

## **PART VI**

# **REFERENCE SECTIONS**



# 1

## Basic terms for understanding the Holocaust

- Anschluss** Literally ‘union’ or ‘joining together’. In this case, Austria’s annexation by Hitler’s Germany on 12 March 1938.
- Blitzkrieg** German term, literally meaning ‘lightning war’, used to describe the intensity and speed of German military onslaught upon enemies’ territory.
- Bund** Jewish socialist movement founded in Tsarist Russia in 1897. Committed to secular non-territorial nationalism, Jewish cultural and linguistic (Yiddish) autonomy, and strongly antagonistic to Zionism (for which, see below).
- Concentration camp** A camp for detention of perceived enemies of the Nazi state. Originally set up after Hitler’s accession to power in 1933, the concentration camp regime involved forced labour and systematic use of terror. Massively extended to territories and people coming under Nazi occupation during the war, usually with a high percentage of Jewish prisoners.
- Death camp** As distinct from both labour and concentration camps, a centre whose sole purpose was to annihilate its inmates. The main Nazi death camps were sited on Polish soil—Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor and Treblinka.
- Death marches** The evacuation and forced marches of camp inmates during the latter stages of the war, when the Nazis felt themselves threatened by the proximity of Allied troops. Tens of thousands of victims died while on these marches.
- Deportation** Process whereby Nazis removed people from their normal place of residence, often via a deportation centre, to a labour, concentration or death camp.
- Der Stürmer** Nazi propaganda weekly, luridly antisemitic, founded in 1923 and edited by Julius Streicher.
- Displaced persons** Those millions of Europeans—Jews and non-Jews—who, by the war’s end, had been forced out of their homes, both by Nazi decrees and by the overall effects of the war.
- Einsatzgruppen** Special mobile units organized by the Reich Security Main Office for the elimination of the Nazis’ enemies in countries occupied by them. Primarily responsible for the large-scale massacres of Russian Jews, communists and intellectuals during Operation Barbarossa, 1941, and for the slaughter of Poles throughout the war years.
- Final Solution** The euphemistic term used by the Nazis for their plans for comprehensive annihilation of European Jewry.
- General Government** Administrative area in central and southern Poland created by the Nazis following the country’s partition between Germany and the Soviet Union. Became the centre of the death camp system.
- Genocide** A term created by the international jurist Raphael Lemkin in 1943 to denote a conscious attempt at the physical destruction of a defined group of people.
- Gestapo** The German state secret police. Directly under the control of Himmler from 1936.
- Ghetto** The quarters of some European towns in which Jews were compulsorily required to reside in the Middle Ages. Resurrected by the Nazis following their take-over of Poland.
- Haganah** The underground military organization of the Jewish community in Palestine under the British Mandate.

- Hitler Youth** Organization originally founded in 1926 to inculcate racial, social and militaristic values into young Germans. After 1936, membership for 10–18 year olds.
- Judenrat** German term meaning ‘Jewish Council’, used to describe the Jewish representative bodies established by the Nazis in various ghettos and communities. The purpose behind their establishment was to provide the Nazis with vital administrative and supervisory assistance and to implement Nazi decrees.
- Labour camp** A camp contributing to Germany’s wartime production through the use of slave labour, mostly involving prisoners of war, Jews and foreign nationals.
- Lebensraum** Literally ‘living space’. The acquisition of additional *Lebensraum* to be colonized by German people in the east was central to Hitler’s racial vision of the future and therefore a key to his foreign policy and military preparations.
- Operation Barbarossa** The name of the Nazis’ military campaign to destroy the Soviet state, starting on 22 June 1941.
- Reichstag** German parliament, largely ornamental during the Nazi era.
- RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* — **Reich Security Main Office**)** The security apparatus of the Nazi state formed from an amalgamation of the Gestapo and Kripo (criminal) state police forces with the SD (Nazi Party intelligence service) in 1939.
- SA (*Sturmabteilung*)** Literally ‘Zstormtrooper’, also known as Brownshirts. Shock troops of the Nazi Party founded in 1921. Eclipsed by the SS after the ‘Night of the Long Knives’ of 30 June 1934 when the SA leadership was murdered.
- SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*)** The security and intelligence wing of the SS founded, under Heydrich, in 1932. The core of the Reich Security Main Office (RHSA) founded in 1939.
- SS (*Schutzstaffel*)** Literally ‘protection squads’ also known as Blackshirts. The paramilitary body created in 1925 to protect the Nazi Party and its leader, Hitler. After the Nazi seizure of absolute power, Himmler turned it into the most powerful organization within the state. All functions of the concentration and death camp system were controlled by it.
- Vichy France** Puppet regime set up in southern France after Nazi conquest. Northern France continued to be ruled directly by Nazi Germany.
- Weimar Germany** The democratic republican regime that was established in Germany after the First World War. Lasted until Hitler’s destruction of democratic government shortly after his accession to power.
- Wehrmacht** German regular armed forces.
- White Paper, 1939** British policy statement of May 1939, rigidly adhered to throughout the war years, restricting the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine to a total of 75,000 over the subsequent five-year period (i.e. an average of 15,000 per year).
- Zionism** Jewish nationalist movement that sought a response to antisemitism in the founding of a Jewish national home in Palestine. The outcome would be the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

