

## **Holocaust Resources**

### **Terms**

**Antisemitism:** prejudice against and hostility toward Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group

**Aryan:** A term used for people who spoke the language of Europe and India. According to the Nazis, this was a person of pure German "blood."

**Beer Hall Putsch:** - A failed takeover of the Bavarian Government by Hitler and his followers. After the failed "putsch," Hitler was convicted of treason and sentenced to five years in prison. The putsch, as well as Hitler's trial, turned him into a national figure.

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

**Concentration Camp:** Camps in which Jews and others victims were imprisoned by the Nazis, located in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe. There were three different kinds of camps: transit, labor and extermination. Many prisoners in concentration camps died within months of arriving from violence or starvation.

**Death Camp:** Nazi extermination centers where Jews and other victims were brought to be killed as part of Hitler's Final Solution.

**Dehumanization:** The Nazi policy of denying Jews basic civil rights such as practicing religion, education, and passable housing.

**DP Camps:** Displaced Person Camp. The upheavals of war left millions of soldiers and civilians without a home. The tens of thousands of Jewish survivors of Nazi camps either could not or did not want to return to their former homes in Germany or Eastern Europe, and many lived in special DP camps while awaiting migration.

**Einsatzgruppen:** Mobile death squad of the SS that followed the German army, executing Jewish residents as the squad moved through the Soviet Union; victims were shot and buried in mass graves.

**Extermination Camp:** Six major camps designed and built for the sole purpose of killing Jews. These were Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor and Treblinka.

**Final Solution:** the cover name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe

**Gas Chambers:** Large chambers in which people were executed by poison gas. These were built and used in Nazi extermination camps.

**Genocide:** The deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, cultural, or religious group.

**Gestapo:** The secret state police of the German army, organized to stamp out any political opposition.

**Ghettos:** the compulsory "Jewish Quarter." Ghettos were established in the poor sections of a city, where most of the Jews from the city and surrounding areas were forced to live. The ghettos were sealed, either

surrounded by barbed wires or walls. Established mostly in Eastern Europe (e.g., Lodz, Warsaw, Vilna, Riga, or Minsk), the ghettos consisted of overcrowding, malnutrition, and heavy labor.

**Holocaust:** Derived from the Greek word holokauston, which meant a sacrifice totally burned by fire. Today, the term refers to the systematic planned extermination of about six million European Jews and millions of others by the Nazis between 1933-1945.

**Judenrat:** Jewish councils set up within the ghettos to maintain order and carry out the orders of the German army.

**Judenrein:** "Cleansed of Jews," a German expression for Hitler's plan to rid Europe of Jews.

**Kristallnacht:** Also known as "The Night of the Broken Glass." On this night, November 9, 1938, almost 200 synagogues were destroyed, over 8,000 Jewish shops were sacked and looted, and tens of thousands of Jews were removed to concentration camps. This pogrom received its name because of the great value of glass that was smashed during this anti-Jewish riot. Riots took place throughout Germany and Austria on that night. On this night 91 Jews were killed and hundreds more injured.

**Mein Kampf:** Meaning "My Struggle," it was Hitler's autobiography. It was the ideological base for the Nazi Party's racist beliefs and murderous practices. Published in 1925, this work detailed Hitler's radical ideas of German nationalism, antisemitism, anti-Bolshevism, and Social Darwinism which advocated survival of the fittest.

**Nazi:** Name for members of the NSDAP, National Socialist Democratic Workers Party, who believed in the idea of Aryan supremacy.

**"Non-Aryan":** A term used to designate Jews, part-Jews and others of supposedly inferior racial stock.

**Nuremberg Laws:** The Nuremberg Laws were announced by Hitler at the Nuremberg Party conference, systematizing and regulating discrimination and persecution of the Jews. The Nuremberg Laws did not define a "Jew" as someone with a particular religious belief, rather anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents, regardless of whether or not that individual belonged to the Jewish religious community. Even those with Jewish grandparents who had converted to Christianity were considered Jews under these laws. The Nuremberg Laws were created to ultimately ostracize, discriminate, and expel Jews from German society.

**Propaganda:** communication that tries to influence ideas or indoctrinate people.

**SA, Sturmabteilung:** Also known as Storm Troopers and "Brown Shirts." Many members of the SA were former soldiers who were unemployed after World War I. They were the Nazi party's main tool for facilitating Hitler's rise to power. In addition to protecting Hitler and Nazi meetings from opponents, they would disrupt meetings of rival political groups.

**SS, Schutzstaffel:** Also known as Protection Squadrons. The German army's elite guard, organized to serve as Hitler's personal protectors and to administer the concentration camps.

**Shoah:** biblical term which has been used to mean destruction. The standard Hebrew term for the mass murder of European Jewry during World War II.

**Swastika:** Comes from the Sanskrit “svastika,” which means "good fortune" or “well-being.” Throughout its history, the Swastika represented life, power, sun, strength and good luck. It was still considered a positive symbol in the early 20th century. German nationalists chose to use the Swastika because it was associated with the Aryan race and German history. It officially became the emblem of the Nazi party in 1920- Hitler said the Swastika symbolized the victory of the Aryan man.

**Stereotype:** Biased generalizations about a group of people based on hearsay, opinions, and distorted, preconceived ideas.

**Third Reich:** Meaning "third regime or empire," the Nazi designation of Germany and its regime from 1933-45.

### Dates:

**January 30, 1933:** Adolf Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany.

**1933:** the Nazi regime established the first concentration camps, imprisoning its political opponents, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others classified as “dangerous.” Extensive propaganda was used to spread the Nazi Party’s racist goals and ideals. Nuremberg Laws were also established at this time, to ban intermarriage, give no citizenship to Jews, and set a strict definition for what a “Jew” was.

**1935:** Nuremberg Laws

**July 1938:** Evian Conference is held- nations refuse to open their doors to Jewish refugees.

**November 9, 1938:** Kristallnacht, Also known as “The Night of the Broken Glass”

**August 23, 1939:** On this day, Hitler and Stalin signed a ten year nonaggression pact, which was referred to as the Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact. This treaty was between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The pact also contained an economic agreement- that Germany would exchange manufactured foods for Soviet raw materials, but it ultimately enabled Germany to attack Poland without fear of Soviet intervention.

**September 1, 1939:** Germany’s invasion of Poland

**September 3, 1939:** Just two days after Germany’s invasion of Poland, Britain and France declared war on Germany.

**1939:** Jews are forced to wear Yellow star and are banned from public places

**April 9, 1940:** Germany’s invasion of Denmark & Norway

**May 10, 1940:** Germany’s invasion of Holland, Belgium & France

**June 22, 1941:** Germany's invasion of USSR under the codename Operation “Barbarossa”

**1942:** Wannsee Conference- Nazi Party and German government officials gathered to discuss and coordinate the implementation of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question."

**1942:** – Killing centers fully operational.

**April 19, 1943:** The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising occurred, which was the most famous attempt by Jews to resist the Nazis in armed fighting. About 300,000 Jews were deported from Warsaw to Treblinka for death in the summer of 1942. Once news of the deportations hit the Warsaw Ghetto, a group of young Jews formed an organization called the Z.O.B. (Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa, which means Jewish Fighting Organization). The Z.O.B issued a declaration for all Jews remaining in the Warsaw Ghetto to resist boarding the railroad cars. In January of 1943, Z.O.B. fighters used the small supply of weapons smuggled into the ghetto to fire at German soldiers as they attempted to round up more Jews for deportation. On April 19, 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began after German soldiers and police entered the ghetto to deport its remaining Jews. Seven hundred and fifty fighters fought the Germans, but on May 16, 1943, the uprising was put to an end. Over 56,000 Jews had been captured, about 7,000 were shot, and the remainder were sent to camps.

**Spring 1944:** Nazi troops occupy Hungary

**June 6, 1944:** D-Day: Under the code name Operation “Overlord,” US, British, and Canadian troops landed on the beaches of Normandy, France, on the English Channel coast east of Cherbourg and west of Le Havre. The allies successfully deceived German troops into believing the main attack would occur further north and east on the coast near Calais and the Belgian border. Allied forces were able to break out of the Normandy beachhead in late July and begin the liberation of northern France. By mid-August, allied forces had destroyed much of the German army in Normandy; by late August, Free French forces liberated Paris.

**January 27, 1945:** Concentration camps that were still operational were closed and evidence of their existence attempted to be destroyed. Those who had survived the camps were taken on forced 'Death Marches'. Auschwitz liberated.

**April 30, 1945:** Hitler commits suicide

**May 8, 1945:** Nazi Germany's surrender became official, and the world could celebrate the liberation of Europe.

#### **Additional Resources:**

AMCHA - [www.amchainitiative.org/](http://www.amchainitiative.org/)

Southern Poverty Law Center - [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)

Anti-Defamation League – ADL - [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)

Facing History and Ourselves - [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum -[www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)

Yad Vashem - [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)