

fuhrerprinzip

a German word meaning leadership principle; the belief that the Fuhrer, or leader, was above the state and that all Germans owed the leader obedience and loyalty

gestapo

the secret police of the Nazi state

gleichschaltung

a German term meaning coordination; in Nazi Germany it meant the nazification of German life and culture

herrenvolk

the master race

hyperinflation

extreme or rapid inflation that devastated the German economy in the 1920s

kaiser

the German word for
king or emperor

lebensraum

a German term meaning living
space; in Mein Kampf Hitler
wrote about Germany needing
to acquire more territory in
Eastern Europe

luftwaffe

the German Air Force

nationalism

the desire to be a nation; the
belief of people of the same
language, culture and racial
background that they should be
a nation

night of the long knives

the name given to the
elimination of the leadership
of the Sturmabteilung by the
Schutzstaffel on 30 June 1934

phoney war

the period between September 1939 and April 1940 when there was no major military action on the Western Front

propaganda ministry

led by Joseph Goebbels, this ministry controlled German newspapers, radio and film, and through the Reich Chamber of Culture its control extended to German music, theatre, writing, art, architecture, literature and sport

Reichstag

the elected lower house of the German parliament; the Chancellor came from this house

reparations

repayments for damage done during the war

Schutzstaffel (SS)

originally formed as Hitler's bodyguard under the leadership of Himmler, the blackshirted Schutzstaffel became an elite and powerful force in Germany, responsible for carrying out Hitler's racial policies

Sturmabteilung (SA)

known as stormtroopers or brown shirts, was the military wing of the Nazi Party, made up largely of ex-soldiers

totalitarianism

a system of government in which total power and all aspects of state affairs are in the hands of one party that tolerates no opposition

volk

a term used in Nazi Germany to mean folk or people; Hitler wanted to preserve the racial purity of the German volk