

Holocaust Vocabulary

Anschluss- the (forced) union of Germany and Austria in 1938

Aryan – a person of northern European descent

Bürgerbraukeller- the place in which Hitler launched his 1923 Beer Hall putsch

Eugenics- the programme for improving the stock of the nation

Final Solution – the systematic attempt to exterminate all European Jews

General Government- the area of Poland that was ruled by- but not annexed to- Germany

Genocide – the deliberate extermination of racial, national, religious, or ethnic group

Gentiles- non-Jews

Gestapo- originally the Prussian secret police force, the name was soon applied to the national secret police force and became a synonym for terror throughout Germany

Ghetto – a section of a town inhabited by an identified group

Holocaust – burnt sacrificial offering dedicated exclusively to God / Old Testament term

Judenrat- Jewish councils, established by the Nazi, to help maintain order in the ghettos

Kristallnacht- this translation as the 'night of broken glass'. On 9-10 November hundreds of Jewish shops, businesses and synagogues were attacked by Nazi activists

Lebensraum- German word for living space. Many Germans hoped to expand German territory by conquering much of eastern Europe

Luftwaffe- German air force

Operation Barbarossa – code name for the attack by Germany on Russia 1941

Pogrom- an organized (violent) attack on Jews

Putsch- an armed attempt to overthrow government

Reichstag- the German Parliament

Schutzstaffel- originally the black-shirted personal guard of Hitler, the Schutzstaffel was later transformed by its leader Himmler into a mass army on which was to rest the ultimate exercise of Nazi power

Shoah – Jewish word for Holocaust meaning destruction

Sonderkommando- the Jews who were forced to help in the killing process

Vichy government- the French government, led by Marshal Petain, was based at the provincial spa town of Vichy between 1940 and 1944. Petain's government collaborated extensively with Nazi Germany.

Volkstrum- the German home guard, set up in 1944, as Germany faced invasion

Wehrmacht- the official name of the combined army, navy, and air force in the Third Reich

Weimar Republic- the democratic system by which Germany was ruled between 1919 and 1933

Zionism- the belief that Jews should be given their own homeland in Palestine