## Main characters

- Mordechai Anielewicz** Young Zionist activist who, as head of the Jewish Combat Organization, led (and died in) the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of April-May 1943.
- Leo Baeck** Leading Jewish rabbi, scholar and spokesman, who became president of the newly formed *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* (National Organization of German Jewry) after the Nazi take-over in 1933. Continued in this role until deported to Theresienstadt.
- David Ben-Gurion** Zionist leader of the Jewish community in Palestine. Given its slender resources, he was opposed to rescue efforts which might detract from his primary goal of building a Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1961, as Israeli Prime Minister, he used the Eichmann trial as a way of bringing world attention to the facts of the Holocaust.
- Walther Darré** Nazi head of the Race Office, Agriculture Minister and advocate of the special German relationship between ‘blood and soil’. Argued that only pure Aryans could own land and in a series of laws eliminated Jews from all aspects of German agricultural production and trade.
- Simon Dubnow** Leading Jewish historian whose last words to his fellow-Jews before his deportation in December 1941 from his home in Riga, Latvia, are said to have been ‘Write and record!’
- Adolf Eichmann** Career bureaucrat in the SS who became a specialist in ‘Jewish affairs’. He oversaw first the expulsions of Jews from Greater Germany and later the transport and other administrative arrangements necessary for the implementation of the Final Solution. Seized by Israeli agents in Argentina where he had gone into hiding after the war, Eichmann was tried and sentenced to death by an Israeli court in 1961.
- Anne Frank** German Jewish girl whose poignant diary chronicles two years of hiding in a tiny attic in Amsterdam. Eventually betrayed to the Gestapo in August 1944, she was deported to Auschwitz and died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. Her diary survived the war and has since been translated into over thirty languages. From its pages, her imaginative, inquisitive teenage mind and unshaken belief in a better future transcend the tragic confines of her hiding-place.
- Hans Frank** Head of the General Government (Nazi-occupied central and southern Poland)—the heartland of the ghetto and death camp system. Exploited its 2.5 million Jewish population for slave labour, while at the same time ensuring their removal through starvation, expulsion and extermination.
- Wilhelm Frick** Nazi Minister of the Interior until 1943. Responsible for Nazi racial and anti-Jewish legislation, including the 1935 Nuremberg Laws and 1938 ‘Aryanization’ of Jewish businesses.
- Bishop Clemens von Galen** Catholic Bishop of Münster who publicly criticized the Nazi ‘euthanasia’ killings in a sermon in August 1941, leading to its official (though not in practice complete) termination. Later imprisoned by the Nazis.
- Joseph Goebbels** Nazi Minister of Propaganda, organizing in this capacity repeated anti-Jewish campaigns. Responsible for the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in November 1938 and later the deportation of Jews from Berlin. Committed suicide in Hitler’s bunker on 30 April 1945.
- Hermann Göring** Close Nazi associate of Hitler who acquired wide powers over Germany’s economy and its war preparations. Responsible for the expropriation of German Jewish assets in the 1930s and the extension of this policy to the whole of Nazi-occupied Europe during the war. Committed suicide at Nuremberg in 1946.

