



Olga + Harry

Rosa + Ceco

Prague

What happened to the Jews of Prague?

This photograph was taken in Prague in Czechoslovakia in 1935. Approximately 55,000 Jews lived there before the Second World War. The photograph shows an engagement party for Olga Goldstein (left) and Herman Weigl (third from the left). Olga and Herman were murdered in the Holocaust.

- Germany invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939. The Czech regions were taken over by Germany. This meant that Czech Jews suffered the same anti-Jewish laws as Jews in Germany and Austria.
- In September 1941, all Jews above the age of 6 were ordered to wear a yellow Star of David badge. In the same month, Hitler decided to make Germany, Austria, and the Czech lands 'free of Jews'. 5,000 Jews from Prague were sent to the Łódź Ghetto in Poland in October. In November, the Nazis created a special ghetto in Terezín, a town north of Prague: more than 40,000 Jews from Prague were sent there. Thousands died there over the next few years because of the terrible conditions.
- In early 1942, thousands of Jews were deported from Terezín to ghettos in eastern Europe. However, from May 1942 onwards, trains were sent directly to extermination camps such as Sobibór and Treblinka in Poland: almost everybody on each train was murdered in gas chambers as soon as they arrived.
- In October 1942, the Nazis began sending Czech Jews, including Olga and Herman, to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. Some Jews were selected to work but most were sent straight to gas chambers. Most people selected to work soon died because of disease, starvation and exhaustion.

More than 65% of the Jews of Prague were murdered during the Holocaust.





Salonica

What happened to the Jews of Salonica?

This photograph was taken in Salonica (Thessaloniki) in Greece around 1930. Approximately 50,000 Jews lived there before the Second World War. The photograph shows a group of Jewish Boy Scouts. It is likely that most of these boys were murdered in the Holocaust.

- Germany invaded Greece in April 1941 but widespread anti-Jewish persecution began in the summer of 1942. In July 1942, 9,000 Jewish men were made to assemble in Salonica's main square where they were whipped and forced to perform gymnastic exercises for hours in blazing heat. Thousands of them were then taken away for slave labour. They were only released after the Germans forced the Jewish community to pay a huge ransom.
- In February 1943, Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David badge. At the end of February, the Nazis ordered that Jews could only live in certain areas of the city. In early March, these areas were surrounded by German police and the Jews were told that they could not leave their homes.
- Between March and May 1943, the Nazis deported more than 40,000 Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp in Poland. The train journey often took more than a week. Some of the Jews were selected for work when they arrived but most of the people on each train, including all children and old people, were immediately murdered in gas chambers. Most people selected to work soon died because of disease, starvation and exhaustion.
- Another train, carrying almost 3,000 people, was sent to Treblinka extermination camp in Poland: everybody on the train was sent to the gas chambers as soon as they arrived.

More than 95% of the Jews of Salonica were murdered in the Holocaust.





Ejszyszki

What happened to the Jews of Ejszyszki?

This photograph was taken in Ejszyszki in eastern Poland in the 1930s. Approximately 3,500 Jews lived there before the Second World War. The photograph shows Dovid and Leah Moszczenik with their daughter Esther and her husband Lou Gordon. Esther and Lou were visiting from their home in the USA. Dovid died of natural causes in the 1930s but Leah was murdered in the Holocaust.

- This area of Poland was invaded by the Soviet Union in September 1939. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 and Ejszyszki was captured after just one day. The Nazis immediately began to persecute the Jews: they had to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothes; they were not allowed to leave their homes at night; they were used as slave labour.
- The German army was followed by SS killing squads known as Einsatzgruppen. The Einsatzgruppen shot suspected Communists and some Jewish men in towns and cities across the Soviet Union.
- In August and September 1941, the Einsatzgruppen and local helpers began killing whole Jewish communities.
- In September 1941, Lithuanian police working for the Nazis rounded up Ejszyszki's Jews and locked them in a stable and three prayer houses. After three days, the men were taken to the Jewish cemetery and all shot. The next day, the women (including Leah) and children were shot nearby. The Lithuanians shot 3,446 people in these two days: 989 men, 1,636 women and 821 children.

