

International Holocaust Memorial Day 2024



Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

Welcome to this exhibition to mark HMD 2024. The following exhibition will take you through a timeline of events before, during and after the Holocaust. Please take your time to read and process each part of the exhibition.

The following exhibition contains descriptions and images of violence, warfare and murder.

What was the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was the systematic murder of Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. For the first time in history, industrial methods were used for the mass extermination of a whole people. Between 1933 and 1945, Jews were targeted for discrimination, segregation and extermination.

The Nazis enslaved and murdered millions of others as well. Political opponents, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), LGBT+ people, prisoners of conscience, people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and others were killed or died in camps as a result of neglect, starvation or disease.

(Imperial War Museum, UK)

Primo Levi

“Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions.”

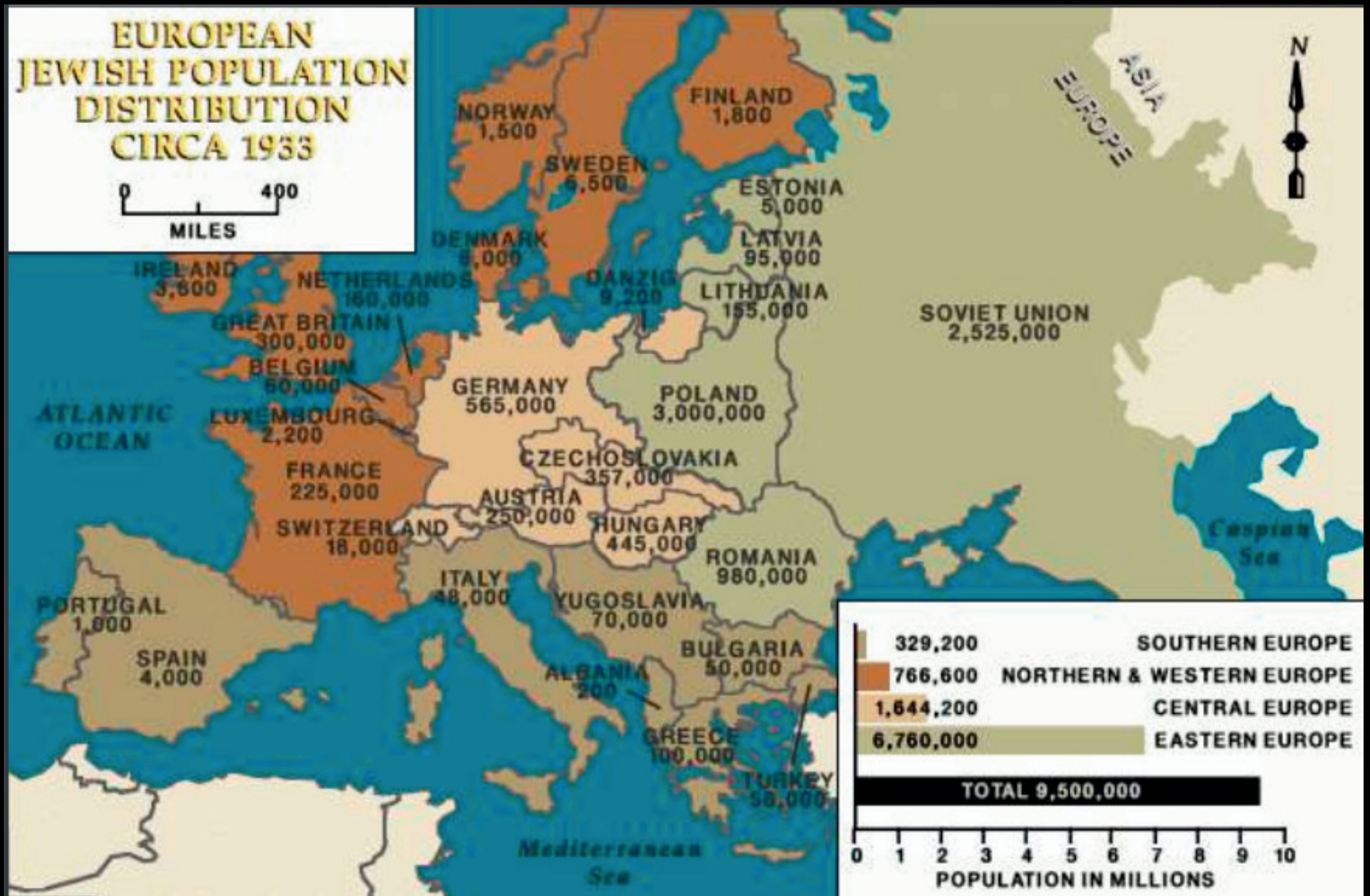


Primo Levi was an Italian Jewish chemist and survivor of Auschwitz

Reflection:

How can you guard yourself against being one of the ‘common people’ who go along with evil?

Pre-War Jewish Life



In 1933, over 9 million Jews lived in Europe, nearly 2% of the total population.

Pre-War Jewish Life



A Polish shtetl in winter



A girls' cheder (Jewish school) in Lublin, Poland



Market day in the shtetl



A man purchasing herring in Mukacevo

In parts of Eastern Europe, Jews lived in small Jewish villages called shtetls. They spoke Yiddish (a Jewish, Germanic language written in Hebrew script).

Pre-War Jewish Life



German Jewish soldiers during World War 1.



A Jewish wedding in Amsterdam, 1933



Classmates at a school in Prague, 1928



The Jewish quarter of Paris, 1930's

In larger cities across Europe, many Jews were more assimilated into the general population. Most spoke the local language, and they tended to live in major towns and cities.

Reflection Point:

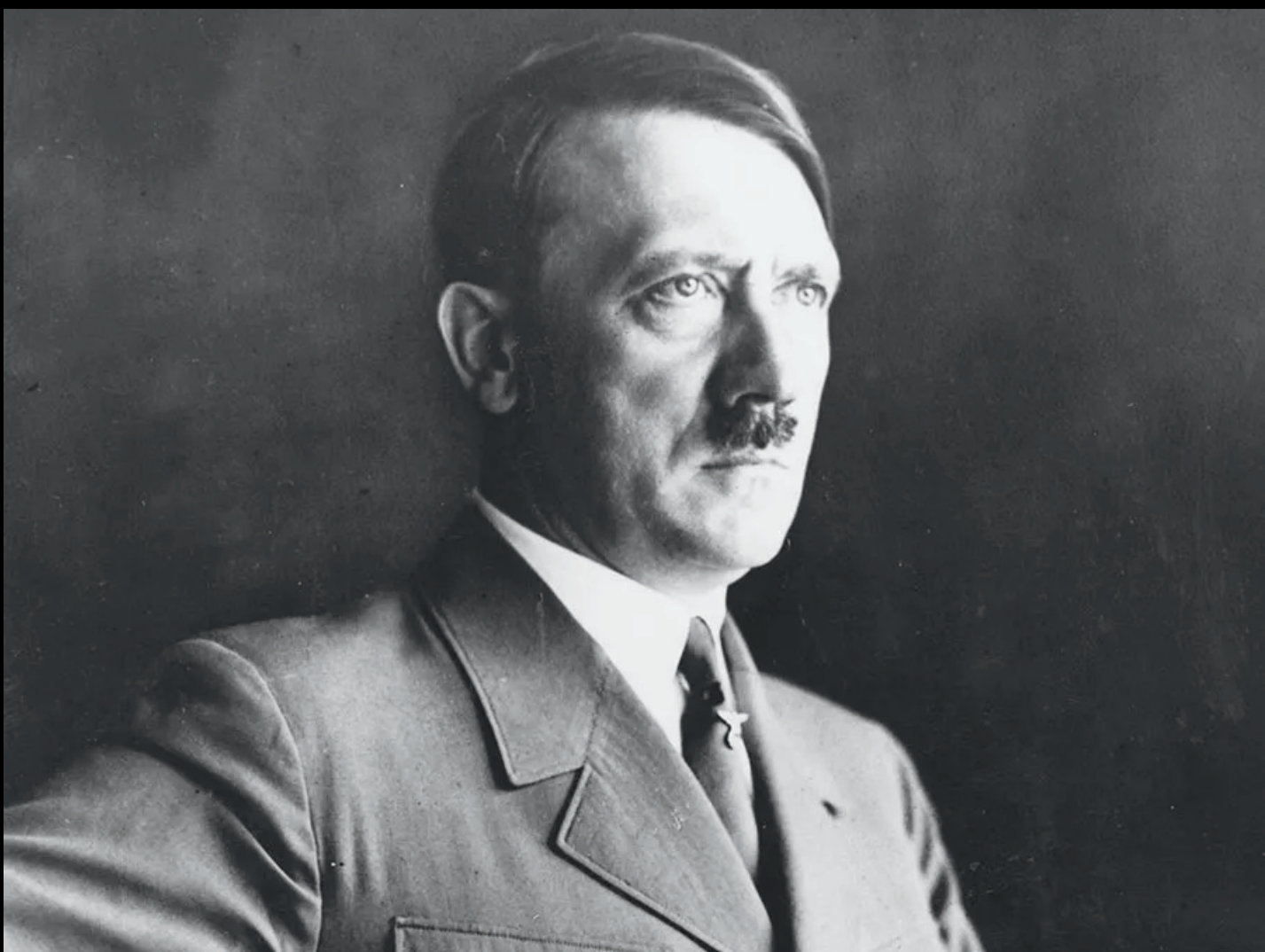
Do you know any Jews in your
city?

