

## History of the Holocaust

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This is not a comprehensive list of Holocaust films, but most of these I have seen. This list includes select foreign language films. The Holocaust may refer narrowly to the extermination of European Jews or more broadly victims of Nazi racism; perpetrators; bystanders; and post-war trials and tribulations of survivors, perpetrators, or bystanders. The Holocaust may be used as a plotting device that explains character motivations which raises question about the potential use or abuse of history in film. The list is divided into films or movies (Filmography) and made for television films or episodes (TVography). Wikipedia maintains a useful list: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Holocaust\\_films](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Holocaust_films) organized chronologically into films and documentaries.

### Filmography<sup>1</sup>

#### *Adam Resurrected*

Fictional account set in post-WWII Israel. Through flashbacks, the main character, Adam, revisits major transitions in his life Nazi Germany. It explores how Adam comes to terms with survivor's guilt. 2008.

#### *Amen*

"During WWII SS officer Kurt Gerstein tries to inform Pope Pius XII about Jews being sent to concentration camps. Young Jesuit priest Riccardo Fontana gives him a hand." English subtitles. Dir. Costa-Gavras. 2002. Professor – DVD)

#### *The Assisi Underground*

"Based on the best-selling documentary novel, this film sheds light on the work done by the Catholic Church and the people of Assisi to rescue several hundred Italian Jews from Nazi execution following the German occupation of Italy in 1943." Dir. Alexander Ramati. 1985.

#### *Au Revoir Les Enfants* (Goodbye, Children)

"Based on Malle's own experiences in a French boarding school during the German occupation, this moving film documents the friendship between a 12-year-old Catholic boy and a Jewish youngster being sheltered at the school by a priest." French with English subtitles. Dir. Louis Malle. 1987.

#### *Bent*

"Max is gay and as such is sent to Dachau concentration camp under the Nazi regime. He tries to deny he is gay and gets a yellow label (the one for Jews) instead of pink (the one for gays). In camp he falls in love with his fellow prisoner Horst, who wears his pink label with pride." Dir. Sean Mathias. 1997.

#### *The Boat is Full*

"In 1942, the Swiss government, alarmed at the vast numbers of people fleeing Nazi Germany, established stringent immigration policies as they declared the country's 'lifeboat' full. . . . tells the story of a group of refugees forced back to the border by ordinary citizens too frightened or indifferent to take them in." German with English subtitles. Dir. Markus Imhoof. 1980.

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<sup>1</sup> The film descriptions are taken from advertisements, the [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org), or [fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/videoaf.html](http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/videoaf.html), [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com), and [www.tv.guide.com/movies/databases](http://www.tv.guide.com/movies/databases).

*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas.*

A fictional story about a young boy whose father is a commandant at a concentration camp. The young boy befriends a Jewish child imprisoned at the camp. Dir. Mark Herman. 2008.

*The Counterfeiters*

Based loosely on a true story about the Nazis' attempt at flooding the British economy with counterfeit currency. One of the counterfeiters was a Jewish prisoner at Sachsenhausen concentration camp. English subtitles. Dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky. 2007.

*The Couple*

A fictional story about how a German or Hungarian-Jewish industrialist negotiates with Nazis to save his the lives of his extended family. Dir. John Daly. 2004.

*David*

"David is a young German Jewish teenager who is caught up in the Nazi persecution, eventually losing his home and family to the Holocaust. He survived as a victim and witness in this poetic but brutal drama filmed in Germany." Dir. Peter Lilienthal. 1979. German with English subtitles.

*A Day in October*

"Set against the backdrop of the Nazi occupation of Denmark in 1943, . . . tells of a Danish resistance fighter and one Jewish family caught up in the forces of history, and emphasizes the power of ordinary citizens and how they were able to resist evil." Dir. Kenneth Madsen. 1992.

*Defiance.*

Based on the account of the Bielski brothers, written by Nechama Tec; the brothers formed a partisan unit including a family cam, and helped to rescue scores of Jews. Dir. Edward Zwick. 2008.

*The Devil's Arithmetic*

A Holocaust fantasy where a modern day shallow Jewish American girl travels back in time to the home of European relatives who survived the Holocaust. Dir. Donna Deitch. 1999.

