

## Glossary

### “Anschluss”

The term refers to the annexation of Austrofascist Austria by Nazi Germany in March 1938. After Hitler’s decision to invade Austria on March 11, 1938, the advancing German troops encountered no resistance on March 12. On the contrary, they were welcomed by many Austrians with jubilation. The following day, the legal annexation of Austria, formally now referred to as the "Ostmark" (Eastern March), took place. In a plebiscite regarding the annexation, allegedly 99.08% of the population voted in favor of the “Anschluss” on April 10, 1938. For the Jewish population in Austria, this marked the beginning of defamation, exclusion, persecution, and internment—culminating in the excesses of the Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) on November 9, 1938, and in subsequent deportations to concentration and extermination camps.

### Breach of Employment Contract

The Nazi regime established a series of offenses collectively referred to as breaches of employment contracts. These encompassed a wide range of actions such as unauthorized absence from the workplace, returning to one’s home region without permission, so-called "work shirking," unjustified sick leave, insufficient work performance, or so-called "flight from work." Such actions were criminalized and prosecuted by the police authorities. While native workers were also punished for breaches of employment contracts, foreign workers were often penalized even for minor infractions—frequently with draconian measures.

### “Foreign Children’s Homes”

Due to the increasing shortage of labor, the Nazi regime banned Polish and Soviet pregnant women from returning to their home regions starting in 1942. As a result, so-called foreign children’s homes were established throughout the Reich to house infants and young children. These facilities were intentionally located as far away as possible from the mothers’ workplaces to prevent visits, ensuring that the mothers’ labor could be fully exploited. The conditions in these homes were mostly catastrophic. Depending on the treatment by the staff, the mortality rate of the children reached up to 70%.

The first such home was established in Spital am Pyhrn in Upper Austria.

### General Government / Warthegau

Following the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939—which marked the beginning of World War II—the Nazi regime partitioned Polish territory. The western part was illegally annexed into the German Reich as Reichsgau Wartheland, also known as Warthegau. Meanwhile, the districts of Kraków, Radom, Warsaw, and Lublin were consolidated into the occupied General Government, which was placed under a civilian administration led by Hans Frank. The German rule in the General Government is regarded as the most horrific form of Nazi terror. The declared goal of the Nazi occupiers was to make the General Government "free of Jews," expel ethnic Poles, and create space for German settlers. The region was covered with a dense network of ghettos, concentration camps, and extermination camps. In addition, mobile killing units (Einsatzgruppen) of the Security Police and the SD carried out mass murders of the Jewish population on a large scale.

### “Forbidden Contact” and “Forbidden Sexual Relations”

Foreign laborers in the Reich were prohibited from having any contact with Germans beyond what was necessary for work-related communication. For example, Poles or Soviet citizens were not allowed to eat at the same table as locals, enter pubs, use public transportation, or even attend the same church services, which were segregated. This “forbidden contact” was strictly monitored and harshly punished, often relying on informants to enforce the rules.

Particular attention was paid by Nazi ideologues and police forces to preventing sexual relations between German women and foreign men. Such acts carried the harshest penalties: German women and girls were sent to concentration camps, such as the Ravensbrück women’s concentration camp, while the highly despised Poles and Soviets were executed—usually on the spot and in full view of other foreign workers in the vicinity.

### Italian Armistice of 1943

In Italian historiography, the term *armistizio* refers to the armistice agreement signed by Pietro Badoglio's government on September 3, 1943, in Cassibile (Sicily). With this agreement, announced on September 8, the Kingdom of Italy surrendered to the Allied powers of the United States, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, thereby exiting its alliance with Nazi Germany. As a consequence, Italy was occupied by German forces, and a Nazi puppet regime—the Italian Social Republic (RSI)—was established in the north.

### Underground Relocation of Armaments Production

In the final years of the war, due to increasing Allied bombings, the Nazi regime decided to relocate vital armaments factories to underground tunnel facilities. For this purpose, concentration camp prisoners were forced to expand existing tunnels or construct entirely new ones. Other prisoners were compelled to begin manufacturing airplanes, tanks, and weapons even while the underground facilities were still under construction. These tunnel facilities were overseen by the *Jäger-Stab*. One of the largest tunnel systems was the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp in Nordhausen, Germany. Several such facilities were also built in Austria, including those in Ebensee, Melk, and St. Georgen an der Gusen. In Nazi documents, these production sites were given code names: Ebensee was called "Zement" (Cement), and St. Georgen an der Gusen was referred to as "Bergkristall" (Rock Crystal).