What proportion of the
general population do you
think Jews make up today?



Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler, a fascist politician, was born in Austria in 1889. After serving in the German Army in WWI, he rose to become the leader of the Nationalist Socialist German Workers ' (Nazi) Party



Hitler's Rise to Power

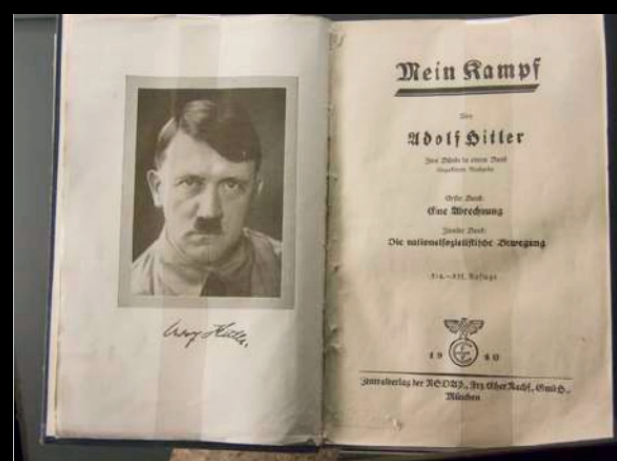
In 1923, Hitler and the Nazis attempted to overthrow local authorities in Munich. This coup became known as the Beer Hall Putsch, and resulted in Hitler's arrest.



Troops supporting Hitler's arrival in Munich, November 1923



Adolf Hitler and other participants in the Beer Hall Putsch



Mein Kampf

Whilst in prison, Hitler wrote Mein Kampf, his antisemitic manifesto including his plans for the future of Germany.

Dachau

Dachau was the first concentration camp established by the Nazis. Most prisoners in the early concentration camps were those thought to be a threat to the Nazi regime: Socialists; Communists; Roma Gypsies and LGBT+ people - people considered to be "un-German".



A memorial at Dachau

Hannah Arendt

“The greatest evil perpetrated is the evil committed by nobodies, that is, by human beings who refuse to be persons”



Hannah Arendt was a German Jewish philosopher and refugee from Nazi persecution

Reflection:

What are some of the ways that you choose to be a person rather than just a human being?

Changing Times

From 1933 onwards, many laws were passed by the ruling Nazi party to concretise the Nazi beliefs into law. These included forced sterilisation of disabled people, banning Jews from attending public schools, and persecuting gay, bisexual and transgender people.



Children learn Nazi ideology in school

The Nuremberg Race Laws (1935) detailed that only 'racially pure' Germans could hold German citizenship, and banned marriage between German citizens and Jews, Roma Gypsies and People of Colour.

The November Pogrom

On the 9 November 1938, Nazi leaders unleashed a series of pogroms (organised anti-Jewish violence) against the Jewish population in Germany. This event came to be called Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass) because of the shattered glass that littered the streets after that night.

