

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS, PLACES AND PERSONALITIES

**aktion (German)** Operation involving the mass assembly, deportation, and murder of Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

**allies** The nations fighting Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan during World War II; primarily the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.

**Anielewicz, Mordecai** Major leader of the Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto; killed May 8, 1943.

**anschluss (German)** Austria acquiesces to its annexation by Germany on March 13, 1938.

**antisemitism** Prejudice or discrimination towards Jews.

**Aryan race** "Aryan" was originally applied to people who spoke any Indo-European language. The Nazis, however, primarily applied the term to people of Northern European racial background. Their aim was to avoid what they considered the "bastardization of the German race" and to preserve the purity of European blood. (See NUREMBERG LAWS.)

**Auschwitz** Concentration and extermination camp in Upper Silesia, Poland, 37 miles west of Krakow. Established in 1940 as a concentration camp, it became an extermination camp in early 1942. Originally established for Poles, it became the largest center for Jewish extermination. Eventually, it consisted of three sections: Auschwitz I, the main camp; Auschwitz II (Birkenau), an extermination camp; Auschwitz III (Monowitz), the I.G. Farben labor camp, also known as Buna. In addition, Auschwitz had numerous sub camps. Originally established for Poles, Auschwitz became the largest center for Jewish extermination.

**Axis** The Axis powers originally included Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan who signed a pact in Berlin on September 27, 1940. They were later joined by Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, and Slovakia.

**Babi Yar** A ravine in Kiev, where tens of thousands of Ukrainian Jews were systematically massacred.

**Beer Hall Putsch** On November 8, 1923, Hitler, with the help of SA troops and German World War I hero General Erich Ludendorff, launched a failed coup attempt in Bavaria at a meeting of Bavarian officials in a beer hall.

**Belzec** One of the six extermination camps in Poland. Originally established in 1940 as a camp for Jewish forced labor, the Germans began construction of an extermination camp at Belzec on November 1, 1941, as part of Aktion Reinhard. By the time the camp ceased operations in January 1943, more than 600,000 persons had been murdered there.

**Bergen-Belsen** Nazi concentration camp in northwestern Germany. Erected in 1943. Thousands of Jews, political prisoners, and POWs were killed there. Liberated by British troops in April 1945, although many of the remaining prisoners died of typhus after liberation.

**blitzkrieg** Meaning “lightening war,” Hitler’s offensive tactic using a combination of armored attack and air assault.

**British White Paper** British policy of restricting immigration of Jews of 1939 to Palestine.

**Buchenwald** Concentration camp in North Central Germany.

**bystander** One who is present at some event without participating in it.

**cattlecar** Railroad car in which Jews were transported to concentration or death camps.

**Chamberlain, Neville (1869-1940)** British Prime Minister, 1937-1940. He concluded the Munich Agreement in 1938 with Adolf Hitler, which he mistakenly believed would bring peace in our time.”

**Chelmno** An extermination camp established in late 1941 in the Warthegau region of Western Poland, 47 miles west of Lodz. It was the first camp where mass executions were carried out by means of gas. A total of 320,000 people were exterminated at Chelmno.

**Churchill, Winston (1875-1965)** British Prime Minister, 1940–1945. He succeeded Chamberlain on May 10, 1940, at the height of Hitler’s conquest of Western Europe. Churchill was one of the very few Western politicians who recognized the threat that Hitler posed to Europe. He strongly opposed Chamberlain’s appeasement policies.

**concentration camp** Immediately upon their assumption of power on January 30, 1933, the Nazi established concentration camps for the imprisonment of all “enemies” of their regime: actual and potential political opponents (e.g. communists, socialists, monarchists), Jehovah’s Witnesses, gypsies, homosexuals, and other “asocials.” The first three concentration camps established were Dachau (near Munich), Buchenwald (near Weimar) and Sachsenhausen (near Berlin).

**crematorium** A furnace used to burn bodies in the death camps

**Dachau** First concentration camp established in March 1933, ten miles northwest of Munich. The camp held, at first, political prisoners. But, as time went on, the number of Jews rose steadily to about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total. Although no mass murder pro-

gram existed there, tens of thousands died through starvation, disease, torture, or in cruel medical experiments.

