

August Sander **People of the 20th Century**

This exhibition presents 144 photographs from the German photographer August Sander's monumental project 'People of the 20th Century'. Conceived in the mid-1920s, it occupied him throughout his career and remained unfinished at the time of his death in 1964. Sander was one of the major figures of the new German photography of the 1920s, defined by its objectivity and sharp focus.

In 'People of the 20th Century', Sander sought to create a social atlas of Germany through portraits of people from all segments of society classified in a system of categories, which grew and evolved over time in response to political changes. While some of the sitters are recognisable, Sander aimed for anonymity, titling his photographs by the professions of their subjects, rather than by name. He believed that a portrait could contain in it the characteristic traits of a person in relation to their time and situation, revealing broader social, political and cultural considerations.

Here, the photographs are displayed chronologically, inspired by Sander's ambition for his works to be documents of their time. Seen against the backdrop of a changing Germany, hundreds of individual lives bear witness to, and intersect with, the collective historical experience. Starting in 1919 with Germany's defeat in the First World War and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles, the exhibition charts the political and economic tumult of the Weimar Republic, the rapid social change and cultural experimentation that went with it, and the descent into dictatorship that followed in 1933.

Timeline text by the German Historical Institute London

1919

In 1918 the First World War ends with Germany's military defeat and a revolution which sweeps its old monarchical governments away. On 9 November 1918 a Republic is proclaimed, unofficially named the Weimar Republic for the city where its constitutional assembly convenes. The Treaty of Versailles forces Germany to concede, partly after plebiscites (referenda), 13% of its territory to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Lithuania and Poland. The city of Danzig is established as an independent Free City administered by the League of Nations. These losses considerably reduce Germany's natural resources and capacity for industrial production, particularly in coal and iron. The new Republic's early years are characterised by crisis. From 1919 to 1923 political instability is rife. Six governments follow each other in quick succession, none lasting more than 18 months. This situation is aggravated by economic crisis and social and financial hardship. In 1923 post-war inflation turns into hyperinflation, leading to the collapse of the currency and to mass unemployment. Germany also sees artistic productivity surging. Parts of German society enthusiastically embrace modern life and modern arts after the war, while others fervently criticise and reject it.

Jan

Occupation of parts of the Rhineland by French, British, Belgian and American troops

Jan

Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg murdered by members of a Freikorps (paramilitary organisation)

Feb

National Assembly opened in Weimar

Mar

Bauhaus art and design school founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar

Apr–May

Third wave of "Spanish Flu" pandemic hits Germany. More people worldwide die than were killed in the First World War

Jun

German delegation signs Treaty of Versailles

Jun

Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter orders to sink the entire remains of the German fleet, 52 ships, at Scapa Flow

Aug

The National Assembly in Weimar approves of new constitution. Germany becomes a parliamentary democracy

Nov

Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg propagates the myth that German army was betrayed by civilian Republicans

1920

Jan

Treaty of Versailles comes into force

Feb

The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) founded in Munich beer hall

Mar

Attempted coup (Kapp Putsch) to replace democratic government with right-wing autocratic regime collapses within days after general strike is called

Aviation and aeroplane production is boosted through military demand and wartime technological progress. After the war, experienced fighter pilots demonstrate their skills in public shows. The Versailles Treaty prohibits Germany from building aeroplanes with engines for six months. Gliding becomes fashionable as a sport instead.

Apr

Army quashes socialist revolt in the Ruhr area

Apr

First dada performance in Cologne involving Hans Arp and Max Ernst

May

Prussia introduces state-sponsored social care for disabled people

Jun

'First International Dada Fair' in Berlin, organised by artists Raoul Hausmann and George Grosz

Jun

Major exhibition of German expressionism in Darmstadt

Jul

International conference in Spa debates reparation payments. Berlin government signs treaty about German disarmament

1921

Jan

Allies set German war reparations at 226 billion gold marks

Feb

German Luftpost GmbH founded in Danzig

Apr

Inter-Allied Reparations Commission reduces reparations to 132 billion gold marks

Jul

Adolf Hitler becomes leader of the NSDAP

The war leaves more than one million orphans and 600,000 widows. State pensions are insufficient, leaving families dependent on welfare, wider family support or additional work. Women's chances of remarrying are limited since the ratio between men and women is now skewed against them.

