

Glossary of Terms

Aktion – 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 Great Britain, United States and the Soviet Union.

Angriff, Der (The Attack) – Nazi newspaper published and edited by Dr. Joseph Goebbels in Berlin from 1927 to 1945.

Anielewicz, Mordecai (1919-1943) – Major leader of resistance in the Jewish Warsaw ghetto; killed 8 May 1943. (see also Ghetto).

Anschluss – The annexation of Austria by Germany on 13 March 1938.

Anti-Semitism – Hostility toward or prejudice against Jews or Judaism. Discrimination against Jews.

Arbeit Mein Frei (Work brings freedom) – Slogan above the entrance to Auschwitz I and other concentration camps.

Aryan – Nazi term meaning a white-skinned person of pure German race. The term originally applied to people who spoke any Indo-European language. It was attributed by the Nazi's in glorification of the white people of Northern European background they considered to be superior. The Nazi's wanted to preserve 'racial purity' and avoid what they considered as 'the bastardization' of the German race' by all those they persecuted during the Holocaust.

Asylum seeker – A person seeking to be recognised as a refugee under the terms of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees as defined in the Refugee Act 1996.

Atrocity – An act of cruelty and wickedness.

Auschwitz – see Conditions within the Camps section within the Resources chapter.

Bund Deutscher Madel (German girls' league) – Female equivalent of the Hitler Youth Organisation for Boys. Founded in 1928, Girls of 14-18 were encouraged to learn home making skills and prepare for a life of motherhood. Within months of Hitler's rise to power thousands of

female doctors, teachers and lawyers were sacked; Hitler believed the home was the best place for a woman to serve her country, and the German Girls' League helped to promote this.

Chamberlin, Neville (1869-1940) – British Conservative Prime Minister 1937-1940. His policy of appeasement toward the Italian Fascist Dictator Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler in 1938 concluded the Munich Agreement but failed to prevent war. He mistakenly believed it would bring 'peace in our time'.

Churchill, Winston (1875-1965) – British Conservative Prime Minister 1940-1945. He succeeded Chamberlain on 10 May 1940 at the height of Hitler's power in Western Europe. Churchill was one of the only Western politicians to recognise the threat that Hitler posed to Europe. He strongly opposed Chamberlain's appeasement policies and led European and American political leaders to accept an unconditional surrender from Germany.

Collaboration – someone who cooperates with the enemy.

Concentration Camps – Immediately upon their assumption of power on 30 January 1933, the Nazis established concentration camps for the imprisonment of all 'enemies' of their regime; Political opponents (communists, socialists, monarchists) Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, homosexuals, mentally and physically disabled. From 1938, Jews were also targeted for internment, solely for being Jewish.

D-Day – Code name of the Allied invasion of France on 6 June 1944.

Death Camp – see Extermination Camp.

Death Marches – Forced marches of concentration camp inmates during the German retreat near the end of World War II.

Deportation – Jews and members of other groups were legally deported to camps from all over Nazi-occupied Europe, under their own new Nazi laws.

Dulag (German) – A transit camp to 'accommodate' prisoners being transferred to and from

concentration and extermination camps.

Einsatzgruppen (German) – Four mobile killing units run by Nazi Security Police and Security Service that followed German troops into the Soviet Union in June 1941. Their victims were primarily Jewish and were shot and buried in mass graves, though later the bodies were exhumed and burned, presumably to destroy evidence of the Einsatzgruppen.

Euthanasia – The original meaning of this term is easy and painless death for the terminally ill. The Nazi euthanasia programme took on a completely new meaning: ‘the taking on of eugenic measures to improve the quality of the German race’. [See also Aryan]. The Nazi programme involved ‘mercy’ deaths for the mentally ill and physically disabled and experiments in mass sterilisation on other ‘incurables’.

Exterminate / Extermination camps – Known also as Death camps, designed to murder ‘enemies of the Reich’ systematically and efficiently. Equipped with gassing facilities for mass murder they were situated in occupied Poland. Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmo, Majdanek-Lublin, Sobibor and Treblinka.

Final Solution – The cover name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe – ‘Final Solution of the Jewish Question’. Beginning in 1941, Jews were rounded up and sent to extermination camps in Poland. The programme was deceptively disguised as ‘resettlement in the east’.

Führer – Leader, Adolf Hitler’s title in Nazi Germany.

Genocide – Deliberate destruction of a racial, religious, national or ethnic group.

Gestapo – Abbreviation of Geheime Staatspolizei or Ge-st-apo – Secret State Police

Ghetto – A part of a town where Jews were forced to live, imprisoned by the Nazis. It was usually separated by walls and gates with barbed wire to prevent anyone from entering or existing. Ghettos existed in several major East European cities and were characterised by overcrowding, starvation and forced labour. As the Jews were deported to death camps the ghettos were destroyed.

Goebbels, Joseph – 1897-1945. Nazi Minister of Propaganda from 1933. He brought all cultural and educational activities under Nazi control. On the capture of Berlin by the Allies in 1945, Joseph Goebbels committed suicide. (Specific examples of how Goebbels controlled all aspects of social life are detailed in the Nazi Propaganda Poster section of the Visual Art chapter and

through the Music chapter).

