

Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA)

(Reich Security Main Office), the central office through which the Nazis dealt with their political and ideological enemies. It was established in September 1939, as a combination of the Security Service (SD) and the Security Police (SIPO), which included the Gestapo and the Criminal Police (*Kripo*). Under the leadership of Reinhard Heydrich, the RSHA grew into the Nazis' most utilized terror organization.

The RSHA encompassed seven departments. Department IV, under the control of Heinrich Mueller, was the *Gestapo*. It was divided into 14 divisions, each dealing with matters such as political enemies, treason, and counterintelligence. Subsection IV B-4, also called the Jewish affairs department, was headed by Adolf Eichmann. From late 1941 on, this section dealt with the "final solution," including the deportation of European Jews to ghettos, forced labor camps, and extermination camps.

The RSHA was also responsible for all security work within the Reich, the occupied territories, and behind the army's front lines. It supplied the soldiers who manned the *Einsatzgruppen* units that carried out the mass extermination of Jews in the Soviet Union, and planned the postwar resettlement of Poland with Germans and ethnic Germans, called *Generalplan Ost*.