Aug

Right wing extremists assassinate politician Matthias Erzberger who had signed the armistice

Dec

Albert Einstein awarded the Nobel Prize

1922

Jan

Celebrated conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler takes charge of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, remaining until 1945

Apr

Treaty of Rapallo marks new dialogue between the Weimar Republic and Bolshevik Russia

May

29 regional Protestant churches unite to form national organisation, German Evangelical Church Confederation

Jun

Assassination of Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau by ultra-nationalist Organisation Consul

Jul

Hyperinflation sets in, dramatically increasing everyday prices

Sep

Modernist playwright Bertolt Brecht's first play, 'Drums in the Night' (Trommeln in der Nacht), is premiered in Munich

1923

Jan

France and Belgium occupy Ruhr. German government announces passive resistance

Aug

First Bauhaus exhibition in Weimar

Aug

1 US dollar costs 4.6 million German marks

Oct

Communist uprising in Hamburg quashed. Another attempted communist insurrection in Saxony stopped by the army

Nov

Beer Hall Putsch, the Nazi attempted coup in Munich, fails. NSDAP is banned

Nov

Anti-Jewish riot in a district of Berlin where Jews from Eastern European live

Nov

At height of hyperinflation 1 egg costs 80 billion German marks. National Bank introduces new, gold-based currency

Dec

3.45 million unemployed, public servants receive only half of their salary

1924

The middle years of the Weimar Republic bring a period of relative stability both politically and economically. Productivity levels, exports and wages increase. Social welfare provisions

are also improved. A consumer mass culture revolving around theatre, cabaret, cinema, dancing, sports and radio develops in many German cities, bringing about the term "Golden Twenties". Economic recovery, however, is not universal. Farmers, in particular, are hit by a severe crisis with falling prices for produce from 1927. In political terms, more durable governments and less frequent elections create the semblance of normality while German foreign policy under the leadership of Gustav Stresemann seeks reconciliation and cooperation with the former war enemies.

Feb

Social-democratic organisation Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold founded to defend parliamentary democracy against the Nazis and their paramilitary units

Feb

A Berlin court fines George Grosz 6,000 marks. It rules that his graphic work 'Ecce Homo' violates public morals

Apr

Allied-backed Dawes Plan envisages new, reduced war-reparations settlement for Germany

Apr

Hitler sentenced to imprisonment for Beer Hall Putsch

Sep

First advertisement in German broadcasting

Nov

Richard Strauss's latest opera 'Intermezzo' premiered in Dresden

Dec

Hitler released from Landsberg prison

Dec

German company Hanomag presents model of a small car aimed at wider public at Transport Exhibition in Berlin

August Sander makes his first non-commissioned portraits of professional people that would become part of 'People of the 20th Century'.

1925

Feb

Reich President Friedrich Ebert dies

Feb

Hitler re-establishes NSDAP after ban is lifted in Bavaria

Apr

During the campaign for the Reich Presidency, Hindenburg uses radio for the first time for electioneering

Apr

Hindenburg elected new Reich President

Apr

Bauhaus resettles from Weimar to Dessau

Jun

'New Objectivity' (Neue Sachlichkeit) exhibition at Kunsthalle Mannheim, profiling critical realist approach of Grosz and Dix

The Great Art Exhibition in Düsseldorf presents Expressionist and Impressionist paintings alongside artworks in the realistic style of 'New Objectivity'. The exhibition is part of a series of music festivals, sports events, and pageants to mark the anniversary of the integration of Lotharingia (Lorraine) into the Holy Roman Empire under King Henry I in 925.

The celebrations are organised to strengthen the bonds of national unity between the Rhineland and the rest of Germany in response to the occupation of parts of the Rhineland and the Ruhr.

Jul

Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' (vol. 1) published

Jul

First German nature preservation day in Munich

Jul

Occupation of the Ruhr ends

Oct

Locarno conference settles Germany's post-war borders in the west and agrees that it will join the League of Nations

Nov

World premiere of 'Variété' a silent film set in the world of carnivals, circuses and variety performances starring Emil Jannings

Dec

Alban Berg's opera 'Wozzeck' premiered in Berlin

At their national rally, the student fraternities reject cooperation with the social-democratic and anti-extremist Reichsbanner. The rally also advocates a Greater Germany that includes Austria.