- Herschel Grynszpan** Seventeen-year-old Jew who assassinated a German official in the Paris embassy in November 1938, in retaliation for the maltreatment and deportation of his parents from Germany to the Polish border. His action precipitated the Kristallnacht pogrom.
- Rudolf Hess** Hitler's official deputy. Flew to Scotland in a personal attempt to make peace with the British in 1941. Tried for war crimes at Nuremberg and sentenced to life imprisonment.
- Reinhard Heydrich** Himmler's right-hand man in the SS and head of the SD, the organization's own security police. Jointly responsible with Himmler for the creation of the Nazi police state and concentration camp system. Creator and organizational chief of the *Einsatzgruppen* with executive responsibility for the implementation of the Final Solution. Convened Wannsee Conference in January 1942 for this purpose. From October 1941, he was Reich Protector of the Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia which had been incorporated into the Nazi state. Assassinated by Czech agents in cooperation with the British in May 1942.
- Heinrich Himmler** Head of the SS and Nazi police apparatus, with overall responsibility for eliminating all enemies of Hitler's new order. Also after 1943 Minister of the Interior. Chief architect of the concentration camp system and prime mover and organizer of the Final Solution. Captured by the British in May 1945 and committed suicide.
- Paul von Hindenburg** Head of the imperial German army in the First World War and last President of the Weimar Republic. His death in 1934 paved the way for the complete consolidation of Nazi power.
- Adolf Hitler** Austrian-born leader of the Nazi Party, self-styled Führer (absolute leader) of the German people and obsessive Jew-hater. A charismatic demagogue whose mixture of opportunism and planning plunged Europe into the Second World War. His decision, in June 1941, to invade the Soviet Union—the nerve-centre of his mythical 'Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy' on to which he projected all that he most feared and loathed—precipitated the implementation of the Final Solution. The total defeat of Nazism by the Allies, culminating in the Red Army's breakthrough to Berlin, led to his suicide in his Chancellery bunker on 30 April 1945.
- Rudolf Hoess** Zealous concentration camp functionary who became commandant of Auschwitz and Birkenau. Worked closely with the IG Farben company in the construction of gas chambers and in the use of Zyklon B gas for the extermination of Soviet prisoners of war and later Jews. Hanged by the Polish authorities in 1947.
- Chaim Kaplan** Polish Jewish educator and writer whose Warsaw Ghetto diary minutely chronicled its fate until his own deportation to Treblinka in September 1942.
- Bernhard Lichtenberg** Courageous Catholic priest who publicly protested at the maltreatment of Jews. Father Lichtenberg was imprisoned for this 'crime' and died in November 1943, while being transferred from Berlin to Dachau concentration camp.
- Josef Mengele** Infamous doctor who oversaw 'selections' for the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau and conducted the most grisly medical experiments on prisoners. After the war, he became one of the most wanted Nazi war criminals, escaping to South America, where he was reported to have died in the mid-1980s.
- Heinrich Müller** Head of Gestapo and, as Adolf Eichmann's immediate superior, had responsibility for executing the Final Solution. Relentlessly committed to the bureaucratic murder of millions, this genocidal fanatic evaded capture at the end of the war and disappeared without verifiable trace.
- Pastor Martin Niemöller** Heroic German Lutheran priest who publicly criticized the Nazi persecution of the Jews. His outspokenness led to his incarceration in the Sachsenhausen and later Dachau concentration camps. Survived the war and took his message of toleration across the globe.

