

The Diary of a Jew

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August 16, 1939

My name is Irina, I am a mother of two children and I have recently gotten this diary so I will write in this until there is no more room. A few days ago my mother (the children's grandmother) arrived in America. The children, Adam and Daria, and I are soon to follow her. We are to leave in a couple months. Adolf Hitler has complete control of Germany now. I think he might have plans to attack Poland. I hope we can get to America before something horrible like an invasion happens.

September 2, 1939

Oh, this is awful. Germany has invaded Poland. Warsaw has not been taken yet but many of the cities close to the borders are now controlled by Germany. Thankfully, Warsaw is not and my town is not under German control, but I cannot tell how long this will last.

September 30, 1939

Well, it happened; Germany has completely taken Poland. Warsaw surrendered a couple days ago and that means that we are now ruled by Adolf Hitler. This act by Germany has made many countries angry. Germany is already at war with Britain, France, India, and Australia.

May 6, 1940

Nothing has really happened in the last few months. I mean, life isn't that different, besides the fact that we are ruled by a dictator. The only other thing is that I saw some Nazi soldiers in our neighborhood earlier. I'm not sure what they were doing but they were in trucks carrying bricks. The children are getting worried and to be honest, I am disturbed as well.

August 23, 1940

Well, it's been awhile since I last wrote in my diary. The children, and I, and a number of other Jews have been moving to an area that was separated from the rest of the world. A ghetto, some might say. There are walls preventing anyone from coming in or out. It is really almost like our old town, though. We have shops, factories, and homes.

November 21, 1940

Oh thank heavens Adam is okay. He could have lost a leg or worse. You see it all started yesterday, when Adam and Daria were playing ball outside. Adam lost the ball and went to go retrieve it. After a while curfew had began and Adam was still outside somewhere. Then I heard an explosion and Adam came rushing inside. He said that bomb dropped and the explosion nearly killed him. I'm just so happy that he is safe.

May 6, 1941

My brother is not doing so well. He and his family are starving to death. He has to buy and sell smuggled bread now just to earn enough money for food for his family. I want to help him but I have Daria and Adam to take care of.

July 12, 1942

Strange things are starting to happen. Soldiers are starting to go to people's houses and take the residents away. This is happening with factories and shops too. They gather everyone in the building and choose who to take and who to leave. The people the soldiers take never come back. There are rumours that when they take you they kill you. I do not wish to believe these rumours but a part of me says that that is the truth.

August 17, 1942

There is death everywhere. People are starving or being shot and taken away. The children are depressed; my brother has recently been taken away and people's corpses are being thrown in the street. I do not see an end to this suffering. I see no end, there is no end...

October 9, 1942

The children and I have gone into hiding now. The only people who are supposed to be left are the factory workers. Scavenging for food and supplies has been hard and painful. I have seen many people being found, taken away and killed. Unfortunately, the children have seen this too.

November 2, 1942

I killed a man today. He tried to take Daria. I killed him with a plank of wood with a nail in it. I feel horrible. I didn't even know his name. After I killed him I took his things and my children and just walked away. I didn't even bury him. I hope that this doesn't make me a monster.

December 20, 1942

Oh God, why have you forsaken me? My children, oh my children, why? It was just a normal day in hiding and then they found us. They found us and took my children away. They took me to one of the camps I've heard about except this one is just for women. I will probably not be able to write in my journal very often anymore and I will have to hide it but I will seize any opportunity to record my thoughts.

January 30, 1943

The people at the camps are doing horrible things to some of these women. Some of these women are test subjects. I am supposed to cook and clean. Conditions are worse than the ghetto here and some women do unspeakable things to get basic comforts.

March 9, 1943

Sometimes I wonder how my children are doing, if they're still alive. I wonder where they are and how they are processing this. Sometimes I see myself as a woman warrior. I mean, I was forced into a ghetto, separated from my children and nearly worked to death and I still am fighting. Meaning I'm still alive, of course. I hope my children are still alive.

May 12, 1943

The thing that I hate about this place is when people disappear. Soldiers take groups of people to an area, I don't know where, and they all disappear. I think all of those people die. The reason is because I saw bodies being taken out of that area. Anyways, I better go now. It's time for my shower...

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