1926

Jan

Airline Deutsche Luft Hansa founded

Jan

French cabaret dancer Josephine Baker appears on stage in Berlin

Feb

Rhineland cities celebrate withdrawal of French and Belgian troops from area around Cologne

"Werkstudent" becomes an official term in the 1920s to signify students who had to work in order to support themselves. In 1920 there are about 10,000 of them, and by 1924 there are 64,000 due to the economic crisis. In contrast to fraternity students, who tended to be conservative, "Werkstudenten" are more likely to be on the political left.

Jun

Referendum to expropriate formerly ruling princely families fails to win majority

Jun

Merger of two car companies creates Daimler-Benz

Aug

Papal Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli criticises the Republic's secular policy towards marriage, family and education

Sep

Germany joins League of Nations as Permanent Member of the Council

Sep

German Colonial Association demands return of former colonies

Oct

First traffic lights introduced in Berlin

Nov

World premiere of composer Paul Hindemith's opera 'Cardillac' in Dresden

Dec

Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann and French Prime Minister Aristide Briand awarded Nobel Peace Prize

From 1900, circuses move from halls to large tents, allowing companies to travel. However, traveling circuses fall on hard times during and after the First World War. Circus workers are badly paid and only in 1920 reach an official wage agreement with the new Association of Circus Directors.

1927

Jan

World premiere of expressionist film director Fritz Lang's 'Metropolis' in Berlin

Feb

First long-distance call between Frankfurt and New York

Feb

First carnival parade in Cologne since 1914

Apr

National farming association, Deutsche Bauernschaft, founded as lobby group

Jul

German parliament creates compulsory unemployment insurance

Jul

The architecture and design exhibition 'Die Wohnung' opens in Stuttgart, profiling 21 buildings by modern architects including Le Corbusier, Gropius and Mies van der Rohe

Sander exhibits 100 portraits of different social groups from the fledgling project 'People of the 20th Century' at the Kölnischer Kunstverein. In the same year, he writes:

"Photography has presented us with new possibilities and new tasks. It can depict things in magnificent beauty, but also in terrible truth, and can also deceive enormously. We must be able to bear seeing the truth, but above all we should hand down the truth to our fellow human beings and to posterity, be it favourable to us or unfavourable."

Sep

Tannenberg Memorial unveiled. President von Hindenburg publicly questions the idea of Germany's guilt for First World War

Dec

Ludwig Quidde, figurehead of the German peace movement, awarded Nobel Peace Prize

The Weimar constitution grants women voting rights and increased protection during pregnancy and after childbirth. However due to mass unemployment, women with children are encouraged to leave the role of breadwinner to men.

1928

Jan

Protest march by 140,000 farmers in north Germany linked to financial difficulties

Feb

For the first time since the First World War German athletes take part in Olympic Games

Apr

First German transatlantic flight

May

International Press Exhibition 'Pressa' in Cologne features traditionalist and modernist designers, including the Soviet artist El Lissitzky

May

Philosopher Max Scheler dies in Frankfurt

Aug

World premiere of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's 'Threepenny Opera' (Die Dreigroschenoper) in Berlin

Aug

First experimental television transmission in Germany at Berlin Funkausstellung

Nov

The motorcycle company BMW starts producing cars

The Cologne Progressives, an informal artist group, form in the 1920s. With a radical Marxist political agenda, they remain committed to easel painting over experimental working methods. Sander himself associates with the group and photographs its members, including Jankel Adler, Marta Hegemann, Heinrich Hoerle and Anton Räderscheidt.

1929

In the wake of the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 and the banking crisis of 1931 the already fragile German economy takes a nose dive. Real term wages begin to fall and unemployment rises to over 5.6 million by the end of 1931. Politically, presidential government begins to replace parliamentary democracy. Starting with the appointment of Heinrich Brüning as chancellor in March 1930 successive governments are formed without a majority in the Reichstag, relying primarily on the emergency powers of the Reich President.

Whereas 66 presidential emergency decrees are enacted during 1932, the Reichstag passes only five laws. After Brüning's fall from power in May 1932, his successors survive for only short periods of time. Extremist parties increasingly gain the upper hand with the National Socialists becoming the largest party in the Reichstag without winning a majority.

Jan

Erich Maria Remarque's anti-war novel 'All Quiet on the Western Front' is an instant bestseller

Jan

Bavarian farmers threaten to stop supplying cities to raise awareness of economic plight in the countryside

Feb

Reichstag ratifies Briand-Kellogg pact internationally outlawing wars of aggression

First edition of Sander's book 'Face of our Time' (Antlitz der Zeit) published. The book contains sixty portrait photographs intended for the wider project 'People of the 20th Century'.

Mar

First Book Day to promote reading

May

May Day Rallies end in violence between Communist party and police, with nine people killed, 63 seriously injured

May

'Film und Foto' the first major international exhibition of photography and film opens in Stuttgart

May

Reichstag gives financial support to East Prussian farmers

May

Mies van der Rohe's German pavilion at World Fair in Barcelona widely celebrated

Jun

Allies' Young Plan further reduces German war reparations

Sep

Airship Graf Zeppelin finishes round-the-world flight

Architect Hans Poelzig designs Haus des Rundfunks (House of Broadcasting) in Berlin where the first regular television service begins in 1935. Radio broadcasts from the same building continue during the war, notably the Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht, a programme of concerts broadcast on request for the armed forces on Sunday afternoons from 1939 to 1941.

Dec

Thomas Mann awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for 'Buddenbrooks' and 'The Magic Mountain'

1930**Apr**

Premiere of 'The Blue Angel' (Der blaue Engel) starring Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings in Berlin

Jun

Allied occupation of the Rhineland ends

Jun

Max Schmeling is the first European to become heavyweight boxing champion

Aug

Right wing groups force the director of the Bauhaus, Swiss architect Hannes Meyer to resign. He is replaced by Mies van der Rohe

Sep

Temporary tax introduced to save unemployment insurance from bankruptcy

Sep

NSDAP wins 107 seats in general election making it the second largest party

Oct

Thomas Mann's Berlin lecture against right wing extremism interrupted by protesters

Oct

Nazis throw stink bombs during the performance of Brecht and Weill's 'Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny' in Frankfurt

Inflation destroys most farmers' savings and leads to low investments in mechanisation. Unlike in the US and Britain, farmers in the Westerwald are still ploughing with oxen. This, alongside price controls for food and increased agricultural imports, results in a farming crisis. Farmers' lobby groups move increasingly to the right, many supporting Nazism.

As in other countries, Sinti and Roma populations (regularly defined as gypsies) are marginalised and criminalised in Germany throughout the modern era. Under the pretext of fighting vagrancy, police in Bavaria registered all Sinti and Roma as early as 1899 using photographs for identification like police registers for criminals. Gypsies have full and equal rights as citizens in the Weimar Republic. However, through special legislation for policing vagrancy, they are increasingly subjected to discriminatory regulations, which continue and are radicalised after 1933. Between 220,000 and 500,000 Sinti and Roma are murdered by the Nazis.

1931

Mar

President Hindenburg curbs freedom of speech and assembly to prevent political riot

May

International Olympic Committee awards 1936 Olympic Games to Berlin

Jun

Hunger marches in several German cities

Jul

Run on banks after collapse of third largest German bank

Aug

International agreement to suspend German reparation payments for one year

Aug

German banking crisis reaches Britain. In response Labour's Ramsay MacDonald forms "National Government" with Conservative and Liberal parties

Sep

Nazi paramilitary Sturmabteilung (SA) destroys Jewish shops in Berlin

Sep

Bank of England abandons gold standard (which traditionally anchored the value of a currency to gold)

Oct

Maximum duration of unemployment payments cut from 26 to 20 weeks

1932

Jan

Jewish students attacked by Nazis in Berlin and Vienna

Feb

A third of the workforce, more than six million people, unemployed

Apr

Hindenburg re-elected as President. Hitler comes second with 36.8% of the vote

Jul

Nazi party gains 37.4% of the vote to become the largest party

Sep

Right wing parties in Dessau Town Council close down Bauhaus

1933

In January 1933 President von Hindenburg appoints Hitler as Chancellor. Hitler immediately starts seizing complete political power. Hindenburg's power to issue emergency decrees and his compliance is crucial for Hitler's swift success. Members of the liberal, socialist, and communist opposition are killed, imprisoned, or exiled. Successive laws result in a period of "Gleichschaltung" establishing the party's totalitarian control over organisations, politics and all aspects of society including media and education. Legal discrimination and increasing violence against Jews and other non-Aryans follows. Remilitarisation and preparations for war begin in 1935.

Feb

Emergency decrees issued to curb freedom of press and right of assembly

Feb

Arson attack on the Reichstag attributed by Nazis to Communists

Mar

Joseph Goebbels's "Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda" established

Mar

Reichstag passes so-called "Enabling Act" suspending its own legislative power and making Adolf Hitler dictator of Germany

Mar

First concentration camps open in Dachau and Sachsenhausen

Apr

Official boycott of Jewish shops, doctors and lawyers begins

Apr

"Law for the Restoration of the Civil Service" excludes "non-Aryans" from civil service

May

Trade Unions dissolved and substituted by DAF (German Labour Front)

May

25,000 "un-German" books burned in an "Action against the Un-German Spirit"

Jul

NSDAP becomes sole political party after all other parties banned

1934

Mar

All regional broadcasting stations lose their independence and are put under the control of Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry

Mar

Albert Einstein loses his German citizenship

May

All theatres are put under the control of Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry

May

Hitler opens first German Theatre Week with Richard Wagner's 'Tristan and Isolde'

Jun-Jul

After a purge ordered by Hitler, the SA becomes politically insignificant and is replaced by the Schutzstaffel (SS), now the primary agency for policing and surveillance

Aug

President Hindenburg dies. Hitler combines the post of President and Chancellor

Sep

Sander's son Erich arrested and imprisoned for ten years because of his political involvement with the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany, which was banned in 1933

Sep

German army no longer sworn in on the constitution, but on Hitler himself

1935

Feb-Mar

In violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler orders the building of a German Air Force and reintroduces conscription

Mar

Jewish musicians barred from public performances

Apr

Hermann Göring marries actress Emmy Sonnemann in lavish wedding in Berlin. A forced contribution to the costs of the ceremonies is deducted from the salaries of all Berlin workers

Jun

Anglo-German convention for the limitation of naval armament

Sep

Nuremberg Laws relegate Jews to second-class status and prohibit intermarriage and sexual relations with Germans

Oct

First two prototypes of the Volkswagen Beetle presented

1936

The German authorities have the printing plates of Sander's book 'Face of our Time' (Antlitz der Zeit) destroyed and confiscate the remaining stock

Mar

German military re-occupation of the Rhineland successfully challenges France's willingness to defend the stipulations of the Versailles Treaty

Jul

Frankfurt Airport opened

Aug

Hitler opens Olympic Games in Berlin. Athletes from 49 countries participate

Sep

Gigantic party rally in Nuremberg

Oct

First German battleship since First World War launched in Wilhelmshafen

Nov

Hitler and Mussolini form military alliance

1937**Feb**

Heinrich Himmler issued the directive to arrest about 2,000 "professional and habitual criminals" to be sent to concentration camps

Mar

Papal encyclical expressing concern over violation of religious freedoms and racial policy commanded to be read out in all Catholic churches

Apr

Guernica bombed by the Luftwaffe

Jul

Picasso's 'Guernica' presented at Paris International Exhibition

Jul

Nazi "Degenerate Art Exhibition" opens in Munich featuring over 650 works confiscated from museums

Aug

First park benches with "Aryans only" signs in Berlin

Nov

Hitler's plans for the annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia submitted to generals

Dec

German police entitled to commit criminals to concentration camps without trial

1938**Mar**

Hitler orders German Army into Austria. On the basis of a "controlled plebiscite" Austria is declared part of German Reich

Jun

Sigmund Freud leaves Vienna and emigrates to London

Jul

Jewish doctors lose their licence to practice medicine

Sep

Munich Pact signed permitting Nazi Germany to annex the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia with a largely German-speaking population. British Prime Minister Chamberlain says this will satisfy Germany and bring "peace for our time"

Oct

Passports belonging to Jews are revoked to be replaced by new passports stamped "J"

The Hitler Youth or Hitlerjugend (HJ) is the youth organisation of the Nazi party. It originates from various rivalling youth organisations close to the Nazi party and its forerunners, which are reorganised in 1926 as Hitler Youth League of German Worker Youth and put under the control of the SA. The Hitler Youth is composed of three main units, the Hitlerjugend for male youths aged 14 to 18, the Deutsches Jungvolk (DJ) for boys aged 10 to 14, and the Bund Deutsche Mädel (BDM) for girls aged 10 to 18.

Nov

SA and SS unleash a pogrom (Kristallnacht) against Jews. Thousands of Jewish shops smashed and looted, 400 synagogues destroyed. Over 20,000 are taken to concentration camps

1939

The German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 triggers the Second World War. Britain and France declare war two days later, but do not attack immediately. In spring 1940 Hitler turns west and conquers France. Despite massive air strikes he fails to force Britain into capitulation. In June 1941 Hitler attacks allied Russia; in December 1941, after a Japanese attack on US fleet in Pearl Harbour, the US declares war against Japan and its ally Germany. Eventually the Second World War involves the vast majority of the world's countries forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. Interlinked with warfare in Eastern Europe was the Nazi extermination policy. Millions of people of all ages, mostly Jews but also large numbers of Roma, Sinti, Slavs and other races, disabled people, homosexuals and religious dissenters, die in the extermination camps of Eastern Europe.

Jan

In a speech to the Reichstag, Hitler announces that war in Europe would lead to "the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe"

Mar

Germany invades rest of Czechoslovakia

Apr

More than 300,000 prisoners interned in German concentration camps

Aug

Germany and Russia sign a mutual non-aggression pact. In a secret protocol Eastern Europe is divided between the two powers

Sep

Germany and then Russia invade Poland

Oct

Hitler signs an order authorising the killing of Germans with physical and mental disabilities

1940**May**

German “Blitzkrieg” in the West begins. Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France invaded and occupied

Jul

German air attacks over Britain intensify (Battle of Britain); British Royal Air Force begins night bombing of German targets

Sep

Germany’s Jews are ordered to wear yellow stars for identification

The SS (Schutzstaffel) grows from a small paramilitary formation to one of the most powerful Nazi organizations. Under Heinrich Himmler’s leadership it becomes an ideologically driven elite organisation and the foremost agent of surveillance and terror within Germany and German-occupied Europe, responsible for enforcing racial policy and running the extermination camps.

Oct

Nazi Warsaw District government moves all Jews living in Warsaw to ghettos

Oct

Charlie Chaplin’s ‘The Great Dictator’ premieres in the US

1941**Mar**

Hitler gives orders for the expansion of Auschwitz prison camp

Jun

Operation Barbarossa: 3 million German troops invade Russia. Hitler declares “War of Annihilation”. Special killing squads (Einsatzgruppen) begin the mass murder of Jews and Soviet officials behind the front

Sep

Zyklon B for gassing humans is tested on Russian Prisoners of War at Auschwitz. General deportation of German Jews begins

Nov

German tanks are on the outskirts of Moscow (Battle of Moscow)

Dec

Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, United States declare war on Japan. Bound by treaty Hitler declares war on the United States

1942**Jan**

Wannsee Conference approves plans for the coordination of “Final Solution”

May

The first RAF attack on German industrial targets is carried out as Cologne is raided

Jun

Germany destroys Czech village of Lidice and kills its adult population in retaliation for assassination of Reinhard Heydrich

1943**Feb**

German 6th Army defeated at Stalingrad. Over 1.5 million Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Romanians and Russians lose their lives

Apr

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Largest single Jewish revolt and act of resistance during Second World War

Jul

Operation Gomorrah: British, Canadian and US aeroplanes bomb Hamburg

By 1942, extermination camps designed specifically for the systematic mass killing of Jews and other “racially undesirable elements” such as homosexuals or Sinti and Roma are established in German-occupied Eastern Europe. The total death toll at these extermination camps alone is estimated at over 3 million. These camps follow the concentration camps that had been established in Germany since March 1933 where initially political opponents were incarcerated. Political opponents are also held in prisons before being deported to camps. August Sander’s son Erich, a political activist on the left, serves a ten year sentence in a prison in Siegburg where he dies in March 1944.

1944**Jun**

D-Day: Allied invasion of Europe commences in Normandy

Jun

Germany launches the first V-1 flying bomb attack on London

Jul

Failed attempt to assassinate Hitler

Aug

Paris liberated by Allied French troops

1945**Jan**

Red Army liberates Auschwitz

Feb

British planes attack Dresden

Apr

Hitler commits suicide

May

Unconditional surrender of all German forces ending the war in Europe