During the night of the 9 November 1938, around 30,000 Jewish men were taken to concentration camps. 91 deaths were officially registered that night, but there were probably more. Hundreds were killed in the ensuing weeks from torture and harassment.



Viktor Frankl

“But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer.”



Viktor Frankl was an Austrian Jewish psychiatrist and survivor of Auschwitz

Reflection:

What does Frankl mean by ‘the courage to suffer’?

The November Pogrom

In a deliberate assault on the core symbols of Jewish identity, synagogues across Germany and Austria were looted, desecrated and burned by Nazi officers, Hitler Youth, and ordinary citizens. Many Jewish cemeteries were vandalised and defiled.

Shops in Jewish ownership were looted and systematically destroyed across Germany. Apartments of Jewish Germans were plundered and ransacked.

With the destruction of their businesses, Jewish Germans lost their last major source of income after their exclusion from the civil service and the professions. Most Jewish Germans had to now live from savings and welfare organisations.



Reflection Point:

First you are forced into segregated schools. Then you can't marry who you choose.

Now your home and business are destroyed. Your synagogue has been burned down.

Try to imagine the terror of not knowing what will happen next.



Kindertransport

In the wake of the November Pogrom, the British government admitted 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish child refugees escaping Nazi territories. Many of these children were the sole survivors of large families.

Some of these child refugees had great experiences with their adoptive families, but this was not the case for everyone. Many older children were put to work and denied an education. Many of them were stripped of their Jewish identity in order to fit in with their new families.



War Breaks Out

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, causing Britain and France to declare war on Germany. The German army would go on to invade much of Europe. Most of Europe's Jews were now in the hands of the Nazis.



Hannah Szenes

**“I could have been 23 next July.
I gambled on what mattered
most, the dice were cast. I lost.”**



Hannah Szenes was a Hungarian Jewish poet and Zionist pioneer who fled the Nazis and joined the British army. She was captured, tortured and executed.

Reflection:

What matters most to you in your life? What would you risk your life for?

Nazi Camps

Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany and its allies established more than 44,000 camps and other incarceration sites. These sites were used for a range of purposes, including forced labor, and detention of people thought to be enemies of the state. Eventually, some of these camps became factories of mass murder for Jews.



Elie Wiesel

“I told him that I did not believe that they could burn people in our age, that humanity would never tolerate it...”



Elie Wiesel was a Romanian Jewish survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald

Reflection:

How did acts of seemingly impossible cruelty come to be committed?

How does this change the way we see the world today?

Auschwitz

Auschwitz was the largest of the death camps, established in May 1940. Over 1.1 million people were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Most prisoners were killed on arrival. Some were forced to work before being shot, some underwent medical experimentation, and others were taken on 'death marches'.



Prisoner markings

From 1938, Jews in the camps were identified by a yellow star sewn onto their prison uniforms. After 1939 and with some variation from camp to camp, the categories of prisoners were easily identified by a marking system combining a coloured inverted triangle with lettering. The badges sewn onto prisoner uniforms enabled SS guards to identify the alleged grounds for incarceration.



Anne Frank

“I’ve reached the point where I hardly care whether I live or die. The world will keep on turning without me, I can’t do anything to change events anyway.”



Anne Frank was a German Jewish teenage diarist who lived in hiding in Amsterdam and was murdered in Bergen Belsen

Reflection:

What does it take for you to feel that your life matters?

Reflection Point:

Why did the SS have a system of badging and identification within the camps, if everyone was a prisoner?

How do badges and numbers dehumanize individuals?



Ghettos

The Nazis established a system of ghettos in many cities across occupied Europe. Ghettos were segregated parts of a city in which Jews were forced to live. There was little work and little food to go round, and many suffered from extreme poverty. Families were crowded into single rooms. Nazi officers frequently humiliated and abused Jewish inhabitants.

The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest in all of Europe. On November 16th 1940, Warsaw's Jews (about 30% of the population) were pressed into just 2.4% of the city's surface area. The ghetto was unsanitary, overcrowded and prone to diseases such as typhus. Thousands of people died from malnutrition or illness.



Wannsee Conference

In January 1942, Nazi leaders gathered together to coordinate "the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem," for an estimated 11,000,000 Jews. The meeting was chaired by Reinhard Heydrich with the participation of 15 officials and representatives of the Reich authorities.