### Hague Land Warfare Regulations of 1907

The Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 is a key international treaty establishing rules for the conduct of land warfare. It represented a significant step in the codification of international humanitarian law and influenced subsequent agreements, including the 1929 Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Even today, this convention serves as a foundation for legislation regarding armed conflicts and the protection of human rights during war.

### Geneva Convention of 1929

The international treaty on the treatment of prisoners of war, adopted by the League of Nations, updated and expanded earlier provisions to protect soldiers in armed conflicts. Among its stipulations, it explicitly prohibited the use of prisoners of war in armaments production. The 1929 convention was an important milestone in the codification of international humanitarian law and laid down principles that were further developed in subsequent international agreements, particularly those of 1949.

### International Red Cross

Founded in 1863, this humanitarian organization provides aid and protection in conflict and disaster situations. Its primary missions include safeguarding lives by assisting the wounded and sick during war, providing humanitarian aid to refugees and those in need, promoting humanitarian law through education and advocating adherence to international standards and offering relief efforts during natural disasters and crises. The organization continues to operate globally, collaborating with national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

### Displaced Persons

The term "Displaced Persons" (DPs) was coined to describe individuals who, after World War II, were unable or unwilling to return to their countries of origin due to persecution, deportation, political conflicts or natural disasters. This category included the millions of people who were forced into labor in Nazi Germany—whether for private employers, in labor camps, or in concentration camps. Many continued to live in so-called DP camps for years after the war, often under extremely challenging conditions, with limited resources and support.

### Prisoner Functionaries (Funktionshäftlinge)

This term refers to concentration camp inmates who were assigned specific roles or functions within the camp system by the Nazi authorities. Selected from among the prisoners, they were tasked with duties such as supervising other inmates or managing logistical operations within the camps. Some acted as the cruel extended arm of the Nazi perpetrators, while others used their positions to help fellow inmates. Despite their "usefulness" to the Nazi camp leadership and instances of collaboration, they too were victims of the Nazi regime, subjected to exploitation and abuse.

### Ghetto

The term originally referred to the Jewish quarter of Venice, established in 1516, where Venetian authorities forced Jewish people to reside. During World War II, ghettos, particularly in occupied Poland, became isolated urban districts, often fenced in and guarded. These ghettos were designed to segregate Jewish residents from the local population and subject them to forced labor.

The largest and most infamous Jewish ghettos were established in Warsaw and Łódź (renamed Litzmannstadt by the Nazis).

### Italian Military Internees (IMI)

In 1943, the Nazi regime denied captured Italian soldiers the status of prisoners of war, instead creating the new category of Italian Military Internees (IMI). This designation deprived them of all protections afforded by international agreements and the International Red Cross. Facing a growing demand for labor in Germany's war industries, approximately 650,000 Italian soldiers were forced into backbreaking labor in mines or armament factories. Branded as "traitors," they endured extreme working conditions, precarious living circumstances, and frequent violence from Nazi forces.

### Camps (Lager)

The term "camps" encompasses a wide range of facilities of varying size and function established by the Nazi regime in Germany and occupied territories during World War II. These sites became places of imprisonment, forced labor, and the mass murder of millions of people.

It is important to distinguish between the different types of camps within the Nazi system:

#### - Labor Camps

Labor camps for civilian workers were typically located near industrial facilities, where the forced laborers were made to toil for the benefit of those industries. These camps were often overseen by the companies themselves and were frequently segregated by nationality and gender. Camps for particularly discriminated groups, such as Polish and Soviet workers, were often surrounded by barbed wire and operated under harsher conditions.

#### - Labor Education Camps (Arbeitserziehungslager, AEL)

The Nazi regime regarded the labor of foreign workers not only as vital for maintaining the German war economy but also as a means of enforcing ideological discipline. Civilian workers who committed infractions or whose work performance did not meet employer expectations were sent to AELs for "reeducation through labor." This involved particularly grueling tasks under precarious conditions. Internment in these camps was temporary, and after serving their sentences, workers were sent back to their original workplaces. Repeat offenses resulted in reentry to an AEL, and a third infraction often led to transfer to a concentration camp. Approximately 200 of these punitive camps existed in total.

#### - Concentration Camps

These facilities, particularly those used by Nazi Germany in the 20th century, were designed to detain people deemed undesirable or dangerous. Life in these camps was characterized by extreme hardship due to overcrowding, malnutrition, forced labor, and violence perpetrated by guards and, in many cases, prisoner

functionaries. Many detainees died from disease, starvation, or violence. Physical and psychological torture were part of daily life for inmates.

Nazi concentration camps were among the most brutal and inhumane components of the Nazi camp system. They were operated by the SS, which, particularly in the later years of the war, became a significant economic force within the Reich through the total exploitation of camp prisoners. Millions of people were imprisoned, exploited, and murdered in concentration camps, including Jews, Roma and Sinti, political dissidents, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others persecuted by the Nazi regime for racial or ideological reasons.

#### - Extermination Camps

Nazi extermination camps were specifically designed for the systematic killing of large groups of people. Unlike concentration camps, which also served purposes such as detention and forced labor, extermination camps existed almost solely to carry out mass murders. The primary victims were the racially persecuted Jews, as well as Roma and Sinti, politically persecuted individuals, disabled people, and others deemed "undesirable" or "unworthy of life" by the Nazi regime.

Victims were mainly killed in gas chambers but also through mass shootings and lethal injections. Afterwards, their bodies were cremated in crematoria or buried in mass graves. Cremation was often preferred to eliminate evidence of these crimes.

The largest extermination camps, including Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibór, and Treblinka, were located in the General Government (occupied Poland).

#### - Prisoner-of-War Camps

Prisoner-of-war (POW) camps were established throughout the Reich and occupied territories, under the direct authority of the German Wehrmacht (the regular army of Nazi Germany). These camps were intended for soldiers of various nationalities captured during the war and served as internment facilities for military prisoners.

As the camp system became increasingly decentralized, many smaller work details and labor battalions emerged. These were often situated near factories or mines, where POWs were housed in close proximity to their places of forced labor.

#### - Transit Camps (Dulag)

Transit camps were temporary holding facilities for captured soldiers, typically located near the frontlines and managed by the Wehrmacht. POWs were registered in these camps before being sent to permanent camps like Stalags and Oflag.

In Italy, the term "transit camp" also refers to facilities used for the deportation of the Jewish population to Nazi concentration and extermination camps. Examples include the camps in Bolzano (Bozen), Fossoli near Carpi, and the Risiera di San Sabba in Trieste.

#### - Main Camps (Stalag)

Stalags were POW camps operated by the Wehrmacht to intern rank-and-file soldiers. Depending on labor demands, prisoners were often transferred to smaller labor camps or work detachments near armament factories. In some cases, POWs were temporarily assigned to private employers.

#### - Officers' Camps (Oflag)

Oflag were POW camps specifically for captured officers, who were intentionally separated from enlisted soldiers. Conditions in Oflag were generally better than in Stalags. Officers often retained their ranks and uniforms and had more freedom, including opportunities for leisure and cultural activities. This was partly because officers were regarded as higher-status individuals, and the Nazi regime sought to maintain a semblance of dignity in their treatment. Additionally, the use of officers for forced labor was significantly restricted. However, violations of human rights and mistreatment still occurred frequently.

### Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935

On September 15, 1935, two laws were enacted in Nazi Germany: the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor. These laws aimed to exclude all individuals deemed not part of the so-called "Volksgemeinschaft" (national community) based on the racist ideology of the Nazi regime. This included those categorized as Jews, Roma, or Black people. The Nuremberg Laws institutionalized the regime's antisemitic and racist ideology through legal means.

In October 1938, these laws were extended to Italy with the declaration of racial policies.

### United Nations (UN)

The United Nations was established in 1945 as an international institution with the goal of promoting peace, security, and cooperation among the world's nations. It aims to prevent future conflicts, advance sustainable development and human rights, and address global challenges such as poverty and humanitarian crises.

The United Nations is not a world government and does not pass laws; instead, it provides a platform for resolving international conflicts and developing guidelines on issues of shared interest. Member states of the UN remain sovereign entities.

Today, the United Nations includes 193 member states, encompassing nearly every country in the world.

### International Labour Organization (ILO)

Founded in 1919, the International Labour Organization is a UN agency created to address the challenges faced by industrialized nations. Its primary goals include promoting and defending fundamental workers' rights, fostering employment and sustainable development, improving global working conditions, and encouraging collaboration among governments, employers, and unions.

The ILO also develops international labor standards and provides technical assistance to member states.