Goering, Herman Wilhelm – 1893-1946. Minister of the Interior for Prussia, which gave him full control of the police and security forces; he organised the Gestapo and ordered the construction of the first concentration camps before handing over camp control to the SS to allow him to develop the power of the Luftwaffe. He was tried at Nuremberg for war crimes but poisoned himself before he could be executed.

Gypsies – also known as Roma, Sinti,, Romany, Travellers and many other names throughout Europe. Groups of people with their own culture, languages, tradition and lifestyles, some of whom have lived a nomadic lifestyle (see Django Reinhardt profile in the Music chapter).

Hitler, Adolf – 1889-1945. German Nazi Dictator born in Austria. Leader of the Nazi party from 1921, he became Chancellor of Germany in 1933 and head of State in 1934. He created a dictatorship by playing party and state institutions against one another, continually creating new laws and offices. He instituted a dreadful programme of extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism, persecuting those people, throughout the occupied territories, he believed to be ‘Un-German’ or ‘Non-Aryan’. He committed suicide in 1945 as Berlin fell to the Allied forces or Allies. Hitler had a great interest in Visual Art and had wished to become an artist himself. (see Hitler section within the Visual Art chapter of this pack. see also Mein Kampf).

Hitlerjugend – The Nazi Youth Organisations for boys aged 10-14 and 15-18 were founded in 1922 and gained 100,000 members over 11 years. But as Hitler came to power in 1933, he abolished all other youth organisations and strongly encouraged membership of the Hitler Youth. By 1939 it was compulsory for all German boys to belong. Military skills and fitness were a priority as many young boys were then sent to defend Nazi Germany in War. (see Bund Deutscher Madel).

Holocaust – See specific definition within the introduction to this pack.

Homosexuals – Men or Women attracted to people of the same sex, often in same sex relationships. Those homosexuals living in Europe during Hitler’s rule suffered persecution and internment in concentration camps because of their sexuality.

Jew – a person whose religion is Judaism; according to Jewish law a Jew is a child born to a Jewish mother.

Jewish badge – An arm band often showing the yellow Star of David; under Nazi rule, Jews were ordered to wear the Jewish badge at all times.

Judenfrei / Judenrein (Free of Jews / Cleansed of Jews) – Nazi term for the absence of Jews as a result of deportation and extermination operations.

Judenrat (Jewish Council) – Council of Jewish representatives in communities and ghettos set up by the Nazis to carry out their instructions.

Judischer Ordnungsdienst – Jewish ghetto police

Julag (From Judenlager meaning Jewish camp) – Nazi camp for Jews

Kapo – a prisoner appointed by the Nazi's to supervise camp inmates or labourers. This was usually someone whom the Nazis thought they could trust, for example a non-Jewish criminal.

Kindertransport (Children's Transport) – the informal name of a rescue effort which brought thousands of refugee Jewish children to Great Britain from Nazi Germany after the events of Kristallnacht in 1938 through until 1940.

Kristallnacht (The night of broken glass) – A pogrom unleashed by the Nazis on 9-10 November 1938. Throughout Germany and Austria, synagogues and other Jewish institutions, shops and businesses were destroyed and their contents looted. At the same time around 35,000 Jewish men were taken away to concentration camps.

Liberation – the act or process of freeing people or indeed a country from enemy occupation.

Lufwaffe – The German air force.

Mein Kampf (My Struggle) – An autobiographical book written by an unknown Adolf Hitler in 1923, in which he sets out his ideas for the future of Germany including his racial theories and the rights of the superior aryan race.

Musselmann – Concentration camp slang word for prisoners who had given up fighting for life. (see Kulisiewicz profile within Music chapter).

National Socialist German Workers Party – Full name of Hitler's Nazi Party. The principles were extremely nationalistic, imperialistic, racist and anti-Semitic.

Neo-Nazism – Modern-day movement that promotes Hitler's policies.

Night and Fog decree – Code name for the rounding up of suspected members of the anti-Nazi resistance in occupied countries of Europe.

Nuremberg Laws – Two laws issued in 1935 to further the legal exclusion of Jews from German life. The first removed the Jews' citizenship, the second defined the Jews racially and prohibited them from engaging in marital and other relations with Germans as well as forbidding Jews employing German young women of child bearing age. Many additional regulations were attached to the two main statutes providing the basis for removing Jews from all spheres of German political, social and economic life. The laws were proclaimed at the annual Nazi party rally in Nuremberg on 15 September 1935.

Nuremberg Trials – Trial of twenty-two major Nazi figures in Nuremberg in 1945 and 1946. They were tried by the International Military Tribunal.

Occupied – a building or country taken possession, by force. During the Second World War the Nazis occupied countries such as Poland, France and Austria.

Partisans – Troops engaged in guerrilla warfare, often behind enemy lines in occupied countries.