More than 99% of the Jews of Ejszyszki were murdered during the Holocaust – only 29 survived.





Zagreb

What happened to the Jews of Zagreb?

This photograph was taken in Zagreb in Yugoslavia in 1936. Approximately 12,000 Jews lived there before the Second World War. The photograph shows Blanka Kupfermann (the woman on the right) relaxing with her family by a swimming pool. Blanka lived in Romania with her husband and children (sitting next to her) and survived the Holocaust but all of her relatives in Yugoslavia, including the people on the left, were murdered.

- Germany invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941. Hitler agreed to let Croatia become an independent country: Zagreb became its capital. Croatia was ruled by a Fascist movement called the Ustaše who wanted to create what they saw as a racially 'pure' Croatia. They immediately introduced a law which removed Jews' rights.
- In the summer of 1941, Ustaše policemen began to send thousands of Jews, Serbs and Roma to Jasenovac concentration camp. Most of the people, including Blanka's parents and her brothers and sisters, who were sent to Jasenovac were murdered. Some were shot; others were beaten to death by Ustaše guards. Most of the people who were selected to work in the camp soon died from disease, starvation and exhaustion.
- Most of Zagreb's Jews had been murdered by the end of 1942. The Ustaše then agreed to hand over the remaining Jews to the Nazis.
- In May 1943, 1,700 Jews from Zagreb were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp in Poland where most of them were murdered in the camp's gas chambers.

More than 90% of the Jews of Zagreb were murdered during the Holocaust, mostly by the Ustaše.





Kraków

What happened to the Jews of Kraków?

This photograph was taken in Kraków in Poland in 1936. Approximately 60,000 Jews lived there before the Second World War. The photograph shows a group of Jewish men walking along a street. It is likely that almost all of these men were murdered in the Holocaust.

- Germany invaded Poland in September 1939; Kraków became the capital of a Nazi-controlled region called the General Government. In October, the Nazis introduced a law saying that Jews would be used as slave labour. In November, all Jews over the age of 10 were forced to wear a special armband with a Star of David on it. Many other anti-Jewish laws were introduced.
- More than 40,000 Jews were forced to leave Kraków in 1940. The 15,000 people who stayed, and Jews from nearby villages, were forced into a ghetto in March 1941. Hundreds died there from disease and starvation.
- In March 1942, the Nazis began Aktion Reinhard: the murder of Jews in the General Government. 12,000 Jews were deported from Kraków to Bełżec extermination camp in June and October. None survived – they were killed in gas chambers when they arrived. Hundreds of others, especially old people, were shot in the ghetto by German and Ukrainian policemen.
- The ghetto was liquidated in March 1943. Around 2,000 Jews were shot by German police. 5,000 others were sent to either Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp or Płaszów, a forced labour camp on the edge of Kraków. Most of them died in these camps.

More than 95% of the Jews of Kraków were murdered in the Holocaust.





Amsterdam

What happened to the Jews of Amsterdam?

This photograph was taken in Amsterdam in the Netherlands in the 1930s. Approximately 75,000 Jews lived there before the Second World War. The photograph shows the Jacobsthal family. The young woman in the bottom right, Hilde, survived the Holocaust but most of the other people in the picture were murdered.

- Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940. The Nazis introduced anti-Jewish laws in autumn 1940 and persecution increased in 1941: hundreds of young men were sent to concentration camps in the spring after fights with Dutch Nazis; Jewish children were banned from state schools in August; thousands of Jewish men were taken away for slave labour in the autumn.
- In May 1942, Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David badge. In July, German police began rounding up Jews in Amsterdam. They were kept in a theatre in the city centre and then sent to Westerbork transit camp. A transit camp was a place where Jews were held before they were deported to extermination camps.
- Most of the Jews in Westerbork, including Hilde's parents, were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. A minority of people were selected to work in Auschwitz but most, including all children and old people, were immediately sent to gas chambers. Most of the people selected to work also died because of disease, starvation or exhaustion.
- Other Jews were sent from Westerbork to Sobibór extermination camp where almost all of them were murdered in gas chambers as soon as they arrived: only 8 Jews from Amsterdam survived Sobibór.

More than 70% of the Jews of Amsterdam were murdered in the Holocaust.

