



- 0. BURNING CONTINUES - Story Preface
- 1. WHY FREE EXPRESSION?
- 2. FREE EXPRESSION IN BOOKS
- 3. THE DIAMOND SUTRA
- 4. THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS
- 5. THE PRECIOUS MANUSCRIPTS
- 6. JOHN WYCLIFFE'S BOOKS
- 7. JOHN HUS BURNS
- 8. TYNDALE WRITES, THEN BURNS
- 9. LUTHER'S TRANSLATIONS ARE BURNED
- 10. THE PRINTING PRESS
- 11. BOOKS BURN IN THE NEW WORLD
- 12. CENSORSHIP CONTINUES
- 13. BURNING CONTINUES**
- 14. CHERISHED RIGHTS
- 15. MORE COOL LINKS

On the 10th of May, 1933—only months into Hitler's official grip on Germany—the government ordered the burning of "non-German" books. This image depicts a screen shot from [moving footage of the event](#) (which includes scenes of university students burning more than 25,000 books). In this specific image, an SA officer throws a banned book into the fire. The event was taking place at the Opernplatz in Berlin. This book-burning image is online via the U.S. National Archives.

At the time Milton made his plea to the British Parliament, colonists were already arriving in America. The Pilgrims had landed at Plymouth Rock nearly twenty-five years before.

First Amendment freedoms certainly did not exist in America in those early days. Although colonists wanted freedom for themselves, their leaders had little tolerance for freedom of expression. As long as ideas about religion and life meshed with the ideas of those who ruled, life was fine. If not, consequences were dire.

When the founding fathers [signed](#) the [U.S. Constitution](#), their intent was to create laws that would allow a free people to live within a system of government they could themselves control. If we study the constitution, however, we can see why the framers also signed a Bill of Rights.

Despite its genius of government, the Constitution has gaps. Considering countless examples of ruthless government over centuries of abuse, the framers knew the people's rights needed to be specifically spelled-out. At least in America, systematic burning of books and flagrant censorship would be proscribed.

One would have thought such activity would be proscribed everywhere in the modern world. Not so.

Government-ordered book burning, like that of the Middle Ages, did not resume until the 20th century. A frightening event foreshadowed the Dark Age of the Modern World.

On May 10, 1933 Nazis burned stacks of the greatest books ever written. Never were Heinrich Heine's words more accurate:

Wherever they burn books they will also, in the end, burn human beings.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BURNING-CONTINUES-Book-Burning-and-Censorship>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BURNING-CONTINUES-Book-Burning-and-Censorship>



Signing the U.S. Constitution

Image online, courtesy [Teaching American History](#).

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Signing-the-U.S.-Constitution>