

CHILDREN UNDER THE NAZIS

Glossary of terms

Aktion (German)	Normally, the word means simply 'action', 'event'. In the Nazi era, however, it was a euphemism for the rounding up and killing of Jews.
Displaced person (DP)	A victim of the Nazi regime who had lost their home due to warfare and persecution. Many DPs were former slave labourers from Eastern Europe or Jewish survivors.
Euthanasia (Greek)	Literally, 'good death'. Mercy killing or assisted suicide to relieve pain and suffering. Under the Nazis, the term referred to the systematic, enforced killing of institutionalised mentally or physically disabled people, who were considered to represent 'life unworthy of life'. The code name for this secret euthanasia programme was 'Aktion T4', short for the street address of the coordinating office in Berlin's Tiergartenstrasse 4. The Nazi euthanasia programme started in the autumn of 1939, and was at first directed at infants and toddlers before being extended to include adults, later also in the occupied territories. It is estimated that at least 5,000 children lost their lives under the T4 programme; the total number of victims is around 200,000.
Expellee	In the context of World War II, ethnic Germans who had been living in the Eastern territories of the German Reich and who were driven from their homes by the local population toward the end of the war.
Himmler, Heinrich (1900-1945)	Head of the SS and of the German police. After Germany's invasion of Poland, Himmler was given control of the annexed parts of Poland, which he used to bring in German settlers and force out Poles and Jews. Himmler gained control of the political administration of the occupied territories and the concentration camp system. In 1943, Hitler appointed him Minister for the Interior, and in this role, Himmler oversaw the 'Final Solution' (the attempt to kill all European Jews) and the system of forced labour. When military defeat became obvious, Himmler tried to negotiate with the Allies. When Hitler learnt about this, he stripped him of all his roles. Himmler committed suicide in Allied custody on 23 May 1945.
Hitlerjugend (German, often abbr. to 'HJ'))	Hitler Youth, the sole legally permitted youth organisation allowed in Nazi Germany. The HJ was the umbrella organisation for the League of German Girls ('Bund Deutscher Mädel', or BDM), the Youngsters in the HJ ('Deutsches Jungvolk', or DJ, for boys aged 10-14), and the HJ proper, for male youths aged 14-18. Its leaders were Baldur von Schirach and Artur Axmann. Membership became compulsory in 1936. The members of the HJ were exposed to intense Nazi propaganda and paramilitary training.
Judenrein (German)	Literally, 'clean of Jews'. A term used to describe a village, town, city, or area after its Jewish population had been deported or murdered.
Kinderlandverschickung (German; abbr.: KLV)	Child evacuation programme designed to save German children from the Allies' air raids on German cities by moving them into KLV homes in rural areas less likely to be bombed. KLV homes were run by the Hitler Youth, and children were exposed to much Nazi propaganda and paramilitary drill.
Kindertransport (German)	Literally, 'children's transport': a rescue mission for Jewish children from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia that brought about 10,000 children to Great Britain in the months before the outbreak of the war.

Mengele, Josef, Dr. (1911-1979)	An SS officer and infamous German doctor who conducted cruel medical experiments in Auschwitz. He was particularly interested in twins. His nickname was 'The Angel of Death'.
Nuremberg Laws	Anti-Semitic laws announced at the NSDAP's annual party rally in Nuremberg in September 1935. The laws defined anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents as Jewish, regardless of religious beliefs held by that person. Jews were excluded from Reich citizenship, and marriage or sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews (called 'racial infamy') became illegal.
Panzer (German)	Tank
Pogrom (Russian)	Literally, 'to demolish violently'. The term refers to violent attacks on Jews by local non-Jewish populations.
Ration card	In the ghettos, food was allocated using coupons that set out how much and what kind of food someone could get. This could depend on factors such as whether or not they had work, or whether they were members of the Judenrat (Jewish Council). In some ghettos, children were given preferential treatment, e.g. in Lodz.
Repatriation	Returning displaced persons to their home country
SA	Abbr. for 'Sturmabteilung' (German), or 'Assault Division', also known as Storm Troopers or Brownshirts. A paramilitary organisation in the Nazi party that intimidated and physically attacked political opponents and Jews. Its leader Ernst Röhm pushed for a socialist Nazi revolution and wanted to merge the SA with the army. On Hitler's orders, Röhm and dozens of other SA leaders were executed by SS on 30 June 1934, the 'Night of the Long Knives'. The SA lost its former political influence. From 1939, the SA was in charge of training men for Home Guard units.
SS	Abbr. for 'Schutzstaffel' (German), or 'Protective Squadron', founded in 1925 as an elite protection force for public Nazi mass meetings. Under Himmler's leadership, the SS became very powerful. The SS controlled the German police and the concentration camp system, they had the leading responsibility for security and intelligence, as well as for identifying ethnicity and overseeing settlement and population policy. The SS was responsible for 'solving' the so-called 'Jewish Question', and its leadership planned, directed, and executed the so-called 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question': the annihilation of the European Jews.
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. An international, but US-dominated relief agency founded in 1943. It became part of the United Nations in 1945. Its purpose was to help victims of war in UN-controlled areas by providing food, clothing, fuel, shelter, medical and other essential services. In collaboration with other aid organisations, UNRRA helped run DP camps, find survivors' relatives, repatriate DPs, and deal with emigration issues.
Volkssturm (German)	Literally, 'people's storm'. A last-ditch home defence force created toward the end of the war in order to avert military defeat. Old men and teenage boys were recruited to the Volkssturm.
Yiddish	A Germanic language, written in Hebrew characters. Spoken widely by European Jews before the Nazi period.