

GLOSSARY

General

Aktion: Murderous campaigns against Jews for the purposes of deportation or execution; Most viciously employed in the Eastern Territories.

Anschluss: (German for Linkage) term used by Germans for Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria on March 13, 1938.

Antisemitism: hatred, prejudice, oppression, or discrimination against Jews or Judaism.

"Arbeit macht frei": (German for "work will set you free") Cynical slogan above entrance gates of a number of concentration and death camps, including Auschwitz, Dachau, and Theresienstadt. It was intentionally deceptive, since all Jews had indefinite sentences.

Aryan: In Nazi racial theory, a person of pure German "blood." The term "non-Aryan" was used to designate Jews, part-Jews and others of supposedly inferior racial stock. For the Nazis, a typical Aryan was blond, blue-eyed and tall. This ideal was based on the mythical Nordic ancestors of the German people

Axis: The political, military, and ideological alliance of Nazi Germany with Italy, Japan, Finland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria during the Second World War.

Chancellor: Chief (prime) minister of Germany, head of the government during the Weimar Republic.

Concentration Camp: In German, *Konzentrationslager*. Prison camps, often with numerous sub-camps, constructed to hold Jews, Gypsies, political and religious opponents, resisters, homosexuals, and other Germans considered "enemies of the state." Before the end of World War II, more than 100 concentration camps had been created across German-occupied Europe.

Displaced persons (DPs): Jews and others who did not wish, at war's end, to be repatriated to their former communities/countries of origin, and who were placed in DP camps.

Einsatzgruppen: Mobile units of SS and SD (Security Service) which followed German armies into the Soviet Union in June 1941. They were ordered to murder through shooting all Jews, as well as Communist leaders and Gypsies. At least one million Jews were killed by Einsatzgruppen.

"Final Solution": The term "Final Solution" (*Endlösung*) refers to "the final solution to the Jewish question." Nazi code for the physical destruction of all the Jews of Europe. The term was used at the Wannsee Conference, Berlin, January 20, 1942 when German officials were convened to discuss its implementation.

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Führer: German word for "leader." Hitler was the Führer of Nazi Germany.

Genocide: the word *genocide* (*genos* – race, nation, tribe; *cide* – killing) was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish/Jewish lawyer who was able to encourage the United Nations General Assembly to pass a resolution in December 1948, giving genocide a legal definition in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The official definition is the intentional destructions of a national, ethnic, religious, or racial group.

Gestapo: In German, *Geheime Staatspolizei*. Secret State Police. It had powers of incarceration without judicial review. It became the most feared entity in Nazi occupied areas.

Ghetto: The Nazis revived the medieval ghetto in creating their forced "Jewish Quarter" (*Wohnbezirk*). The ghetto was a section of a city where all Jews from that city 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.

Gypsies: Popular term for Roma and Sinti, nomadic people believed to have come originally from northwest India. Traveling mostly in small caravans, Gypsies first appeared in Western Europe in the 1400's and eventually spread to every country of Europe. Prejudices toward Gypsies were and are widespread. Approximately 250,000 to 500,000 Gypsies are estimated to have perished in Nazi concentration camps, killing centers and in Einsatzgruppen and other shootings.

Holocaust: The word "Holocaust" is derived from the Greek word *holokauston*, a translation of the Hebrew word "Olah," meaning burnt sacrifice offered whole unto the Lord. It was a name given to what Winston Churchill once called "a crime without a name," because in the ultimate manifestation of the Nazi killing program – the death camps – Jews were murdered in gas chambers and their bodies were consumed whole in crematoria and open fires.

Jehovah's Witness: Religious sect that originated in the United States and had about 20,000 members in Germany in 1933. Witnesses, whose religious belief did not allow them to swear allegiance to any worldly power, were persecuted as "enemies of the state." About 100,000 Witnesses from Germany and other countries were imprisoned in concentration camps. Of these, about 2,500 died.