**death camps** See Extermination camps.

**death marches** Forced marches of prisoners over long distances and under intolerable conditions was another way victims of the Third Reich were killed. The prisoners, guarded heavily, were treated brutally and many died from mistreatment or were shot. Prisoners were transferred from one ghetto or concentration camp to another ghetto or concentration camp or to a death camp.

**deportation** Expulsion, as of an undesirable alien, from a country.

**dictator** A person who has absolute power or control of a government.

**DP/ displaced person** The upheavals of war left millions of soldiers and civilians far from home. Millions of DP's had been eastern European slave laborers for the Nazis. The tens of thousands of Jewish survivors of Nazi camps either could not or did not want to return to their former home in Germany or Eastern Europe, and many lived in special DP camps while awaiting migration to America or Palestine.

**Displaced Persons Act of 1948** Law passed by U.S. Congress limiting the number of Jewish displaced persons who could emigrate to the United States. The Law contained anti-Semitic elements, eventually eliminated in 1950.

**Eichmann, Adolf (1906–1962)** SS Lieutenant-colonel and head of the “Jewish Section” of the Gestapo. Eichmann participated in the Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942). He was instrumental in implementing the “Final Solution” by organizing the transporting of Jews to death camps from all over Europe. He was arrested at the end of World War II in the American zone, but escaped, went underground, and disappeared. On May 11, 1960, members of the Israeli Secret Service uncovered his whereabouts and smuggled him from Argentina to Israel. Eichmann was tried in Jerusalem (April-December 1961), convicted, and sentenced to death. He was executed on May 31, 1962.

**Eisenhower, Dwight D.** As Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, General Eisenhower commanded all Allied forces in Europe beginning in 1942.

**Einsatzgruppen (German)** Battalion-sized, mobile killing units of the Security Police and SS Security Service that followed the German armies into the Soviet Union in June 1941. These units were supported by units of the uniformed German Order Police

and auxiliaries of volunteers (Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian). Their victims, primarily Jews, were executed by shooting and were buried in mass graves from which they were later exhumed and burned. At least a million Jews were killed in this manner. There were four Einsatzgruppen (A, B, C, D) which were subdivided into company-sized Einsatzkommandos.

**eugenics** A movement devoted to improving the human species by controlling heredity.

**euthanasia** The original meaning of this term was an easy and painless death for the terminally ill. However, the Nazi euthanasia program took on quite a different meaning: the taking of eugenic measures to improve the quality of the German "race." This program culminated in enforced "mercy" deaths for the incurably insane, permanently disabled, deformed and "superfluous." Three major classifications were developed: 1) euthanasia for incurables; 2) direct extermination by "special treatment"; and 3) experiments in mass sterilization.

**Evian Conference (July 6, 1938)** Conference convened by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in July 1938 to discuss the problem of refugees. Representatives of thirty-two countries met at Evian-les-Bains, France. However, not much was accomplished, since most western countries were reluctant to accept Jewish refugees.

**extermination camps** Nazi camps for the mass killing of Jews and others (e.g. Gypsies, Russian prisoners-of-war, ill prisoners). Known as "death camps," these included: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka. All were located in occupied Poland.

**Final Solution** The cover name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe- the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." Beginning in December 1941, Jews were rounded up and sent to extermination camps in the East. The program was deceptively disguised as "resettlement in the East."

**fascism** A social and political ideology with the primary guiding principle that the state or nation is the highest priority, rather than personal or individual freedoms.

**Frank, Hans (1900–1946)** Governor-General of occupied Poland from 1939 to 1945. A member of the Nazi Party from its earliest days and Hitler's personal lawyer, he announced, "Poland will be treated like a colony; the Poles will become slaves of the Greater German Reich." By 1942, more than 85% of the Jews in Poland

had been transported to extermination camps. Frank was tried at Nuremberg, convicted, and executed in 1946.

**Führer** Leader. Adolph Hitler's title in Nazi Germany.

**gas chambers** Large chambers in which people were executed by poison gas. These were built and used in Nazi death camps.