*Diary of Anne Frank*

"Anne Frank and her family take refuge in an attic hideaway for two years in order to escape Nazi persecution. The film attempts to capture their struggle to preserve a civilized life under increasingly desperate circumstances." There are multiple versions of the Diary of Anne Frank. The original movie starred Millie Perkins as Anne Frank; director George Stevens in 1959. 20<sup>th</sup> C Fox released a production in 1980; directed by Boris Sagal. BBC produced the *Diary* as a miniseries in 2009; directed by Jon Jones. [Compare these versions to the made-for-television movie entitled *Anne Frank: The Whole Story* (2001).]

*Divided We Fall*

Fictional story about a Slavic couple who hide a Jewish man who has escaped from Theresienstadt; hiding the young man is complicated by an acquaintanceship with a Czech-German Nazi collaborator. English subtitles. Dir. Jan Hrebejk. 2000.

*Europa, Europa*

". . . the story of Solomon Perel, a courageous German-Jewish teenager who survived WW II by concealing his true identity and [sometimes] by living as a Nazi for seven harrowing years through three countries." Dir. Agnieszka Holland. 1990.

*Everything is Illuminated*

"Jonathan Foer, a young American Jewish man, goes on a quest to find the woman who saved his grandfather during the Holocaust in a small Ukrainian town ..."

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Everything\\_Is\\_Illuminated\\_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Everything_Is_Illuminated_(film)) Dir. Liev Schreiber. 2005.

*Exodus*

Based on true events after World War II in which a boat filled with Jewish displaced persons are trying to enter Palestine illegally. Some recollections of the concentration camps are incorporated into the plot. Based on the novel by Leon Uris. Dir. Otto Priminger. 1960.

*Garden of the Finzi Contini*

"Adapted from Giorgio Bassani's 1962 semi-autobiographical novel, this film chronicles the gradual disintegration of the Jewish community living in Italy at the beginning of World War II" through their deportation to Auschwitz. Dir. Vittorio De Sica. Italian with English subtitles. 1971.

*God on Trial.*

In the midst of a "selection," a group of Jewish inmates at Auschwitz put God on trial. Dir. Andy DeEmmony. 2008.

*The Grey Zone*

Inspired by the memoir by Miklos Nyiszli, a Hungarian doctor who survived eight months in Auschwitz. Dir. Tim Blake Nelson. 2002.

*Goodbye, Children (see Au Revoir les Enfants)**Hanna's War*

". . . reenacts the story of Hannah Senesh, the Haganah heroine who parachuted into Nazi occupied Hungary during the World War to rescue Jews, losing her own life at the hands of the Nazis." Dir. Menahem Golan. 1988.

*The Harmonists (or Comedian Harmonists)*

Based on a true story of how a sextet barbershop forms to become incredibly successful only to be broken up by the politics of the Third Reich because three of its members are Jewish. Dir. Joseph Vilsmaier. 1997. German with English subtitles.

*The Hiding Place*

Based on a true story of Corrie ten Boom, her family's attempt to save Dutch Jews, and their capture. Dir. James F. Collier. 1975.

*The Holocaust*

This is the 1978 TV Miniseries. Dir. Marvin J. Chomsky. 1978.

*The House on Garibaldi Street*

Explores the capture and trial of Adolf Eichmann. Dir. Peter Collinson. 1979.

*Ida*

"Set in Poland in 1962, it is about a young woman on the verge of taking vows as a Catholic nun." She learns that her parents were Jewish and so begins an exploration of her family's history and her identity. Director Pawel Pawlikowski. 2013.

*Jacob the Liar*

Based on the novel by Jurek Becker, a Holocaust survivor. It is a fantasy revolving around Jakob Heym's lie to his fellow ghetto inmates about the progress of Soviet troops and the possibility of liberation. There are two versions of this film which are not very similar. 1975 East German production. Dir. Peter Kassovitz. 1999.

*Judgment at Nuremberg*

". . . centered around the post World War II Nuremberg trials of German judges who upheld the Nazi laws involving horrendous abuses of basic human rights." Dir. Stanley Kramer. 1961.

*The Juggler*

Focuses on the post-war life of a Jewish survivor who has arrived in Haifa and is struggling with memories and survivor's guilt. 1953. Dir. Edward Dmytryk

*Kapo*

The fictional story of a Jewish woman, who becomes a Kapo in a concentration camp which poses moral dilemmas. She eventually becomes involved in a camp uprising. Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo. 1959.

*The Last Stop (Ostatni Etap or The Last Stage)*

Fictional experience of the Auschwitz women's camp and underground activities. The first fictional account of the concentration camps told through a Polish-Communist director's eyes. Dir. Wanda Jakubowska. 1948.