Judenrate: Council of Jewish leaders established on Nazi orders in German-occupied population centers where ghettos were established. Jewish leaders, called Elders, were forced to carry out Nazi plans for Jewish ghetto life.

Kapo: An inmate in a concentration camp who supervised other prisoners as barrack heads, foreman of work details, etc...in return for additional rations and better living conditions.

Killing centers: Camps equipped with facilities to kill with poisonous gas: Belzec, Chelmo, Sobibor, Treblinka, as well as killing sections of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek-Lublin concentration camps.

Kristallnacht: (German: Night of Broken Glass) a violent, orchestrated pogrom against Jewish stores and synagogues on November 9-10, 1938, in Germany, Austria, and Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia.

Lebensraum: ("Living Space") The acquisition of Lebensraum was a guiding principle of German foreign policy expressed in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The Nazis believed they were entitled to conquer huge portions of eastern territories that they deemed necessary for the continued existence or economic well-being of the "Aryan race."

Mein Kampf: (German: My Struggle) Adolf Hitler's autobiography and philosophical/political creed, written in 1924, with the aid of his secretary, Rudolf Hess, in Landsberg prison. It embodied the ideas of racism, anti-Semitism, social Darwinism and the "will to power."

Mischlinge: Those who were not classified as Jews but who had some Jewish blood were categorized as *mischlinge* (hybrid) and were divided into two groups:
Mischlinge First Degree: those with two Jewish grandparents, and did not belong to the Jewish religion and were not married to a Jew.
Mischlinge Second Degree: those with one Jewish grandparent

Muselmann: A physically and emotionally run-down concentration camp inmate who was so weak he could not walk, work, or stand erect.

Nazi: (N.S.D.A.P.) Short term for the *National Socialist German Workers Party*, a right-wing, nationalistic, anti-Semitic political party formed in 1919, and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921 to 1945.

Nuremberg Laws: Nazi laws passed in September 1935, which took German citizenship from Jews, defined them "racially", and prohibited Jewish-Aryan inter-marriage.

Nuremberg War Crimes Trials: One of the greatest trials in history where 21 top Nazi war criminals stood accused by the world's first International Military Tribunal. Among the indictment were charges of conspiracy, crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. At the end of the one year trial, all but two of the Nazi defendants were found guilty. Twelve of those convicted were sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment, and four to prison terms ranging from 10 to 20 years. The trials were held in the German city of Nuremberg from November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1945, by an international military tribunal of U.S., British, French and Soviet judges.

Partisan: Member of a resistance group operating secretly within enemy lines, particularly in rural areas.

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Persecution: Act of causing others to suffer, especially those who differ in background or lifestyle or hold different political or religious beliefs.

Pogrom: Russian word for "devastation." Organized violence against Jews, often with understood support of governmental authorities.

Prejudice: An adverse judgment about a person or group of people based on limited knowledge or stereotypes.

Reich: German word for "empire." Hitler termed his regime the Third Reich. The first Reich was the Holy Roman Empire; the second was the Kaiser Reich.

Reichstag: Germany's lawmaking body under the Weimar and continued to function during the Third Reich totally controlled by Nazis.

"Righteous Among the Nations": Gentiles who risked their own lives to save Jews during the Holocaust with no exception of material reward, and who are honored at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum in Jerusalem, Israel.

SA: In German, *Sturmabteilung*. Nazi Storm Troopers. Also called "Brownshirts." Members of a special armed and uniformed branch of the Nazi party led by Ernst Röhm from 1922 to 1934. The organization faded when its leaders were executed in the Night of the Long Knives.

Scapegoat: Person or group of persons unfairly blamed for wrongs done by others.

SD: (*Sicherheitsdienst*; Security Service) An intelligence service for the Nazi Party and SS. Headed by Reinhard Heydrich, it became a terror instrument against "enemies of the state."

Selektion: (German: Selection) in ghettos, the SS selected which Jews would be deported. In camps, the SS selected the exhausted and sick inmates for extermination upon arrival or during roll-call.

