

## Short History of Book Bans<sup>1</sup>

2019: In the United States, people demanded the removal of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series from public libraries. Complainants objected to depictions of magic, witchcraft, and "actual curses and spells" in the text. They also disliked the characters' use of "nefarious means" to achieve their goals. The ALA also reported that Harry Potter books were the most frequently challenged in U.S. public libraries from 2000 to 2009.

2013: In Pakistan, spokesmen for organizations that represent the nation's private schools announced bans on "I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban." Senior education officials said the book—which was co-authored by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb—showed insufficient respect for Islam.

\*2001: The U.S.A. PATRIOT Act, in response 9/11, gave the FBI power to collect info about the library borrowings of any U.S. citizen and to gain access to library patrons' log-ons to Web sites, while protecting the FBI from disclosing the identities of individuals being investigated.

1987: "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou was removed from the required reading list for Wake County, North Carolina, high school students because of a scene in which the author, at the age of seven and a half, is raped.

1933: A series of massive bonfires in Nazi Germany burned thousands of books written by Jews, communists, and others.

1624: Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible was burnt by order of the Pope.

1524–26: Thousands of copies of William Tyndale's English translation of the NT were printed in Germany and smuggled into England, where they were publicly burned in 1526 on the orders of London's Catholic bishop. Church authorities insisted that the Bible would be available only in Latin and that **only they** would be able to read and interpret it. In 1536, as a result of a plot masterminded by the English, Tyndale was arrested in Belgium, tried for heresy, and strangled and burned at the stake near Brussels. A few of his translations were burned with him.

259–210 B.C.: The Chinese emperor Shih Huang Ti is said to have buried alive 460 Confucian scholars to control the writing of history in his time. In 212 B.C., he burned all the books in his kingdom, retaining only a single copy of each for the Royal Library and those were destroyed before his death. With all previous historical records destroyed, **he thought history could be said to begin with him.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.freedomtoread.ca/resources/bannings-and-burnings-in-history/>