The "Final Solution" was the code name for the systematic, deliberate, physical annihilation of the European Jews. At some still undetermined time in 1941, Adolf Hitler authorized this European-wide scheme for mass murder. Heydrich convened the Wannsee Conference.



Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

In April 1943, the Nazis planned to deport the remaining Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto for extermination. The Zionist youth movements led an uprising and resisted for 27 days, making the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising the largest Jewish uprising in WWII.

With no military training and few weapons, the Jewish resistance eventually succumbed to the Nazis, who burned the ghetto to the ground in May 1943.

This courageous event inspired resistance fighters in other ghettos across Europe.



Mordechai Tenenbaum

"The force that has overcome Europe and destroyed entire states within days could cope with us, a handful of youngsters. It was an act of desperation . . . We aspired to only one thing: to sell our lives for the highest possible price."



Mordechai Tenenbaum was a leader of the ghetto resistance and a member of the Dror Zionist Youth Movement. He was killed in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising

Reflection:

What does courage look like in the face of certain death?

Roma and Sinti

In August 1944, the 'Gypsy family camp' at Auschwitz was liquidated by the SS. Over 1,000 Roma and Sinti people were transported to the concentration camp at Buchenwald, and the remaining 3,000 were murdered in the gas chambers at Birkenau.

An estimated half million Roma and Sinti were murdered during the Holocaust.



Death Marches

By 1945, the allied forces were winning the war, and approaching Auschwitz-Birkenau. In an attempt to cover up the atrocities that they had committed, the SS demolished the gas chambers and crematoria at the camp. Surviving prisoners were taken on "death marches ". Thousands of people were forced to march for miles, further into German-controlled territory.



SS guards shot anyone who fell behind. Prisoners suffered from the cold weather, starvation, and exposure

Reflection Point

Siegfried Fedrid, an Austrian inmate, grabbed his blanket from Auschwitz before leaving the camp for the death march. He shared it with other prisoners to survive the freezing nights.

Temperatures reached -30°C .

Why should we share, even when we have so little?



Vladek Spiegelman

“Friends? Your friends? . . . If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week . . . THEN you could see what it is, friends!”

Vladek Spiegelman was a Polish Jewish survivor of Auschwitz. His son Art wrote Maus, a graphic novel about his experiences in the camps



Reflection:

What are the different ways that the camps destroyed human beings?

Liberation of Auschwitz

On January 27th 1945, Soviet forces liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau. There they found more than 7,000 starving inmates, weak and dying. The atrocities committed there were finally revealed to the world. Today, the anniversary of the liberation is known as Holocaust Memorial Day



Edith Eger

“Survivors don’t have time to ask, “Why me?” For survivors, the only relevant question is, “What now?””



Edith Eger is a Slovak Jewish psychologist and survivor of Auschwitz

Reflection:

What would it take for you to rebuild your life after losing absolutely everything?

Reflection Point

Each of these shoes belonged to a child, taken from their homes and transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.



Focus on just one shoe, and think about the child whose life was cruelly cut short by the Nazis.

After the Holocaust

Survivors of the Holocaust were scattered all across the world, looking for their families and friends. Many did not discover the fates of their loved ones until years later. Most had no homes to return to. Some Jews were attacked or even killed when they tried to reclaim their old homes.



Mental and physical trauma from their experiences often made survivors' lives immeasurably difficult and painful.

Eva Schloss

“A few months ago I finished speaking, and looked down at a class of schoolchildren. A Somali girl with dark eyes hesitantly put her hand up and asked, ‘Do you think it will happen again?’ I can’t answer that, but maybe you can. Will it? I hope not.”



**Eva Schloss was an Austrian Jewish survivor of
Auschwitz**

Reflection:

**What can be done to make the slogan
‘never again’ a reality?**

Thank You

Thank you so much for engaging in this exhibition. We hope you have learnt valuable lessons about the past to shape the future.

To learn more about the Holocaust, you can visit:

www.hmd.org.uk

www.encyclopedia.ushmm.org

www.auschwitz.net/en

www.facinghistory.org

www.yadvashem.org

www.history.com