Shtetl: Yiddish word for small Jewish township or village. Any remaining shtetls were destroyed in the Holocaust.

Sho'ah: (Hebrew: mass slaughter) This Hebrew word is preferred over "Holocaust" in Israel. It is found in Isaiah 10:3 and means destruction, complete ruin.

Sonkerkommando: German word for "special squad." In the context of extermination camps, it refers to an unit of Jewish prisoners forced to take away bodies of gassed inmates to be cremated and to remove gold fillings and hair.

SS: In German, *Schutzstaffel*, Protection Squad. Units formed in 1925, as Hitler's personal bodyguard. The SS was later built into a giant organization by Heinrich Himmler. It provided staff for police, camp guards, and military units (Waffen-SS) serving with the German army. It became the primary instrument in the Final Solution.

“Stab in the Back Legend”: The idea that Germany lost World War I because of an internal enemy who had stabbed Germany in the back. Back stabbers were defined as those who in the last stages of the war expressed the German’s people yearning for peace – the Democrats, the Catholic Center party, the Socialists, Communists and, of course, the Jews. The legend of the stab in the back (*Dolchstoßlegende*) was to become a favorite theme of Nazi propaganda.

Star of David: Star with six points, symbol of the Jewish religion. Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David in Nazi controlled Europe. The patch had to be sewn on all visible clothing.

Underground: Organized group acting in secrecy during the war, to resist Nazi domination.

Waffen-SS: The Waffen SS, the largest branch of the SS (39 divisions), often fought at the front line as regular soldiers.

Wannsee Conference: An 87-minute meeting held on January 20, 1942, at a villa in a Berlin suburb, attended by 15 leading Nazi officials. Reinhard Heydrich, its chairman, discussed plans to coordinate the “Final Solution.”

Wehrmacht: The name of Nazi Germany’s army after 1935. The *Wehrmacht* assisted the SS in the “Final Solution.”

Weimar Republic: Democratic regime in Germany from 1918 to 1933. During this period the country suffered economically, both from forced reparations after World War I and also because of the Great Depression, and politically, because of the unstable government. Nazism gained popularity, especially during the Great Depression, by positioning itself as a solution to these problems.

Yalta Conference: Yalta, a city in the Russian Crimea, hosted a wartime conference in February 1945, where US President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin met. The Allies agreed to final plans for the defeat of Germany and the terms of its occupation.

Yiddish: A language that combines elements of German and Hebrew, usually written in Hebrew characters and spoken by Jews chiefly in eastern Europe and areas to which eastern Europeans migrated.

Zyklon B: (hydrogen cyanide) A poisonous gas used in the gas chambers of the Nazi extermination camps.

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Auschwitz I: original and main Auschwitz camp in southwest Poland. Served first as Polish military barrack, then as concentration camp largely for gentiles.

Auschwitz II: (Birkenau) Largest Nazi Camp, opened in October 1941. It was used particularly for the extermination of Jews and Roma (Gypsies). It was the site of four gas chambers.

Auschwitz III: (Buna-Monowitz) Set aside as a labor camp for chemical giant I.G. Farben. It refers also to 36 subcamps.

Belzec: Nazi extermination camp in eastern Poland where an estimated 250,000 Jews were killed between March 1942 and December 1942. Earlier, Belzec functioned as a forced labor camp.

Bergen-Belsen: Located in northern Germany, transformed from a prisoner-exchange camp into a concentration camp in March 1944. Poor sanitary conditions, epidemics, and starvation led to deaths of thousands, including Anne and Margot Frank in March 1945.

Buchenwald: Concentration camp in north-central Germany, established in July 1937. One of the largest concentration camps on German-soil, with more than 130 satellite labor camps. It held many political prisoners. More than 65,000 of approximately 250,000 prisoners perished at Buchenwald.

Chelmno: (*Kulmhof*) Nazi extermination camp in western Poland where at least 150,000 Jews, about 5,000 Gypsies, and several hundred Poles, as well as Soviet prisoners of war, were killed between December 1941 and March 1943.