**genocide** The deliberate and systematic destruction of a religious, racial, national, or cultural group.

**gentile** A non-Jewish person

**Gestapo** Acronym of *Geheime Staatspolizei*; Secret State Police. The Prussian and, later the Third Reich's, secret state police and the Nazis' main tool of oppression and destruction, led by Hermann Goring.

**ghetto** The Nazis revived the medieval ghetto in creating their compulsory "Jewish Quarter" (*Wohnbezirk*). The ghetto was a section of a city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to reside. Surrounded by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were often sealed so that people were prevented from leaving or entering. Established mostly in Eastern Europe (e.g. Lodz, Warsaw, Vilna, Riga, Minsk), the ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, starvation and forced labor. All were eventually destroyed as the Jews were deported to death camps.

**Goebbels, Joseph (1897–1945)** Hitler's Minister of propaganda and public information. It was at his prompting that all "un-German" books were burned on May 10, 1933. He was also one of the creators of the "Führer" myth, an important element in the Nazis' successful plan for support by the masses. He saw the Jews as the enemy of the people, and instigated the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938. As Nazi Germany collapsed in 1945, he and his family committed suicide.

**Goring, Hermann (1893–1946)** An early member of the Nazi party, Goring participated in Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich in 1923 (see HITLER, ADOLF). After its failure, he went to Sweden, where he lived (for a time in a mental institution) until 1927. In 1928, he was elected to the Reichstag and became its president in 1932. When Hitler came into power in 1933, he made Goring Air Minister of Germany and Prime Minister of Prussia. He was responsible for the rearmament program and especially for the creation of the German Air Force. In 1939, Hitler designated him his successor. During World War II, he was virtual dictator of the German economy and was responsible for the total air war waged by Germany. Convicted at Nuremberg in 1946, Goring

committed suicide by taking poison just two hours before his scheduled execution.

**great depression** A deep, worldwide, economic contraction beginning in 1929 which caused particular hardship in Germany which was already reeling from huge reparation payments following World War I and hyperinflation.

**Greater German Reich** Designation of an expanded Germany that was intended to include all German speaking peoples. It was one of Hitler's most important aims. After the conquest of most of Western Europe during World War II, it became a reality for a short time.

**Grynszpan, Herschel (1921–1943?)** A Polish Jewish youth who had emigrated to Paris. He agonized over the fate of his parents who, in the course of a pre-war roundup of Polish Jews living in Germany, were trapped between Germany and Poland and not permitted entry into either country. On November 7, 1938, he went to the German Embassy where he shot and mortally wounded Third Secretary Ernst vom Rath. The Nazis used this incident as an excuse for the *KRISTALLNACHT* (Night of the Broken Glass) pogrom.

**Gypsies (*Roma and Szentí*)** A nomadic people, believed to have come originally from northwest India, from where they immigrated to Persia by the fourteenth century. Gypsies first appeared in Western Europe in the 15th century. By the 16th century, they had spread throughout Europe, where they were persecuted almost as relentlessly as the Jews. The gypsies occupied a special place in Nazi racist theories. It is believed that approximately 500,000 perished during the Holocaust.

**Hess, Rudolf (1894–1987)** Deputy and close associate of Hitler from the earliest days of the Nazi movement. On May 10, 1941, he flew alone from Augsburg and parachuted, landing in Scotland where he was promptly arrested. The purpose of his flight has never become clear. He probably wanted to persuade the British to make peace with Hitler as soon as he attacked the Soviet Union. Hitler promptly declared him insane. Hess was tried at Nuremberg, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was the only prisoner in Spandau Prison until he apparently committed suicide in 1987.

**Heydrich, Reinhard (1904–1942)** Former naval officer who joined the SS in 1932, after his dismissal from the Navy. He organized the *Einsatzgruppen*, which systematically murdered Jews in occupied Russia during 1941–1942. In 1941, he was asked by Goring to implement a "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." During the

same year he was appointed protector of Bohemia and Moravia. In January 1942, he presided over the *Wannsee* Conference, a meeting to coordinate the “Final Solution.” On May 29, 1942, he was assassinated by Czech partisans who parachuted in from England. (For consequences of this assassination, see **LIDICE**).

