

## Essential Vocabulary for Holocaust Study

Antisemitism: prejudice against or hatred of Jews.

Assimilate: A cultural minority adopts the dominant culture in areas such as clothing, traditions/holidays, language, and food.

Bystander: people who were passive and indifferent to the escalating persecution

Collaborator: actively participated in the murder of Jews, and in several cases committed atrocities against their Jewish fellow citizens within their own national borders.

Concentration Camp: A camp in which civilians are detained or confined, usually under harsh conditions and without regard to legal norms of arrest and imprisonment that are acceptable in a constitutional democracy.

Death March: It referred to forced marches of concentration camp prisoners over long distances under guard and in extremely harsh conditions.

Democracy: a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting

Deportation: Refers, in the context of WWII, to the Nazi policy of forcibly transferring people, usually Jews, to concentration camps.

Dictator: a person who rules a country with total authority and often in a cruel or brutal way.

Discrimination: the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

Displaced Persons: in the aftermath of the Holocaust and World War II, more than 250,000 Jewish people lived in camps maintained by the Allied authorities and United Nations from 1945-1952. Many did not (or felt they could not) have homes to return to after Liberation.

Emancipation: the process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation.

Emigration: the act of leaving one's country to settle in another country.

Eugenics: or "racial hygiene," was a scientific movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Euthanasia: The intentional killing of a person or animal. Today, it refers to causing a painless death for a terminally ill individual who would otherwise suffer. Nazi euphemism for murders mandated in the name of racial purity.

Expulsion: To be required or forced to leave a place

Fascism: a far-right political philosophy, or theory of government, that emerged in the early twentieth century.

The Final Solution: a euphemism used by Nazi Germany's leaders. It referred to the mass murder of Europe's Jews.

Forced Labor: often pointless and humiliating, and imposed without proper equipment, clothing, nourishment, or rest

Genocide: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Ghetto: Often enclosed parts of a city that isolated Jews by separating Jewish communities from the non-Jewish population and from other Jewish communities.

The Great Depression: term used for a severe economic recession (bad economy) which began in the United States in 1929.

Hitler Youth: developed as Nazi Party youth groups to introduce children and juveniles to Nazi ideology and policy.

Holocaust: Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators from 1933-1945.

Human Rights: rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons.

Immigration: the act of entering a country of which one is not a native for permanent residence.

Kristallnacht/November Pogrom: On November 9–10, 1938, Nazi leaders unleashed a series of pogroms against the Jewish population in Germany and recently incorporated territories. This event came to be called *Kristallnacht* (The Night of Broken Glass) because of the shattered glass that littered the streets after the vandalism and destruction of Jewish-owned businesses, synagogues, and homes.

Liquidation: A euphemism used by Nazi Germany's leaders. The act of eliminating or killing, typically by violent means.

Master Race: Hitler believed that Germans were members of a superior group of races that he called "Aryan." The German "Aryan" race was gifted above all other races, Hitler asserted, with this biological superiority destining the Germans to rule a vast empire across Eastern Europe.

Medical Experimentation: centered around three topics: survival of military personnel, testing of drugs and treatments, and the advancement of Nazi racial and ideological goals.

Mein Kampf (My Struggle): promoted the key components of Nazism: rabid antisemitism, a racist world view, and an aggressive foreign policy geared to gaining Lebensraum (living space) in eastern Europe.

Nazi Ideology: Nazis believed that human beings could be classified collectively as "races," with each race bearing distinctive characteristics that had been passed on genetically since the first appearance of humans in prehistoric times. These inherited characteristics related not only to outward appearance and physical structure, but also shaped internal mental life, ways of thinking, creative and organizational abilities, intelligence, taste and appreciation of culture, physical strength, and military prowess.

Nazi Party: one of a number of right-wing extremist political groups that emerged in Germany following World War I.

Pogrom: riots launched against Jews by local residents, and frequently encouraged by the authorities.

Prejudice: bias without sufficient information; preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Propaganda: the dissemination of information to influence or control or large groups of people.

Refugee: a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.

Reparations: money that a country or group that loses a war pays because of the damage, injury, deaths, etc., it has caused.

Resistance: Broadly defined as opposing something or someone. Organized armed resistance was the most direct form of opposition to the Nazis, resistance also included escape, hiding, cultural activity, and other acts of spiritual preservation.”

Scapegoat: a person or group made to bear the blame for others or to suffer in their place.

Socialist (person)/Socialism (political philosophy): Broadly defined as the idea that the means of production (money, land, etc.) should be owned by the people.

Sterilization: A procedure that destroys the ability of a person to reproduce.

Swastika: ancient symbol in the form of an equal-armed cross with each arm continued at a right angle, used (in clockwise form) as the emblem of the German Nazi Party.

T-4 Program: Code name for Euthanasia Program of mentally and physically disabled Germans. Euthanasia is the intentional killing of a person or animal.

The Third Reich: Nazi state. Hitler wanted it to be the third empire that lasted 1000 years.

Transit Camp: functioned as temporary holding facilities for Jews awaiting deportation. These camps were usually the last stop before deportations to a killing center.

Versailles Treaty: held Germany responsible for starting World War I. Germany became liable for the cost of massive material damages.

World War I: marked the first great international conflict of the twentieth century. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian crown, and his wife, the Duchess Sophie, in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, sparked the hostilities. Fighting began in August 1914 and continued on multiple continents for the next four years.

## Bibliography

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

USC Shoah Foundation's Pyramid of Hate lessons <http://sfi.usc.edu/lessons/pyramid-hate>

USHMM Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust

<https://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/general-teaching-guidelines>