



GEORGIA COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

Holocaust Glossary

Antisemitism: Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Antisemitic words and actions are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

Aryan: Term used in Nazi Germany to refer to Northern Europeans with features such as blonde hair and blue eyes. They were considered by so-called race scientists to be superior, members of a "master race."

Auschwitz: the largest Nazi concentration camp complex, located in Poland. The Auschwitz main camp (Auschwitz I) was established in 1940. In 1942, a killing center was established at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II). In 1941, Auschwitz-Monowitz (Auschwitz III) was established as a forced-labor camp. More than 100 subcamps and labor detachments were administratively connected to Auschwitz III.

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

Boycott: To refuse to have dealings with a person, a store, an organization, etc., usually to express disapproval or to force acceptance of certain conditions.

Collaborator: Someone who assists an enemy (such as an invader or part of an occupying force)

Concentration camp: Throughout German-occupied Europe, the Nazis established camps to detain and sometimes kill so-called enemies of the state, including Jews, Gypsies, political and religious opponents, members of national resistance movements, homosexuals, and others.

Crematorium: a facility containing a furnace for burning dead bodies.

Death march: Forced marches, in the winter of 1945, of Nazi camp prisoners toward Germany. During the marches, thousands of prisoners were shot or died of starvation or exhaustion.

Deportation: Forced removal of Jews in Nazi-occupied countries from their homes.

Einsatzgruppen: Mobile killing squads that followed the German armies to Poland in 1939 and to the Soviet Union in June, 1941. Their charge was to kill all Jews as well as communists, the disabled, Gypsies, and others considered undesirable by the Nazi state. They were supported by local collaborators. The victims were executed by mass shootings and buried in unmarked mass graves.

Euthanasia: In Nazi usage, "euthanasia" was a term for a secret program which targeted for systematic killing institutionalized disabled patients, without consent.

Fascism: A political movement that emphasizes the nation as a whole, rather than individuals. It supports a government run by force, headed by a charismatic leader, conquering of other lands by military force; and the destruction of any opposition.

"Final Solution": The Nazi plan to annihilate the European Jews.

Gestapo: The German Secret State Police, which was under SS control. It was responsible for investigating political crimes and opposition activities.

Ghetto: A confined area of a city in which members of a minority group are forced to live.

International Military Tribunal: The court established by the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to prosecute Nazi war criminals.

Jehovah's Witnesses: Religious group that had about 2,000 members in Germany in 1933. Their religious beliefs did not allow them to swear allegiance to Hitler or the Nazi Party. This made them enemies of the Nazi state.

Killing centers: The Nazis built killing centers to carry out the final solution. Unlike concentration camps, Killing centers are sometimes called "extermination camps" or "death camps." Almost 2,700,000 Jews were murdered in the killing centers either by poison gas or by shooting.

Kindertransport: The informal name of rescue efforts which allowed for thousands of Jewish children to be sent from Germany, Austria, and parts of Czechoslovakia to Great Britain between 1938 and 1940.

Kristallnacht: Also known as the "Night of Broken Glass," it is the name of the government sponsored anti-Jewish riots and destruction in Germany and Nazi occupied lands, which occurred on November 9 and 10, 1938.

Liberate: To set someone free from a situation, especially imprisonment or slavery.

Nuremberg Laws: Racial laws put into effect by the German parliament in Nuremberg on September 15, 1935. These laws became the legal basis for the racist anti-Jewish policy in Germany. They stripped Jews of their citizenship, defined who was Jewish, and began the process of removing Jews from German life.

Operation Barbarossa: The code name for the German invasion of the Soviet Union which began on June 22, 1941.

Refugee: A person forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.

Reich: German word for empire.

Reichstag: The German Parliament. On February 27, 1933, a fire burned the Reichstag building. A month later, on March 23, 1933, the Reichstag approved the Enabling Act, giving Hitler total dictatorial power.

Schutzstaffel (SS): Originally organized as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS was responsible for carrying out the final solution, the destruction of the Jews of Europe.

S.S. St. Louis: The steamship St. Louis was a refugee ship that left Hamburg, Germany, 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 granted entry into England, Holland, France and Belgium.

Swastika: An ancient Eastern symbol appropriated by the Nazis as their emblem.

Synagogue: in Judaism, a house of worship and learning.

T-4 Program: The euthanasia program directed against disabled persons who were considered “unworthy of life” and “useless eaters,” under Nazi ideology. The T-4 program served as the training ground for methods of mass murder that would later be used in the death camps.

Third Reich: The official name of the Nazi regime; ruled from 1933 to 1945 under Adolf Hitler.

Wannsee Conference: On January 20, 1942 on a lake near Berlin, the SS official, Reinhard Heydrich, helped present and coordinate the Final Solution.

Warsaw Ghetto: Established in November 1940, the ghetto, surrounded by a wall, confined nearly half a million Jews. Many died from overcrowding, forced labor, lack of sanitation, starvation, and disease. From April 19 to May 16, 1943, some inhabitants of the ghetto participated in a revolt against their captors.

Weimar Republic: Name for the parliamentary democracy established in Germany from 1919–1933, following the collapse of Imperial Germany and preceding Nazi rule.

Yellow star: a badge featuring the Star of David (a symbol of Judaism) used by the Nazi regime during the Holocaust as a method of visibly identifying Jews.

Zyklon B: Hydrogen cyanide, a poisonous gas originally developed as a fumigation agent to remove insects. In September 1941, it was used experimentally on Soviet prisoners of war. Millions of Jews were gassed in the Nazi extermination camps.