees. 118 were able to get away, another 89 were recaptured, and 26 were killed. The attack marks the only "mass breakout" by deportees on a Holocaust train.

1944

April 25

Adolf Eichmann and the Nazis offered the Hungarian rescue worker Joel Brand the "Blood for Goods" deal, proposing that one million Jews be allowed to leave Hungary for any Allied-occupied country except Palestine, in exchange for goods obtained outside of Hungary. The deal would never be made because the Allies believed it to be a trick.

1945

April 23

The main Flossenbürg concentration camp was liberated by soldiers of the United States Army who found around 1,527 ill and weak prisoners in the camp hospital.

April 24

Spandau concentration camp was liberated by the Soviet Red Army.