*Life is Beautiful*

"Chaplinesque fable about the power of imagination set against the stark reality" of an Italian Jewish family (Dora, the non-Jewish mother, Guido, the Jewish father, and Giosue, their son). Direct by Roberto Benigni. 1998.

*Man in the Glass Booth*

"Arthur Goldman is a rich Jewish industrialist, living in luxury in a Manhattan high-rise. . . . Israeli secret agents burst in [to his apartment] and arrest Goldman for being . . . a Nazi war criminal. Whisked to Israel for trial, Goldman forces his accusers to face not only his presumed guilt – but their own." 1975.

*Max*

A fictional story in which a Jewish gallery owner in Munich at the end of World War I becomes mentor to an angry young painter, Adolf Hitler. Director Menno Meyjes. 2002.

*Mephisto*

Fictional "career of an ambitious actor, Hendrik Hoefgen, during the early Nazi years and how he maneuvers to retain prominence, even divorcing his Jewish wife. Adapted from a novel by Claus Mann. Dir. Istvan Szabo. 1981. German with English subtitles.

*Mr. Klein*

"The story of an art dealer in Vichy, France, who takes advantage of desperate Jews fleeing the country by purchasing their art masterpieces for a fraction of their worth. The twist? The Nazis arrest him when he is mistaken for a Jewish leader of the resistance." Dir. Joseph Losey. 1976.

*The Murderers Are Among Us*

Fictional account set in war-destroyed Berlin that explores one German's attempt to come to terms with his war crimes. English subtitles. Dir. Wolfgang Staudte. 1946.

*The Music Box*

Fictional story about an American émigré's arrest and prosecution for falsifying visa papers and committing crimes against humanity during World War II. The daughter of the accused is drawn into the drama as his lawyer. Dir. Costa-Gavras. 1989.

*The Nasty Girl (Das Schreckliche Mädchen)*

"A school project inspires a young German woman to investigate her town's past, which seems to upset her neighbors. As she gets close to the truth, she is victimized by hooded locals, and bomb threats become real bombs." Based loosely on a true story. Dir. Michael Verhoeven. 1990. German with English subtitles.

*Nowhere in Africa*

Story of Jewish family who escapes the Nazis by emigrating to Kenya and becoming farmers. English Subtitles. Dir. Caroline Link. 2001.

*The Only Way*

"Focusing on one assimilated Jewish family, this film dramatizes how Danes from various backgrounds came together to help Jews escape imminent deportation." Dir. Bent Christensen. 1970.

*Out of the Ashes*

"...true-life account of Hungarian gynecologist Dr. Gisella Perl, who survived the Holocaust by working as the head of the women's infirmary at Auschwitz – a fact that lands her in serious political trouble when she emigrates to the United States in 1946." Dir. Joseph Sargent. 2004.

*The Pawnbroker*

A post-war examination of a survivor living in New York. Based on the novel by American novelist Edward Wallant. Dir. Sidney Lumet. 1964.

*The Pedestrian*

"drama of a successful German businessman who was a Nazi war criminal responsible for the annihilation of a Greek village." Dir. Maximilian Schell. 1974.

*The Pianist*

Based on the true story of Wladyslaw Szpilman set in the Warsaw Ghetto. Dir. Roman Polansky. 2002.

*The Quarrel*

"This story, set in Montreal, details the resolution of an old conflict between two old friends one who abandoned the Jewish faith of his heritage and the other, an orthodox rabbi who started a Yeshiva in Montreal. Both are survivors of the Holocaust, and they nurse wounds of both the holocaust and of the fight they had the night one left Yeshiva for a life of worldly freedom." Dir. Eli Cohen. 1991.

*La Rafle (The Roundup)*

French film inspired by a true story about Parisian Jews rounded up the French Policy in July 1942. The lives of several Jews are followed showing a diversity of experiences. Director Roselyne Bosch. 2010.

*The Reader*

A fictional story about a young man, growing up in post-WWII Germany, who has an affair with an older woman with a mysterious past. Film themes are more relevant to Germans coming to terms with their Nazi past. Dir. Stephen Daldry. 2008.

*Revolt of Job*

"A WWII era parable of the biblical story of Job. The tragedy of a Hungarian Jewish family during the Holocaust is explored in this film. As the Nazis invade Hungary, an older Jewish couple adopts a young gentile orphan boy to survive them. Dir. Imre Gyögyössi and Barna Kabay. 1983. Hungarian with English subtitles.