**Himmler, Heinrich (1900–1945)** Reich leader of the SS, head of the *Gestapo* and the *Waffen SS*, minister of the interior, and next to Adolf Hitler, the most powerful man in Nazi Germany. His obsession with “racial purity” led to the idea of killing the Jews. He committed suicide on May 23, 1945, before he could be brought to trial.

**Hindenburg, Paul Von** General Field Marshal who became a German national hero during World War I and was Reich president from 1925–1934.

**Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945)** *Fuhrer und Reichskanzler* (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Although born in Austria, he settled in Germany in 1913. At the outbreak of World War I, Hitler enlisted in the Bavarian Army, became a corporal and received the Iron Cross First Class for bravery. Returning to Munich after the war, he joined the newly formed German Workers Party, which was soon reorganized, under his leadership, as the Nationalist Socialist German Workers Party (*NSDAP*). In November 1923, he unsuccessfully attempted to forcibly bring Germany under nationalist control. When his coup, known as the “Beer-Hall Putsch,” failed, Hitler was arrested and sentenced to 5 years in prison. It was during this time that he wrote *Mein Kampf*. Serving only 9 months of his sentence, Hitler quickly reentered German politics and soon outpolled his political rivals in national elections. By this time the western democracies realized that no agreement with Hitler could be honored and World War II had begun. Although initially victorious on all fronts, Hitler’s armies began suffering setbacks shortly after the United States joined the war in December 1941. Although the war was obviously lost by early 1945, Hitler insisted that Germany fight to the death.

**Hitler Youth/Hitler Jugend** Was a Nazi youth auxiliary group established in 1926. It expanded during the Third Reich. Membership was compulsory after 1939.

**Holocaust** The destruction of some 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their followers in Europe between the years 1933–1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for complete and utter annihilation. The term “Holocaust”—literally meaning “a completely burned sacrifice”—tends to suggest a sacri-

ficial connotation to what occurred. The word *Shoah*, originally in Biblical term meaning widespread disaster, is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

**homophobia** Fear of homosexuals

**International Military Tribunal** The United States, Great Britain, France, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics charted this Court to prosecute Nazi war criminals.

**Jehovah's Witnesses** A religious sect, originating in the United States, organized by Charles Taze Russell. The Witnesses base their beliefs on the Bible and have no official ministers. Recognizing only the kingdom of God, the Witnesses refuse to salute the flag, to bear arms in war, and to participate in the affairs of government. This doctrine brought them into conflict with National Socialism. They were considered enemies of the state and were relentlessly persecuted.

**Jewish Badge** A distinctive sign which Jews were compelled to wear in Nazi Germany and in Nazi-occupied countries. It often took the form of a yellow Star of David.

**Jude** "Jew" in German –put on the yellow star of David during the Holocaust

**judenrat** Council of Jewish representatives in communities and ghettos set up by the Nazis to carry out their instructions.

**judenrein** "Cleansed of Jews," denoting areas where all Jews had been either murdered or deported.

**Kapo** Prisoner in charge of a group of inmates in Nazi concentration camps.

**Korczak, Dr. Janusz (1878-1942)** Educator, author, physician, and director of a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw. Despite the possibility of personal freedom, he refused to abandon his orphans and went with them to the gas chamber in Treblinka.

**kindertransport** The Kindertransport was set up on the eve of World War II just after Kristallnacht (November 9 and 10, 1938) by the British Cabinet allowing for approximately 10,000 refugee Jewish children to be rescued from Germany, Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia with the aid of Jewish, British and Quaker relief organizations. The children were permitted entrance into Great Britain between December 1938 and September 1939. Some of the children were sent to foster homes and hostels and others were sent to live on training farms run by the Youth Aliya in Great Britain. Most of the children never saw their parents again. Of the 10,000, it is believed that 20–25% eventually made their way to the U.S. or Canada.