Dachau: First concentration camp, established in March 1933 near Munich, Germany. At first Dachau held only political opponents, but over time, more and more groups were imprisoned there. Thousands died at Dachau from starvation, maltreatment, and disease.

Drancy: Located near Paris, Drancy became the largest transit camp for deportation of Jews from France. Between July 1942 and August 1944, about 61,000 Jews were transported from Drancy to Auschwitz, where most of them perished.

Lodz: Before World War II, a major industrial city in western Poland with a Jewish population second only to Warsaw's. In April 1940, the first major ghetto was created there. Some 43,500 persons died in the Lodz ghetto from starvation, disease and exposure to the cold. Thousands more taken from the ghetto were killed by gassing at Chelmno. In August - September 1944, the 60,000 remaining Jews were sent to Auschwitz, only a few survived.

Majdanek-Lublin: Located near Lublin in eastern Poland, at first a labor camp for Poles and prisoner-of-war camps for Soviets, it existed as a concentration camp from April 1943 to July 1944. Tens of thousands perished there from starvation, maltreatment, and shootings. Also a killing center, where at least 50,000 Jews were shot or gassed.

Mauthausen: Concentration camp for men near Linz in upper Austria opened in August 1938. Many political prisoners were held at Mauthausen and its numerous subcamps. Classified by the SS as one of the two harshest concentration camps; many prisoners were killed there by being pushed from 300-foot cliffs into stone quarries. Close to 40,000 Jews perished there.

Ostland: (Eastern Territories) These Nazi-occupied territories included Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and western Byelorussia.

Ravensbrück: Concentration camp for woman opened in May 1939, 56 miles north of Berlin. An estimated 120,000 prisoners were inmates there, including many political prisoners, Jews, Gypsies, and Jehovah Witnesses.

Rhineland: Demilitarized zone that Allies established after the First World War as a buffer between Germany and Western Europe.

Sobibor: Nazi extermination camp in eastern Poland where up to 200,000 Jews were killed between May 1942 and November 1943.

Sudetenland: Mainly German-speaking region that was part of Czechoslovakia between the two world wars. Annexed by Germany in October 1938 as result of the Munich Pact.

Theresienstadt: German name for the Czech town of Terezin, located about 40 miles from Prague. Nazis used the Theresienstadt ghetto, established in November 1941, as a “model Jewish settlement” to show Red Cross investigators how well Jews were being treated. In reality, thousands died from starvation and disease, and thousands more were deported and killed in extermination camps.

Treblinka: Nazi extermination camp about 50 miles northeast of Warsaw. Up to 750,000 Jews and at least 2,000 Gypsies were killed at Treblinka between July 1942 and November 1943.

Warsaw: The capital of Poland, where about 375,000 Jews lived on the eve of World War II. In October-November 1940, Germans established the Warsaw Ghetto, into which some 500,000 Jews were crowded. Of these, an average of 5,000 to 6,000 died each month from starvation, diseases, exposure to the cold, and shootings. Tens of thousands were deported to Treblinka in the summer of 1942. After an uprising in April 1943, organized by resistance fighters ended on May 16, 1943, the surviving Jews were deported to Nazi camps.

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Westerbork: Transit camp in northeastern Holland for almost 100,000 Jews who were deported between 1942 and 1944 to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sobibor, Theresienstadt, and Bergen-Belsen. Anne Frank and her family were held at Westerbork between August 8, 1944 and September 3, 1944, when they were put on the last transport to Auschwitz.

Vichy: A spa town in central France and the site of the collaborationist French government after the defeat of Republican France in 1940.