*The Rose Garden*

"Aaron Reichenbach is haunted by an event he witnessed during the final days of World War II: the murder of 20 children in a Nuremberg schoolhouse. Forty years following the Holocaust, Reichenbach finds himself on trial for assaulting the elderly businessman he believes responsible for the killings." The film is not just about the crimes of the Nazi, but also about Germans coming to terms with the Nazi past. Dir. Fons Rademakers. 1989.

*Rosenstrasse*

Based upon the true story of German women who protest the deportation of their Jewish husbands. German in English subtitles.

*Schindler's List*

"Shot on location in Poland in stark black-and-white, . . . tells the story of German businessman Oskar Schindler who saves more than 1,000 Jews from deportation and death." Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1993.

*The Shop on Main Street*

"This evocative fable . . . relates the tale of Tano, a peasant who is appointed the Aryan controller of a shop run by an elderly, half-deaf Jewish woman unaware of the Nazi occupation of their small town in 1942 Czechoslovakia." Dir. Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos. 1965. Czech with English subtitles.

*Sophie's Choice*

Post war fictional account of a Polish woman's relationships with an American Jews as viewed through the eyes of a southern writer. Sophie was among the Poles who suffered at Auschwitz. Based on William Styron's novel. Dir. Alan J. Pakula. 1982.

*Sophie Scholl: The Last Days*

Examines the last days of Sophie Scholl, a member of the White Rose, anti-Nazi group. Actually has very little to do with the Holocaust. English subtitles. Dir. Marc Rothmund. 2005.

*Son of Saul*

Fictional drama set in Auschwitz that follows a Hungarian prisoner in the Sonderkommando. Director László Nemes. 2015

*Sunshine*

A fictional exploration of three generations of a Hungarian Jewish family during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dir. Istvan Szabo. 1999.

*The Train of Life*

A fable about Jews in a remote Polish town who attempt to deport themselves before the Nazis do. Dir. Radu Mihaileanu. 1998. French and German in English subtitles.

*Triumph of the Spirit*

Fact based story about a former Greek Olympic boxer (Dafoe) who was taken as a prisoner during World war II and placed in the Auschwitz prison camp. There he was permitted to survive as long as he fought for the amusement of his captors. His father (Loggia) and brother (Mandylor) were also held as insurance that he would continue to fight. Edward James Olmos also appears as a strong willed gypsy that is the leader of the prison factions. Robert Young. 1989.

*The Visas that Saved Lives*

A docu-drama recounting how Chiune Sugihara, Japan's consul-general in Lithuania helped to save Jewish lives by issuing visas.

*Voyages*

"Film is spun from the stories of three aging Jewish women whose lives were irreparably damaged by the Holocaust." Dir. Emmanuel Finkiel. 1999.

*The Wannsee Conference*

"Dramatizes the famous conference where the leading Nazis discussed the implementation of the 'final solution' by the German bureaucracy." German with English titles. Dir. Heinz Schirk. 1984. Compare to *Conspiracy*.

*War and Love*

"This is a drama about two Jewish teenagers fighting against the Nazis during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The two are captured and sent to Nazi concentration camps." Dir. Moshé Mizrahi. 1985.

*The White Rose*

"This film dramatizes the true story of a group of German students, the White Rose, who printed and distributed thousands of anti-Nazi leaflets during WW II." Dir. Michael Verhoeven. 1982. German with English subtitles.

*The Zookeeper's Wife*

Inspired by a true story of the rescue of Warsaw Ghetto Jews by a Polish couple. Director Niki Caro. 2017.

## TVography

*A Call to Remember*

Examines the memories of survivors and how it impacts their "new" family in the United States. Dir. Jack Bender. 1997.

*Anne Frank: The Whole Story*

Based on Melissa Muller's 1998 biography of Anne Frank, ". . . this version puts young girl's story in a context, depicting the character's life before captivity and graphically detailing the devastating end of her life." Dir. Robert Dornhelm. 2001.

*Charlie Grant's War*

"Charlie Grant, a Canadian diamond broker working in Vienna in the 1930s gradually becomes aware of the Nazi threat to Jewish lives, and works underground to help 600 Jews leave Europe. This film tells the story of one Canadian who made a difference, and is a condemnation of the Canadian government which allowed only 5,000 Jewish refugees to enter its country." 1984.

*Conspiracy*

Reenactment of the Wannsee Conference. HBO films. Director Frank Pierson. 2001. Compared to *Wannsee Conference*.

*The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler*

The docu-drama about Irena Sendler, a Polish woman who helped rescue Jewish infants and children from the Warsaw Ghetto. She was arrested by the Nazis and sentenced to death. Hallmark Hall of Fame. Dir. John Kent Harrison. 2009.