### Organisation Todt (OT)

In late 1938, Fritz Todt, former General Inspector of Roadways and responsible for constructing Germany's autobahn network, was tasked with building fortifications along the German-French border. To achieve this, he created a massive workforce under his name.

After founding the Ministry of Armaments and Munitions in March 1940, Todt expanded the OT's scope, which began operating both within Germany and in occupied territories, taking on all construction projects of military significance. Following Todt's death in February 1942, the OT continued to grow, forcing civilian laborers, POWs, and concentration camp prisoners to work under harsh and exploitative conditions.

### Residence Permit

A residence permit is a document allowing citizens from non-EU countries to legally reside within the European Union. It usually requires a lawful entry into the territory and may be issued for various purposes such as work, study, family reunification, or applications for international protection.

The duration and conditions of residence permits vary according to the laws of the issuing country.

### Polish and Eastern Worker Decrees

Polish civilian workers were among the first to be forced into labor in Germany after the 1939 invasion of Poland. Classified as "subhumans" in the Nazi racial hierarchy, they were subjected to strict rules known as the Polish Decrees issued on March 8, 1940, by Heinrich Himmler's Reich Security Main Office (RSHA). These decrees enforced lower wages, constant surveillance, poor-quality food, severe restrictions on movement, and a prohibition on returning to occupied Poland. Minor offenses were met with harsh punishments, including internment in concentration camps or execution.

After the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, similar rules called the Eastern Worker Decrees were implemented for Soviet laborers. These were even harsher, reflecting their lower standing in the Nazi racial hierarchy.

### Reichswerke Hermann Göring

Founded in 1937 to prepare for war, the Reichswerke Hermann Göring became one of the largest industrial enterprises in Nazi Germany. Named after the Reich Minister of Economics, the corporation specialized in steel and mineral production, focusing on strategic materials like iron ore. It played a key role in manufacturing tanks, weapons, and ammunition.

The Reichswerke heavily relied on forced labor, employing civilians, prisoners of war, and concentration camp inmates under brutal conditions. Its main locations included Salzgitter/Braunschweig and Linz, the latter of which is now home to voestalpine, a leading global steel and technology company.

### Italian Social Republic/Republic of Salò (RSI)

On September 23, 1943, the Nazi regime established a puppet fascist state in the occupied part of northern Italy. Known as the Italian Social Republic or Republic of Salò, it was led by Benito Mussolini but remained heavily controlled by the Nazis.

### Sans-Papiers

A French term meaning “without papers,” referring to undocumented migrants living in a country without legal documents such as residence permits or visas.

### Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO)

In Vichy-controlled France, young men were conscripted under the Service du Travail Obligatoire (STO) to work in Nazi Germany. Particularly prevalent in southern France, this program mandated two years of service. After the war, those forced into this labor were often unjustly stigmatized as collaborators.

### League of Nations

The League of Nations was an intergovernmental organization established on January 10, 1920, to maintain peace and promote cooperation between nations. Its charter was incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles following World War I. The League addressed pressing security and international issues but failed to prevent the crises of the interwar period that culminated in World War II.

Despite its shortcomings, the League was an important step in developing international institutions. When the United Nations was established in 1945, it sought to avoid repeating the League’s mistakes.

### Sonderkommando

In Nazi extermination camps, Sonderkommando units consisted primarily of Jewish prisoners forced to facilitate the functioning of the camps. Their tasks included escorting victims to gas chambers, removing corpses, and burning them in crematoria or burying them in mass graves.

### Asylum Seekers/Asylum Status and Refugees

Asylum seekers are individuals who have left their countries of origin and submitted an application for asylum in another state. They are awaiting a decision from the host country’s authorities regarding the recognition of their refugee status.

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, refugees are defined as individuals who, due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on their culture, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, membership in a particular social group, or political opinions, are outside their country of origin and unable or unwilling to return. Once the asylum process is successfully completed, asylum seekers are recognized as asylum beneficiaries, while refugees are granted formal refugee status. Both groups receive support from the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), which assists in processes for obtaining international protection.

### Detention Pending Deportation (Schubhaft)

In Austria, Schubhaft refers to the detention of a foreign national to ensure the enforcement of their deportation. Unlike criminal imprisonment or judicially ordered detention, Schubhaft is an administrative measure issued and executed by a decision of the relevant authority.

In Germany, a similar concept exists under the term Abschiebungshaft (deportation detention). Both practices are implemented to facilitate the forced removal of individuals from the country, not as a punitive measure but as part of administrative procedures.

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