**Kristallnacht (German)** Night of the Broken Glass: pogrom unleashed by the Nazis on November 9–10, 1938. Throughout Germany and Austria, synagogues and other Jewish institutions were burned, Jewish stores were destroyed, and their contents looted. At the same time, approximately 35,000 Jewish men were sent to concentration camps. The “excuse” for this action was the assassination of Ernst vom Rath in Paris by a Jewish teenager whose parents had been rounded up by the Nazis. (see **GRYNSZPAN, HERSCHEL**).

**League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*)** Female counterpart of the Hitler Youth formed in 1927 but not formally integrated by Hitler until 1932.

**Lebensraum** Meaning “living space,” it was a basic principle of Nazi foreign policy. Hitler believed that Eastern Europe had to be conquered to create a vast German empire for more physical space, a greater population, and new territory to supply food and raw materials.

**Lidice** Czech mining village (pop.700). In reprisal for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazis “liquidated” the village in 1942. They shot the men, deported the women and children to concentration camps, razed the village to the ground, and struck its name from the maps. After World War II, a new village was built near the site of the old Lidice, which is now a national park and memorial. (see **HEYDRICH, REINHARD**).

**Lodz** City in western Poland (renamed Litzmannstadt by the Nazis), where the first major ghetto was created in April 1940. By September 1941, the population of the ghetto was 144,000 in an area of 1.6 square miles (statistically, 5.8 people per room). In October 1941, 20,000 Jews from Germany, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were sent to the Lodz Ghetto. Those deported from Lodz during 1942 and June-July 1944 were sent to the Chelmno extermination camp. In August-September 1944, the ghetto was liquidated and the remaining 60,000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz.

**Madagascar Plan** A Nazi policy that was seriously considered during the late 1930s and 1940s which would have sent Jews to Madagascar, an island off the southeast coast of Africa. At that time Madagascar was a French colony. Ultimately, it was considered impractical and the plan was abandoned.

**Majdanek** Mass murder camp in eastern Poland. At first, a labor camp for Poles and a POW camp for Russians, it was turned into a gassing center for Jews. Majdanek was liberated by the Red Army

[army of the Soviet Union] in July 1944, but not before 250,000 men, women, and children had lost their lives there.

**master race** Those people called Aryans by the Nazis who would rule for a thousand years; those people of “pure blood.”

**Mauthausen 1938** A camp primarily for men, opened in August near Linz in northern Austria, Mauthausen was classified by the SS as a camp of utmost severity. Conditions there were brutal, even by concentration camp standards. Nearly, 125,000 prisoners of various nationalities were either worked or tortured to death at the camp before liberation by American troops who arrived in May 1945.

**Mein Kampf (German)** This autobiographical book (*My Struggle*) by Hitler was written while he was imprisoned in the Landsberg fortress after the “Beer-Hall Putsch” in 1923. In this book, Hitler propounds his ideas, beliefs, and plans for the future of Germany. Everything, including his foreign policy, is permeated by his “racial ideology.” The Germans, belonging to the “superior” Aryan race, have a right to “living space” (*Lebensraum*) in the East, which is inhabited by the “inferior” Slavs. Throughout, he accuses Jews of being the source of all evil, equating them with Bolshevism and, at the same time, with international capitalism. Unfortunately, those people who read the book (except for his admirers) did not take it seriously but considered it the ravings of a maniac. (see **Hitler, Adolf**).

**Mengele, Josef** SS physician at Auschwitz, notorious for pseudo-medical experiments, especially on twins and Gypsies. He “selected” new arrivals by simply pointing to the right or the left, thus separating those considered able to work from those who were not. Those too weak or too old to work were sent straight to the gas chambers, after all their possessions, including their clothes, were taken for resale in Germany. After the war, he spent some time in a British internment hospital but disappeared, went underground, escaped to Argentina, and later to Paraguay, where he became a citizen in 1959. He was hunted by Interpol, Israeli agents, and Simon Wiesenthal. In 1986, his body was found in Embu, Brazil.

**musselmann (German)** Concentration camp slang word for a prisoner who had given up fighting for life.

**Nazi Party** Short Term for *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), the National Socialist German Workers Party, a right-wing, authoritarian, nationalistic and anti-Semitic political party formed on January 5, 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler as its leaders from 1921 to 1945.