*Escape from Sobibor*

"A re-creation of the prisoner uprising at the Sobibor extermination camp in occupied Poland." Dir. Jack Gold. 1987.

*Haven*

Based on a true story about the efforts of one woman, Ruth Gruber, to assist Jewish refugees in the last months of the war leave Europe and come to the United States. Dir. John Gray. 2001.

*Hidden in Silence*

"Poland 1939, shortly before invasion of the German troops. To save their belongings from the Nazis, the Jewish family Diamant transfers them to their 17-year-old catholic maid Fusia. In return Fusia provides them with food until the ghetto is dissolved, and then hides 13 people in her loft for over two years. However, as the front approaches and two German nurses take quarter in Fusias apartment everything seems to be in vain." Dir. Richard A. Colla. 1990.

*Holocaust*

This miniseries tells the story of a the Holocaust through the lives of one assimilated German-Jewish family. Dir. Marvin J. Chomsky. 1978.

*Leni*

Based on a true story of Leni, who provided a safe haven for children orphaned by the Holocaust. Dir. Leo Hiemer. 1994.

*Max and Helen*

". . . the story of two Holocaust survivors who not only refuse to bring their tormentor to justice, but who convinced the internationally known Nazi hunter Simon Weisenthal that a greater mercy would fulfilled if their tormentor was never brought to trial." Dir. Philip Saville. 1990.

*Miracle at Midnight*

A docu-drama on the Danish rescue of Jews. Dir. Ken Cameron. 1998.

*Miss Rose White*

A Hallmark movie about two sisters, one who survives the Holocaust, and the other, who lives a fully assimilated life in the United States. Dir. Joseph Sargent. 1992.

*Murderers Among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story*

"This is the true story of a Holocaust survivor who committed himself in the years after liberation to the task of hunting Nazis and bringing them to justice." The film focuses as much on Wiesenthal's own concentration camp experience as it does on his post-war pursuits of justice. HBO pictures. Dir. Brian Gibson. 1989.

*Nazi Hunter: The Beate Klarsfeld Story*

Based on the true story of the Klarsfelds, who have devoted their life to hunting down Nazis. Dir. Michael Lindsay-Hogg. 1986.

*Never Forget*

"More than thirty years after World War II, the Institute for Historical Review, which says the Holocaust was a concoction of the Jewish imagination, challenges Mel Mermelstein, a survivor of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, to prove in a court of law that anyone was gassed at Auschwitz." Dir. Joseph Sargent. 1991.

*Nightmare Years*

Dramatization of the autobiographical story of William Shire, an American correspondent in Berlin from 1933 until 1941. Dir. Anthony Page. 1989.

*Nuremberg*

A docu-drama about the International Military Tribunals largely focusing on American prosecutor Robert Jackson's role in the events. TNT pictures. Dir. Yves Simoneau. 2000.

*Out of the Ashes*

Based on the true story of physician Dr. Gisella Perl, who gave abortions to Jewish women in Auschwitz in order to save their lives. Dir. Joseph Sargent. 2003.

*Playing for Time*

Based on the true story by Fania Fenelon, who played in the orchestra that accompanied forced laborers and people walking to their deaths at Auschwitz. Dir. Daniel Mann. 1980.

*The Scarlet and the Black*

Based on a true story of a Catholic priest assigned to the Vatican who helps those persecuted by the Nazis escape following the Nazi occupation of Italy in 1943; most of those rescued were not Jews but Allied soldiers caught behind enemy lines. Dir. Jerry London. 1983.

*Skokie*

"Based on a true story, this dramatization depicts how citizens of Skokie, Illinois, a small town with a higher than average percentage of death-camp survivors became divided over an impending street demonstration by neo-Nazis." Dir. Herbert Wise. 1981.

*Uprising*

A docu-drama about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943. 2001.

*Varian's War*

A docu-drama about Varian Fry's attempts to get German-Jewish intellectuals out of Germany. Dir. Lionel Chetwynd. 2001.

*The Voyage of the Damned*

Fictional account of the St. Louis affair which found Jews being turned away from the safe havens in Cuba and the United States. Dir. Stuart Rosenberg. 1976.

*Wallenberg*

A docu-drama that portrays Raoul Wallenberg's efforts to rescue Jews. Dir. Lamont Johnson. 1985.

*The Wall*

Based on the John Hershey novel and revolves around the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Dir. Robert Markowitz. 1982.