- Marshal Philippe Pétain** Considered saviour of France after its army had collapsed in the First World War. He was acclaimed saviour for the second time in 1940 when, following the French army's defeat, he negotiated a peace treaty with Hitler. The Vichy regime which he led from the south of the country cooperated with the Nazis in the deportation to the death camps of French Jews and Jewish refugees from other parts of Europe.
- Pope Pius XII** Head of the Catholic Church during the Second World War. Pursued an equivocal and controversial policy towards Nazism, failing to speak out publicly against its persecution of the Jews. Severely criticized after the war for not doing more to save the Jews (and other civilians) from extermination.
- Field Marshal Walter von Reichenau** Professional German soldier notorious for his role in wedding the Wehrmacht to the Nazi regime. As chief of the Sixth Army during Operation Barbarossa, he issued an infamous order in October 1941 calling on the Wehrmacht to 'discharge its historical mission of once and for all delivering the German people from the Asiatic-Jewish peril'.
- Joachim von Ribbentrop** Hitler's Foreign Minister after 1938. Chief architect of the Nazi Non-aggression Pact with Stalin's Soviet Union of August 1939. Hanged at Nuremberg in 1946.
- Ernst Röhm** Head of the SA Stormtroopers and a potential challenger to Hitler's leadership of the Nazi Party. Murdered in the 'Night of the Long Knives', 1934.
- Alfred Rosenberg** Baltic German obsessed by the idea that the Russian Revolution was a facet of the 'international Jewish conspiracy'. The Nazis' key exponent of racial theory. As wartime Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, Rosenberg concocted schemes for a subjugated Russia, free of Jews and colonized by Germans.
- Chaim Rumkowski** Controversial and 'despotic' leader of the Jewish Council in the Polish ghetto of Lodz. He believed that by demonstrating their economic indispensability to the Nazis the Jews of Lodz might be spared. He perished in Auschwitz, killed by his fellow-Jews who felt he had betrayed them.
- Bernhard Rust** Nazi ex-schoolmaster appointed Reich Minister of Science, Education and Culture in 1934. Subordinated school system to the interests of Nazism, which included the 'de-Judaization' of its teachers and pupils.
- Oskar Schindler** Highly complex member of the Czech Nazi Party; entrepreneur and womanizer, he followed the German army to Cracow, Poland. There he set up a factory near a forced labour camp (Plaszow) where he protected his largely Jewish workforce. Schindler is said to have saved the lives of more than 1,100 Jews, in unique circumstances, during the Holocaust years. (He has since been immortalized in Steven Spielberg's oscar-winning film, *Schindler's List*.)
- Albert Speer** Hitler's favourite architect and, from 1942 to 1945, Minister for Armaments and War Production. After the war, he alone admitted the guilt of the Nazi regime at the Nuremberg Trial and acknowledged his personal moral responsibility for the use of slave labour in the factories under his control. Condemned for crimes against humanity, he was sentenced to, and served, twenty years in prison.
- Franz Stangl** Austrian-born policeman involved in the 'euthanasia' programme and later Commandant of Sobibor and Treblinka death camps. Extradited from Brazil in 1967, he was later sentenced by a German court to life imprisonment, dying soon afterwards.
- Julius Streicher** Nazi publisher of the violently antisemitic weekly *Der Stürmer* and heavily involved in the Jewish boycott and other anti-Jewish campaigns in Hitler's Germany.
- Raoul Wallenberg** Swedish diplomat in Budapest who, in late 1944, personally intervened, under cover of diplomatic immunity, to save thousands of Hungarian Jews destined for the gas chambers. Disappeared after the Red Army's entry into the city in January 1945.

**Chaim Weizmann** Zionist leader based in London who attempted, in the summer of 1944, to persuade the British government to bomb the railway lines leading to Auschwitz. Later became first President of the State of Israel.

**Robert Weltsch** German Zionist whose editorial in the *Jüdische Rundschau*, 'Wear the Yellow Badge with Pride' became a famous riposte to the Nazi anti-Jewish boycott of 1 April 1933.

**Christian Wirth** German police bureaucrat whose efficient 'euthanasia' killings of the mentally and physically disabled in Germany paved the way for his later promotion within the death camp system, with responsibility for Belzec, Treblinka and Sobibor.

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