**Niemöller, Martin (1892–1984)** German Protestant Pastor who headed the Confessing Church during the Nazi regime. During World War I Niemöller distinguished himself in the German Navy. He was ordained as a minister in 1924, and in 1931, became pastor of Dahlem parish in Berlin, where his naval fame and his preaching drew large crowds. In 1937, he assumed leadership of the Confessing Church. Subsequently, he was arrested for “malicious attacks on the state,” given a token sentence and made to pay a small fine. After he was released, he was re-arrested on direct orders from Adolf Hitler. He spent the next seven years in Sachsenhausen and Dachau concentration camps, usually in solitary confinement. Despite this, at the beginning of World War II, the patriotic Niemöller offered his services to the German Navy, but was refused. In 1945, he was released by the Allies, and became an avowed pacifist who supported a neutral, disarmed and unified Germany. The following statement is attributed (but never recorded officially) to Martin Niemöller and authenticated by Niemöller’s second wife and widow, Sibylle Niemöller. Taken from the *The Christian Century*, Dec. 14, 1994, v. 111, n. 36, p. 1207(1).

**Night and Fog Decree 1941** Secret order issued by Hitler on December 7, to seize “persons endangering German security” who were to vanish without a trace into night and fog.

**Nuremberg Laws 1935** Two anti-Jewish statutes enacted September during the Nazi party’s national convention in Nuremberg. The first, the *Reich* Citizenship Law, deprived German Jews of their citizenship and all pertinent, related rights. The second, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, outlawed marriages of Jews and non-Jews, forbade Jews from employing German females of childbearing age, and prohibited Jews from displaying the German flag. Many additional regulations were attached to the two main statutes, which provided the basis for removing Jews from all spheres of German political, social, and economic life. The Nuremberg Laws carefully established definitions of Jewishness based on bloodlines. Thus, many Germans of mixed ancestry, called “*Mischlinge*,” faced anti-Semitic discrimination if they had a Jewish grandparent.

**Nuremberg Trials** Trials of twenty-two major Nazi figures in Nuremberg, Germany in 1945 and 1946 before the International Military Tribunal.

**partisans** Irregular troops engaged in guerilla warfare, often behind enemy lines. During World War II, this term was applied to resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied countries.

**perpetrators** Those who do something that is morally wrong or criminal.

**Plaszow** Concentration camp near Cracow, Poland opened in 1942.

**pogrom** An organized and often officially encouraged massacre of or attack on Jews. The word is derived from two Russian words that mean “thunder.”

**prejudice** A judgment or opinion formed before the facts are known. In most cases, these opinions are founded on suspicion, intolerance, and the irrational hatred of other races, religions, creeds, or nationalities.

**propaganda** False or partly false information used by a government or political party intended to sway the opinions of the populations

**Protocols of the Elders of Zion** A major piece of anti-Semitic propaganda, compiled at the turn of the century members of the Russian Secret Police. Essentially adapted from a nineteenth century French polemical satire directed against Emperor Napoleon III, substituting Jewish leaders, the Protocols maintained that Jews were plotting world dominion by setting Christian against Christian, corrupting Christian morals and attempting to destroy the economic and political viability of the West. It gained great popularity after World War I and was translated into many languages, encouraging anti-Semitism in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. Long repudiated as an absurd and hateful lie, the book currently has been reprinted and is widely distributed by Neo-Nazis and others.

**Rath, Ernst Vom (1909–1938)** Third secretary at the German Embassy in Paris who was assassinated on November 7, 1938 by Herschel Grynszpan (see **Grynszpan, Herschel**).

**Ravensbruck** Concentration camp opened for women in 1939.

**Reich** German word for “empire.”

**Reichstag** The German Parliament. On February 27, 1933, a staged fire burned the Reichstag building. A month later, on March 23, 1933, the Reichstag approved the Enabling Act which gave Hitler unlimited dictatorial power.

