

## Frank, Hans

(1900--1946), Nazi governor of the *Generalgouvernement* from 1939--1945. Trained as a lawyer, Frank joined the Nazi Party in 1923. Throughout the 1920s, Frank served as Adolf Hitler's personal lawyer. However, when Hitler seized power in 1933, Frank lost his importance within the party. He was given a number of positions without power, including Minister without portfolio.

When the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, they split the country into three: the western third was annexed to the Third Reich ;the eastern third was given to the Soviet Union ;and the central third was made into the *Generalgouvernement*, a semi-independent administrative unit. At that point, Frank ostensibly achieved prominence once more when Hitler appointed him governor-general of the *Generalgouvernement*. However, Frank did not hold great power there. He was the most important administrator in the region; but while he managed to get Hermann Goering to cooperate with him regarding the region's economy, the SS took charge of the extermination of Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*. Hitler meant for the *Generalgouvernement* to be used as a "racial dumping ground," an endless supply of slave labor, and a site for the mass extermination of European Jewry. Frank did not oppose these goals, but he hated others infringing on his domain. Thus, he went back and forth, sometimes opposing and sometimes supporting the inflow of Jews and Poles who had been expelled from German-occupied areas and the mass murder of Jews. He very much wanted to please Hitler, but he also wanted to build up his own power base. This conflict led to his downfall.

In March 1942 Frank was stripped of all power over racial and police issues. He then began to openly criticize SS policies, leading Hitler to remove Frank of his party positions. Hitler, though, would not allow Frank to resign, so Frank stayed in the position of governor-general until he was forced to flee from the advancing Soviet army. After the war, Frank was tried and hanged at Nuremberg. His official diary still serves as an important source for World War II historians.