Biographical

Anielewicz, Mordechai

Leader of the ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir underground in 1940, in Warsaw, Anielewicz set up cells and youth groups, and published an underground newspaper. After hearing of the mass murder of Jews in the east, he organized self defense in the ghetto and, in 1943, became commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. After 4 weeks of battle, he was killed in his bunker.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich

A German Protestant theologian and outspoken opponent of Nazi racist ideology. Bonhoeffer's involvement in the smuggling of fifteen Jews to Switzerland led to his arrest and subsequent execution by the Nazis. His courageous opposition to the Nazis enhanced his post-war influence.

Churchill, Winston

Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill KG, OM, CH, FRS (November 30, 1874 - January 24, 1965) was a British politician, best known as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II. Churchill is generally regarded as one of the most important leaders in British and world history.

Eichmann, Adolf

SS Lieutenant Colonel and head of the Gestapo department of Jewish Affairs. Organized transportation of Jews from all over Europe to Nazi extermination camps. After the war, he escaped to Latin America. Captured by Israeli Secret Service in Argentina, he was brought to Israel for trial. He was tried in Jerusalem in 1961, convicted, and executed, the first and last official execution in Israel, which does not have the death penalty.

Frick, Wilhelm

Reich Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick was responsible for the enactment of most of the racial laws. He gradually lost control of the ministry's affairs and was replaced by Heinrich Himmler in 1943. Frick then became governor of Bohemia and Moravia. He was one of the major war criminals found guilty and hanged at Nuremberg.

Goebbels, Paul Josef

Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany, and one of Hitler's closest confidants, he was responsible for spreading Hitler's message in Germany and beyond. At the end of the war, in Hitler's Berlin bunker, Goebbels and his wife took their own lives and those of their six children.

Goering, Hermann

Commander of the SA, Reichstag speaker, and commander of the German air force. Hitler also placed him in charge of Germany's economy and the "Jewish Question," and appointed him his successor. He played an important part in the murder of the Jews. Although sentenced to death in at Nuremberg 1946, he committed suicide.

Hess, Rudolf

Rudolf Hess (1894-1987) was a prominent Nazi leader and a close aide to Adolf Hitler. From 1933, all German law was signed by him. Just before World War II, he apparently felt that he had been removed from the decision-making process of the Nazi party, and in 1941 he flew to Britain. At the end of the war, he was sentenced to life imprisonment and committed suicide in 1987.

Heydrich, Reinhard

SS Lieutenant General, head of Reich Security, which included the Gestapo. Organized the Einsatzgruppen and led the Wannsee Conference of January 1942, where the coordination of the "Final Solution" was discussed. He was shot by members of the Czech resistance on May 27, 1942, near Prague, and died several days later. In reprisal for shooting Heydrich the Czech village of Lidice was destroyed. In addition, in honor of Heydrich, Nazis gave the code name "Operation Reinhard" to destruction of the Jews in occupied Poland, at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka extermination camps.

Himmler, Heinrich

Reich leader of the SS from 1929 to 1945, during the Second World War, he was head of a vast empire: all SS formations, police forces, and concentration and labor camps. The senior SS leader responsible for carrying out the "final solution," Himmler committed suicide before he could be brought to trial.

Hitler, Adolf

German dictator and Nazi party leader who ascended to power in January 1933 and led his country into the Second World War. His deeply ingrained antisemitism and belief in racial superiority laid the groundwork for the Holocaust.

Mengele, Josef

Senior SS physician at Auschwitz-Birkenau from 1943 to 1944. One of the physicians who carried out "selections" of prisoners upon arrival at camp, separating those to be assigned to forced labor from those to be killed. Mengele also carried out cruel research on twins deported to the camp. He would become known as the "Angel of Death." After the war, he disappeared. The remains of a Wolfgang Gerhard, who died in a swimming accident in 1979, was discovered in Brazil in 1985, and identified as Mengele.

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Roosevelt, Franklin Delano

Thirty-second President of the United States, serving from 1933 to 1945.

Ribbentrop, Joachim von

Foreign Minister of Germany from 1939-1945. He reached the climax of his career with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939. His influence rapidly diminished after that, as war replaced diplomacy. He saw no alternative to the "Final Solution." For crimes against humanity, he was condemned to death.