**resistance** The act of resisting, opposing, withstanding rebellion, and attempts to escape.

**resettlement** German euphemism for the deportation of prisoners to killing centers in Poland.

**revisionists** Those who deny that the Holocaust ever happened.

**Righteous Among the Nations** Term applied to those non-Jews who, at the risk of their own lives, saved Jews from their Nazi persecutors.

**Robota, Rosa** Jewish woman whose actions culminated in the demolition by contraband explosives of Crematorium IV at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, an action for which she gave up her life. She was apprehended and executed.

**Roosevelt, Franklin Delano** Thirty-second president of the U.S., serving from 1933-1945.

**SA** (abbreviation: *Sturmabteilung*): the storm troops of the early Nazi party; organized in 1921.

**scapegoat** Person or group of people blamed for crimes committed by others.

**selection** Euphemism for the process of choosing victims for the gas chambers in the Nazi camps by separating them from those considered fit to work (see Mengele, Josef).

**Sennesh, Hannah** A Palestinian Jew of Hungarian descent who fought as a partisan against the Nazis. She was captured at the close of the war and assassinated in Budapest by the Nazis.

**Shoah** The Hebrew word meaning “catastrophe,” denoting the catastrophic destruction of European Jewry during World War II. The term is used in Israel, and the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) has designated an official day, called Yom ha-Shoah, as a day of commemorating the Shoah, or Holocaust.

**shtetl** Yiddish term for a small Eastern European Jewish town or village.

**Sobibor** Extermination camp in the Lublin district in Eastern Poland (see **Belzec**; **Extermination camp**). Sobibor opened in May 1942 and closed one day after a rebellion of the Jewish prisoners on October 14, 1943. At least, 250,000 Jews were killed there.

**Sonderkommando** The term refers to the Jewish slave labor units in extermination camps that removed the bodies of those gassed for cremation or burial.

**Star of David** A six-pointed star which is a symbol of Judaism. During the Holocaust, Jews throughout Europe were required to wear Stars of David on their sleeves or fronts and backs of their shirts and jackets.

**stereotype** Biased generalizations about a group based on hearsay, opinions, and distorted, preconceived ideas.

**SS** Abbreviations usually written with two lightning symbols for *Schutzstaffel* (Defense Protective Units). Originally organized as

Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a giant organization by Heinrich Himmler. Although various SS units were assigned to the battlefield, the organization is best known for carrying out the destruction of European Jewry.

**Stalin, Joseph (1922–1953)** Secretary General of the Communist party and Premier of the USSR from 1941–1953 during the Second World War. Life under Stalin's brutally oppressive regime was hard and often dangerous.

**St. Louis** The steamship St. Louis was a refugee ship that left Hamburg in the spring of 1939, bound for Cuba. When the ship arrived, only 22 of the 1128 refugees were allowed to disembark. Initially, no country, including the United States was willing to accept the others. The ship finally returned to Europe where most of the refugees were finally granted entry into England, Holland, France and Belgium.

**Streicher, Julius** Nazi politician who, among other positions was the founder and editor of *Der Sturmer*. Streicher specialized in anti-Semitism and was one of the chief proponents of the Nuremberg Laws. He was one of the major Nazi figures to be tried by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. He was sentenced and executed on October 16, 1946.

**Struma** Name of a boat carrying 769 Jewish refugees which left Romania late in 1941. It was refused entry to Palestine or Turkey, and was tugged out to the Black Sea where it sank in February 1942, with the loss of all on board except one.

**Der Sturmer** (The Attacker) An anti-Semitic German weekly, founded and edited by Julius Streicher, which was published in Nuremberg between 1923 and 1945.

**Sudetenland** Formerly Austrian German-speaking territories in Bohemia which were incorporated into Czechoslovakia after World War I.

