

# WITNESSTODAY

## PROJECT WITNESS MARKS SIGNIFICANT DATES IN ELUL

### Signing of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact August 23, 1939 – 8th of Elul 5699

The German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was signed by German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov. It contained a secret protocol that provided for the partition of Poland and Eastern Europe into Soviet and German spheres of interest. This pact enabled Germany to attack Poland without fear of Soviet intervention. Due to this pact, thousands of Polish Jews were able to find refuge in the Soviet Zone from the atrocities in German-occupied Poland from 1939-1941.



The signing of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact

“A block of wooden huts was burned down when two bombs fell among them,” The *Palestine Post* reported at the time. “In one street alone, 15 people lost their lives. Of two bombs falling together, one wrecked the wall of a synagogue where four people were killed, while the other crashed through two stories of a building.”

The destruction was extensive. Many of the more seriously wounded had to be transported to the Hadasah Hospital in Jerusalem.

In later years, Tel Aviv resident Yehuda Lapidot described his experience of the raid when he was a teenager. “From conversations around us, we understood that many people had been injured. I immediately ran home to report that I was safe and then went to see what had happened. The Nordiya quarter (where the Dizengoff Center now stands) had been heavily hit; the huts were in ruins, and among the debris lay the dead and injured. Here and there a fire had broken out. Damaged cars and wagons blocked the road itself..

I gazed at the horror around me. Of what strategic importance could this residential area have been?

“A mass funeral was held for the 137 men and women who had died in



Tel Aviv Municipality bombing by the Italian Royal Air Force

### Bombing by the Italian Royal Air Force September 9, 1940 – 6th of Elul 5700

On September 9, 1940 at 4:58 p.m. the Italian Royal Air Force bombed Tel-Aviv, killing 137 people. The war had come to the Jewish homeland.

The bombing took place far from any military targets, but struck the heart of Tel Aviv, near where the Dizengoff Center is located today.

the bombardment. The funeral procession left from the Balfour School and I still recall the coffins lying in rows on the trucks en route to the Nahlat Yitzhak Cemetery.”

Although it was a major event in Palestine and one of the few instances where the Axis caused Jewish deaths in the area that would later become Israel, the Italian bombing of Tel Aviv has been largely forgotten over the years. While it caused many deaths, in the

context of the events taking place during the war, the attack has somewhat disappeared into the annals of history.

In 1995, however, the Tel Aviv Municipality erected what may be the only memorial to the victims of the Italian air raid on Tel Aviv. Today, on the corner of King George Street and Ben Zion Boulevard, stands a small stone memorial, honoring those killed on Monday, September 9, 1940.



Tel Aviv Memorial [Wikipedia](#)

# FIRES BURNING BRIGHT

*The Men Who Sacrificed Their Lives To Learn Torah*

WEBINAR

PRESENTER

**Rabbi Eli Lefkowitz**

Director of the Mesivta Program of Project Witness

Wednesday,  
Sept 23, 2020  
7:30PM - 8:30PM



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*For those unable to watch the video,  
a phone number for phone participation will be sent upon registration.*