

# HENRY WERMUTH

## - EASY TO READ LIFE STORY



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

### Key words



**Jews:** People who follow the religion of Judaism.

**The Nazi party:** The group who were in power in Germany from 1933 – 1945, led by Adolf Hitler.

**Star of David:** A six-pointed star, which is a symbol of Judaism



**Death camp:** Places specifically designed by the Nazis with equipment to kill large numbers of people.

**Auschwitz-Birkenau:** The largest Nazi death camp.

**The Holocaust:** The attempt by the Nazis to kill all the Jews in Europe.

Henry Wermuth was born in 1923 in Germany. He lived with his parents, Bernhard and Ida and sister, Hanna. Henry and his family were **Jews**. Henry was proud to be German.

In 1933, **the Nazi party** came to power in Germany, led by a man called Adolf Hitler. Soldiers marched through the streets singing about killing Jews. Henry could not believe his country had voted for these people.

One night, Henry's family were woken up by the Nazis. They were forced to leave their home and sent by train back to Poland, where Henry's parents were from.

In 1939 the Nazis started World War Two by invading Poland. They forced Jewish people to wear a white armband with a blue **Star of David** and to clear streets of snow and ice.

The family heard rumours that the Nazis were killing Jewish people. Henry used cardboard to make a hiding place for Ida and Hanna in a tiny loft room.

Henry and Bernhard were forced to go and work for the Nazis. They were worried soldiers would come and take away all the Jewish people. Just before they left, Henry said to his mother: 'Promise me you will go into the secret place'.

A week later, Henry and Bernhard returned home and found photographs of Ida and Hanna in the hiding place. On the back of each picture was a goodbye message.

The Nazis had taken Ida and Hanna, along with all the Jewish people in the town, to a **death camp**, where they were murdered.

In 1942, Henry heard rumours that Hitler would be travelling by train near where he was working. Even though it was very dangerous, Henry felt he had to do something.

Henry made his way through the forest to the railway line, avoiding the guards. He blocked the train track with stones and large pieces of wood.

The following morning, Henry waited for the sound of a crash, but it never came. He never found out what had happened.

Soon after, Henry and Bernhard were sent to a series of Nazi camps, ending up at **Auschwitz-Birkenau**. It was hard to stay alive in Auschwitz. They were given tiny amounts of bread and thin soup. People were starving to death.

In January 1945 the soldiers took all the prisoners out of Auschwitz. Henry and Bernhard were moved from camp to camp.

One morning, the man in charge of their group hit Bernhard in the head and he died. It was 11 days before the war ended.

The Nazis killed Bernhard, Hanna and Ida, as part of **the Holocaust**. By the end of the war, they had killed six million Jews.

When Henry was finally rescued from the Nazis, he was very sick. He had to try and rebuild his life with no friends or family.

Henry came to Britain. He became a successful businessman, married, and had a family.

In 1995 he was awarded a medal for his attempt to kill Hitler. He has written a book about his life.

Find out more...

The Holocaust: [hmd.org.uk/holocaust](https://hmd.org.uk/holocaust)

Other resources for educators: [hmd.org.uk/educators](https://hmd.org.uk/educators)