**survivors** Persons who survived persecution at the hands of the Nazis from 1933–1945.

**swastika** An ancient symbol appropriated by the Nazis as their emblem.

**Terezin (Czech)** Established in early 1942 outside Prague as a "model" ghetto, Terezin was not a sealed section of town, but rather an eighteenth-century Austrian garrison. It became a Jewish town, governed and guarded by the SS. When the deportations from central Europe to the extermination camps began in the spring of 1942, certain groups were initially excluded: invalids; partners in a mixed marriage, and their children; and prominent

Jews with special connections. These were sent to the ghetto in Terezin. They were joined by old and young Jews from the Protectorate, [area of Bohemia and Moravia occupied by the Germans] and, later, by small numbers of prominent Jews from Denmark and Holland. Its large barracks served as dormitories for communal living; they also contained offices, workshops, infirmaries, and communal kitchens. The Nazis used Terezin to deceive public opinion. They tolerated a lively cultural life of theatre, music, library, lectures, art and sports. Thus, it could be shown to officials of the International Red Cross. In reality, however, Terezin was only a station on the road to the extermination camps; about 88,000 were deported to their deaths in the East. In April 1945, only 17,000 Jews remained in Terezin, where they were joined by 14,000 Jewish concentration camp prisoners, evacuated from camps threatened by the Allied armies. On May 8, 1945, Terezin was liberated by the Red Army. (see **BAECK, LEO**).

**Third Reich** Meaning "third regime or empire," the Nazi designation of Germany and its regime from 1933-45. Historically, the First Reich was the medieval Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until 1806. The Second Reich included the German Empire from 1871-1918.

**Treaty of Versailles** Germany and the Allies signed a peace treaty at the end of World War I. The United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy negotiated the treaty at the Peace Conference held in Versailles beginning on January 18, 1919. The German Republic government which replaced the imperial administration was excluded from the deliberations. The treaty created the Covenant of the League of Nations, outlines Germany's disarmament, exacted massive reparation payments from Germany, and forced Germany to cede large tracts of territory to various European nation-states.

**Treblinka** Extermination camp in Northeast Poland (see **EXTERMINATION CAMP**). Established in May 1942, along the Warsaw-Bialystok railway line, 870,000 people were murdered there. The camp operated until the fall of 1943 when the Nazis destroyed the entire camp in an attempt to conceal all traces of their crimes.

**typhus** An acute infectious disease transmitted by lice or fleas. Anne Frank died of typhus.

**Umschlagplatz (German)** Collection point. It was a square in the Warsaw Ghetto where Jews were rounded up for deportation to Treblinka.

**underground** Organized group acting in secrecy to oppose government, or, during war, to resist occupying enemy forces.

**Volk** The concept of Volk (people, nation, or race) has been an underlying idea in German history since the early nineteenth century. Inherent in the name was a feeling of superiority of German culture and the idea of a universal mission for the German people.

**Wannsee** Lake near Berlin where the Wannsee Conference was held to discuss and coordinate the “Final Solution.” It was attended by many high-ranking Nazis, including Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann.

**Wallenberg, Raoul (1912–19??)** Swedish diplomat who, in 1944, went to Hungary on a mission to save as many Jews as possible by handing out Swedish papers, passports and visas. He is credited with saving the lives of a least 30,000 people. After the liberation of Budapest, he was mysteriously taken into custody by the Russians and his fate remains unknown.

**Warsaw Ghetto** Established in November 1940, the ghetto, surrounded by a wall, confined nearly 500,000 Jews. Almost 45,000 Jews died there in 1941 alone, due to overcrowding, forced labor, lack of sanitation, starvation, and disease. From April 19 to May 16, 1943, a revolt took place in the ghetto when the Germans, commanded by General Jurgen Stroop, attempted to raise the ghetto and deport the remaining inhabitants to Treblinka. The uprising, led by Mordecai Anielewicz, was the first instance in occupied Europe of an uprising by an urban population. (See **Anielewicz, Mordecai**).

**Wehrmacht** The combined armed forces of Germany from 1935–1945.

**Weimar Republic** The German republic, and experiment in democracy (1919–1933), was established after the end of World War I.

**Wiesenthal, Simon (1908–2005)** Famed Holocaust survivor who has dedicated his life since the war to gathering evidence for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. (see p.49).

**Zionism** Political and cultural movement calling for the return of the Jewish people to their Biblical home in Israel (Palestine).

**Zy-Klon B** (Hydrogen cyanide) Pesticide used in some of the gas chambers at the death camps.

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