Ringelblum, Emanuel

One of the leaders of the Anti-Fascist Bloc in the Warsaw ghetto, who organized the underground ghetto archives. His *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* gave detailed accounts of daily events and conditions. He was murdered by the Gestapo in March, 1944.

Robota, Rosa

Born in Poland, Rosa Robota was a Jewish underground activist in Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. She helped smuggle gun powder out of the camp factory, and was subsequently arrested. She was tortured and interrogated, but would not reveal the names of fellow activists. Robota was hanged in 1945.

Rohm, Ernst

Chief of Staff of the SA, he wanted a "second revolution" which would displace the existing class structure, and turn the SA into a People's Army. Friction between Rohm and Hitler led to the killing of Rohm, and 70 other leading Stormtroopers, in "Night of the Long Knives," on June 30, 1934.

Rosenberg, Alfred

Chief Nazi ideologist and head of the foreign policy department. In his major work "The Myth of the Twentieth Century," he wrote that race was the main factor determining science, art and culture. The Jews, he asserted, had distorted the ideals of race with their religion of humanity. He was condemned to death at Nuremberg, in 1946.

Schindler, Oskar

Protected hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust by employing them in his enamel factory, thereby saving them from deportations. He saved nine hundred Jews from the infamous Plaszow labor camp, outside of Krakow, by setting up a branch of the camp in his factory. He also saved eleven hundred other Jews from camps, giving them medicine and food.

Sendler, Irena

One of the most active members of the Polish underground organization, Zegota (Council of Aid to Jews), Sendler smuggled Jewish children out of the ghetto and found hiding places for them with non-Jews. Arrested in 1943, she withstood torture to protect the children. Yad Vashem has named her one of the "Righteous Among the Nations."

Speer, Albert

Hitler's chief architect and minister of armaments from 1942 to 1945. His task was to draw up new plans for the city of Berlin and create a center for party conventions and pageantry in Nuremberg. In 1946 at Nuremberg, he was charged with employing forced laborers. He admitted responsibility for his actions and was sentenced to twenty years in prison.

Streicher, Julius

A Nazi politician, Streicher was one of the most rabid anti-Semites in the Nazi Party. He founded and edited the anti-Semitic newspaper "Der Stürmer," (The Attacker), and helped write the Nuremberg Laws. He wrote articles accusing Jews of vile crimes and calling for the destruction of the Jewish people. At Nuremberg he was sentenced to death.

Sugihara, Sempo

As Japanese consul general in Kovno, Lithuania, in 1940, Sempo Sugihara acted against his government's policy and granted some 1600 transit visas to Polish Jewish refugees stranded in Kovno. Of those who thus escaped death in Lithuania, many eventually reached the United States. Sugihara, who had been dismissed from the Japanese Consular Corps, for disobedience was named one of the "Righteous Among the Nations" in 1984.

Wallenberg, Raoul

Wallenberg was a heroic Swedish diplomat who saved the lives of thousands of Jews in Budapest, Hungary in 1944. He issued protective passports which saved Jews from deportation, personally removed Jews already on the trains, set up special hostels to protect the Jews he rescued and helped foil a plan to blow up the Jewish ghettos. After being detained by the Soviets in 1945, all trace of him vanished.

Zuckerman, Yitzhak

A leader of the underground in Warsaw, Zuckerman organized a secret press and prepared youth for future immigration to Palestine. Ordered to the Polish side of Warsaw during the ghetto uprising, he tried to supply arms to fighters and made his way back to the ghetto to rescue others. He survived the revolt and moved to Palestine in 1947.



Diane Thodos- Child, 2004; Simon Norfolk- For Most Of It I Have No Words: Genocide, Landscape, Memory: Armenia after a snowstorm, 2000; Maria Theresia Litschauer- From the series 6/44-5/45: Mauthausen_wand 1, 2005; Djibril Sy- Untitled (Mother of Dead Child), 2003; Samuel Bak- Absence, 1997