



Susan Hodgins on Dorrit Sim



Questions & Glossary

1. How was Dorrit's life affected by antisemitism and by her experiences as a child in Germany?
2. How did Dorrit's life change when she moved to Scotland?

Glossary

Aryan

Term used by the Nazis to refer to exclude groups of people from German society, namely Jews, Roma and people of colour. Historically the word was a more neutral term that was manipulated – there is no racial group that can be defined as 'Aryan'.

Aryanization

Transfer of Jewish-owned property to non-Jews – 'Aryans' at a greatly reduced price. This was a voluntary process from 1933 until the summer of 1938, after which Jews were forced to transfer businesses, property and assets. In April 1938, Jews had to register all of their assets so that the value of Jewish property was known, with the intention to acquire it for the Reich.

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Complex of concentration and extermination camps in Poland, of which Auschwitz-Birkenau was the camp with gas chambers. There were 1.1 million people murdered on this site, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Awful Deed

A document from 1789 that was among Dorrit's family papers. It shows that Dorrit's ancestors had the right to live and work in Kassel but were still to be treated differently, because they were Jewish.

Hitler Youth

A Nazi-organised youth movement with sections for boys and girls. Its aim was to prepare members for war. The boys' movement was modelled on the Sturmabteilung (SA) or 'Storm Troopers', who were a paramilitary group associated with the Nazi party. The SA were also known as 'Brownshirts' due to the colour of their uniform.

Kindertransport

From German, meaning 'children's transport'. Programme approved by the British government, allowing the admission of almost 10,000 mostly Jewish child refugees from central Europe following Kristallnacht, until the outbreak of war. Due to immigration restrictions, the children were unaccompanied by parents and had to be sponsored by welfare agencies.

Kristallnacht

From German, meaning 'Night of Broken Glass'. A nationwide action, organised by the Nazis, on the night of 9th-10th November 1938 in which Jewish businesses and homes were attacked and looted, synagogues burned, and 91 people killed. More than 30,000 Jews were held in concentration camps until they agreed to leave Germany. Also called the 'November Pogrom'. Pogrom is a Russian word meaning a violent riot and has historically referred to anti-Jewish violence.

Molotov Cocktails

A weapon that is thrown by hand, made of a container that will shatter on impact (usually a glass bottle) filled with a flammable liquid and sealed with a cloth wick. Once broken, flames will spread easily due to the flammable liquid.

Theresienstadt

Theresienstadt was presented in propaganda to Jewish people as a model Jewish settlement but in reality, was a ghetto run by the SS which served as a transit camp for Jews on route to extermination camps. The camp operated during November 24 1941 and May 9 1945 in northern Czechoslovakia, where 35,440 Jews died in the ghetto and 88,000 were deported.