



# The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz: The Jewish Engineer Behind Hitler's Volkswagen

*Paul Schilperoord*

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## **The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz: The Jewish Engineer Behind Hitler's Volkswagen** Paul Schilperoord

The astonishing biography of Josef Ganz, a Jewish designer from Frankfurt, who in May 1931 created a revolutionary small car: the Maikäfer (German for "May bug"). Seven years later, Hitler introduced the Volkswagen. The Nazis not only "took" the concept of Ganz's family car-their production model even ended up bearing the same nickname. The Beetle incorporated many of the features of Ganz's original Maikäfer, yet until recently Ganz received no recognition for his pioneering work. The Nazis did all they could to keep the Jewish godfather of the German compact car out of the history books. Now Paul Schilperoord sets the record straight. Josef Ganz was hunted by the Nazis, even beyond Germany's borders, and narrowly escaped assassination. He was imprisoned by the Gestapo until an influential friend with connections to Göring helped secure his release. Soon afterward, he was forced to flee Germany, while Porsche, using many of his groundbreaking ideas, created the Volkswagen for Hitler. After the war, Ganz moved to Australia, where he died in 1967.

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