Persecuted / Persecution – Causing suffering to people, especially those who differ in background or lifestyle or hold difference political or religious beliefs.

Potsdam Conference – Meeting held by Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Harry S. Truman from 17 July to 2 August 1945 in Potsdam, Germany. It was called to discuss political and economic problems after Germany's surrender.

Prisoner-of-war – A soldier, sailor, airman, or marine who is imprisoned by an enemy power during or immediately after an armed conflict.

Rabbi – Jewish religious leader and teacher

Rassenschande (Racial defilement) – Nazi term for sexual contact between an aryan and a non-Aryan.

Razzia – A round-up of Jews.

Red Army – Workers and Peasants Red army, renamed in June 1945 as the Soviet army.

Red Cross – An international aid agency that brings medical relief to the victims of wars and natural disasters.

Refugee – A person who has fled his home or country because of persecution.

Reichsfluchtsteuer – Emigration tax payable by Jews before leaving Germany.

Reichsführer-SS – Leader of the SS, Heinrich Himmler.

Reichstag – German Parliament.

Reichstag Fire – Controversial fire which demolished the Reichstag Parliament building on 27 February 1933 and for many, signalled the death of German Democracy. Hitler used the fire, supposedly started by Communists, as an excuse to pressurise the aged President von Hindenburg into allowing him to take dictatorial control of the Reich and introduce new decrees to quash any peoples or parties unhappy with his new ideologies. The benefits of the fire to Chancellor Hitler became clear very quickly and many privately suggested that perhaps Hitler and the Brownshirts were responsible for the fire after all. (see introduction to the Music chapter).

SA (Sturmabteilung) – Storm troopers of the early Nazi party, founded in 1921; also known as the Brown Shirts.

SS (Schutzstaffel) – Formed in 1925 as Hitler's personal body guards, the SS was transformed into a massive organisation by Heinrich Himmler. Some units were assigned to battle but most were responsible for the interment, persecution and death of many of the millions belonging to the social groups that so offended Hitler (see Concentration Camps and Persecuted).

Selektion – Euphemism for the process of choosing victims for the gas chambers in the Nazi camps by separating them from those considered fit for work / slave labour. A Nazi medical professional would point to the left for immediate gassing or to the right for prolonged agony in the camps. Of those who were sent to the right, the survival rate was extremely poor; from all the millions who had died there only a handful of people were left to testify when the camps were liberated.

Sho'ah – Hebrew term for 'Holocaust', with particular reference to the mass murder of approximately 6 million Jews by the Nazis.

Stalag (Stannnnlager) – Prisoner-of-war camp . Camps for military personnel were divided by barbed wire into compounds; some camps contained several Lagers or barracks for shelter but sanitation and washing facilities were limited. (see Messiaen profile in Music chapter).

Starvation rations – Drastically reduced food rations given to those interred in Nazi camps. Forced labour and little nutritional intake often led to a state of physical exhaustion and muscle wastage before death. (see Musselmann).

Swastica – Ancient symbol originating from South Asia, appropriated by Nazi's as their emblem.

Synagogue – a sacred building, a Jewish place of prayer.

Third Reich – Official name of the united German state was the Reich. The first Reich was the Holy Roman Empire. The second Reich was created by Otto von Bismark, first Chancellor of the German Empire 1871-1890. The Third Reich was proclaimed by Adolf Hitler and lasted twelve years.

Typhoid – A serious and sometimes fatal infection of the digestive system; transmitted by contaminated food or drinking water. Many in the camps died from malnutrition and connected diseases.

Umschlagplatz – Place in Warsaw, Poland from where freight trains took those deported by the Nazi's to concentration camps in the East

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation (UNRRA) – An organisation established on 9 November 1943 by four member nations of the United Nations. After World War II it aided thousands of displaced persons.

Vernichtung durch Arbeit (Extermination through work). Deliberate policy of gradually killing prisoners in some camps through starvation and overwork. (see Arbeit Macht Frei).

Wannsee Conference – Meeting called by Reinhard Heydrich and held at Wannsee a suburb of Berlin, on 20 January 1942, to coordinate the 'final solution.'

War refuge board – United States agency established in January 1944 by order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to rescue people from Nazi-occupied territories. (see also Varian Fry within Chagall profile of Visual Art chapter).

Warsaw Ghetto – Established in November 1940, the ghetto confined around 500,000 Jews. Almost 45,000 died there in 1941 due to overcrowding, forced labour, lack of sanitation, starvation and disease. From 19 April to 16 May 1943 a revolt took place when the German army attempted to raze the ghetto and deport all remaining inhabitants to Treblinka extermination camp. The uprising led by Mordecai Anielewicz, was the first instance in occupied Europe of an anti-Nazi revolt by an urban population.

Weimar Republic – The German republic (1919-1933) established after the end of World War I, with its capital in the city of Weimar.

Xenophobia – Fear or hatred of foreigners or things foreign.

Yad Vashem – Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem.

Zyklon B – Hydrogen cyanide, pesticide used in the 'Euthanasia' programme and later, especially in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau.