

Under Adolf Hitler the National Socialist German Worker's Party became very powerful in Germany from 1933 to 1945. The Nazis, as they were called, wanted to get rid of people who they thought were not as good as they were. They especially hated Jews and thought they were evil. At the beginning they made life hard for the Jews in Germany and all over Europe. Later on, they decided to kill them. This mass killing was called the Holocaust.



After 1939 about 6 million Jews were killed in the countries that Hitler controlled. But Jewish people were not the only ones murdered by the Nazis. Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally and physically disabled people and others who were against Hitler were killed in the Holocaust.

Hating Jews and treating them badly is called anti-Semitism. Hitler started this as soon as he became chancellor of Germany in 1933. Jews lost their jobs and their shops were closed and often destroyed.

In 1935 the Nazis passed a new law. Jews were no longer citizens of Germany and they were not allowed to marry other Germans. They lost all of their rights. Every Jew had to wear a yellow Star of David. Many Jews were afraid of Hitler and tried to escape before World War II started.

On November 9th and 10th, 1938 the Nazis destroyed all Jewish synagogues and other public places the Jews went to. This event was called the "Kristallnacht" or "Night of Broken Glass".

Soon thousands of Jews were arrested and locked up in special camps. Others had to live in overcrowded parts of cities called ghettos where they got nothing to eat and suffered from many diseases. The most famous ghetto was in Warsaw, Poland. About half a million Jews had to live in an area that usually was home for 10,000 people. By 1943 only 70,000 had survived.

The Nazis decided that they had to solve what they called "the Jewish problem" once and for all. On January 20, 1942 the Nazi leaders met at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin and decided that all Jews should be killed.



*Entrance at Auschwitz*

All across Central Europe the Nazis built special death or concentration camps to kill Jews and other people who were not worth of living. The biggest camps were built in Poland. Some well known camps were Auschwitz, Treblinka, Dachau, Sobibor and Belzec.

At first, the outside world thought that these camps were places where Jews and other prisoners had to work. A sign reading "Arbeit macht frei" hung over the gate at Auschwitz.

Those who were lucky became slaves. They had to work hard and didn't get enough to eat. Some of them died of starvation. Most of the Jews, however, were brought to the gas chambers that often looked like big showers. There they were killed with poison gas, then taken away and burned.

Although the countries that fought against Hitler knew about the death camps there wasn't anything they could do about them.

Many Europeans who were against Hitler's ideas tried to help the Jews. They often hid them, gave them false documents and helped them escape. A famous book called "The Diary of Anne Frank" tells the story of a Jewish girl whose family hid in Amsterdam for two years but were then caught.

Hitler killed himself shortly before the war was over because he realized that he had lost the war. When it ended in 1945, Allied soldiers entered Germany. They liberated the concentration camps but were shocked when they saw what had happened there.

Jews who survived the Holocaust had no place to go. They waited to find a new home. In 1948, the United Nations decided to give homeless Jews a new place to live. The state of Israel was founded and hundreds of thousands of European Jews went there to start a new life.

The Holocaust is one of the most terrible periods of human history. In many countries memorials have been built to remember those who died. Museums in Europe and America try to show what happened over 60 years ago and help our generation understand the horrors of the Second World War.

## ANNE FRANK

During World War II a young Jewish girl, Anne Frank, wrote a diary while her family was hiding from the Nazis. She did not survive the war but her diary became well-known to many people. It shows how Jews lived during World War II.

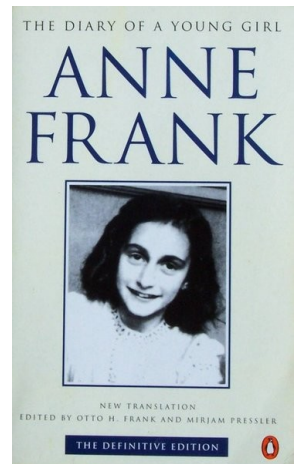
After Hitler came to power in 1933, Anne Frank's family went to the Netherlands, where her father set up a small company in Amsterdam. In 1940 the Germans invaded the Netherlands and it was no longer safe for the Jews to live there. They lost their shops and had to hand over their companies to the government. Anne and her sister Margot were not allowed to go to school with other pupils.

When Margot got a notice that said she would be sent to a labour camp the Frank family started to hide themselves. Otto Frank, Anne's father, prepared a secret back room in his office. Together with a few other Jews the Frank family lived there for two years. With the help of some non-Jewish friends they got food and other things they needed to survive.

Although they were constantly afraid of being discovered, they tried to live a normal life. Anne started to write a diary. In it she wrote about her interests in boys and movies and about the hardships of everyday life.

On August 4, 1944 the German police discovered the hiding place. The whole family was arrested and transported to Auschwitz in Poland. A month later Anne and her sister were taken to a prison camp at Bergen-Belsen in Germany. There both of them caught typhus and died only one month before the Allied soldiers came to free the camp. Anne Frank was 15 years old.

Friends of the family discovered Anne's diary. They gave it to her father, who was the only member of the family to survive the war. Later on, it was published as a book and became known to millions of readers all over the world as "The Diary of Anne Frank". The building in Amsterdam where the Frank family hid is now a museum called the Anne Frank House.



- **Allied** = the countries that fought against Germany in World War II = The USA, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union
- **arrest** = to put into prison
- **chancellor** = the leader of a government
- **citizen** = people who belong to a country and have rights there
- **concentration camp** = a place where people are kept prisoners and treated badly
- **constantly** = always
- **destroy** = damage completely
- **disabled** = someone who cannot use a part of their body
- **discover** = to find something or someone
- **disease** = illness
- **escape** = to get away from a dangerous place
- **especially** = very much
- **evil** = bad
- **false** = wrong
- **found** = to create a new state
- **gate** = a part of a wall that you can open to enter or leave
- **get rid of** = to kill people that they don't want any more
- **gypsy** = a group of people who originally come from India and wander around in caravans and today live all over the world
- **hand over** = to give something to somebody
- **hardships** = things that make your life difficult
- **homeless** = without a home
- **horror** = a feeling of shock and fear
- **invade** = to enter a country and take control of it
- **labour camp** = a prison camp where prisoners have to do hard work
- **liberate** = to free
- **lock up** = to put in prison
- **mass killing** = to kill many people in a very short time
- **memorial** = a kind of stone with writing on it, that reminds you of people who have died
- **mentally** = everything that has to do with your brain
- **non-Jewish** = not a Jew
- **notice** = a piece of paper with information
- **once and for all** = here: finally
- **outside world** = here: places outside of Germany
- **overcrowded** = filled with too many people
- **pass a law** = to make a law
- **physically** = everything that has to do with your body
- **poison** = something that can lead to death or make you ill if you eat or drink it
- **prison camp** = a special prison in which prisoners of war are kept
- **public** = for everyone
- **publish** = to print a book, magazine or a newspaper
- **realize** = to begin to understand something
- **rights** = the things that you are officially allowed to do
- **secret** = something that only a few people know about
- **set up** = open up
- **shower** = you stand under it and wash your body
- **slave** = someone who is owned by another person and works for them
- **solve** = to find a way of dealing with a problem
- **starvation** = if you suffer or die because you don't have enough food
- **suffer** = to feel pain
- **survive** = to continue to live
- **synagogue** = a place where Jewish people meet to pray
- **typhus** = a disease carried by insects that live on the bodies of people and animals