

## NAZI PROPAGANDA: BOYCOTT SIGN, 1933

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National Archives, courtesy of USHMM (14337)

A woman reads a boycott sign posted in the window of a Jewish-owned department store in Berlin, April 1, 1933. The sign reads: "Germans defend yourselves against Jewish atrocity propaganda, buy only at German shops!"



# NAZI GERMANY AND ANTI-JEWISH POLICY



SA soldier near a Jewish-owned store on the day of the boycott, Germany. Yad Vashem Photo Archive (1652/11)

The Nazi Party rose to power with an antisemitic racial ideology. However, the anti-Jewish campaign was not conducted according to a blueprint, rather it evolved. Before the outbreak of the war, political and economic factors, as well as public opinion both inside and outside Germany influenced the evolution of Nazi anti-Jewish laws and measures.

The main purpose of the anti-Jewish policy between 1933 and 1938 according to the racial theory was to isolate German Jewry from German society and ultimately encourage them to leave their homeland. Through 1938 and into 1939, more and more force was used to push Jews out of German territory.

In addition to the fact that the laws and decrees were issued chronologically, they should also be understood for how they affected different spheres of life. They affected personal status, the interaction of Jews with general society, and their economic situation. The restrictions affected individuals and the Jewish community as a whole. Jews were not only limited by the flurry of laws and decrees, they also frequently felt deeply humiliated by them.

## Build Up of Anti-Jewish Policy (1933–1938)

**1933–1934:** marked by boycotts against Jews and the exclusion of Jews from all government-related jobs, including serving as judges and teachers.

**1935:** marked by the Nuremberg Laws which classified Jews according to racial criteria and deprived them of German citizenship.

**1937–1938:** marked by increasing anti-Jewish violence, confiscation of Jewish property, and the forbidding of Jewish ownership of businesses. The culmination of violence was the *Kristallnacht Pogrom* in November 1938.

## Anti-Jewish Policy by Year

### 1933

- All non-“Aryans” were dismissed from holding government jobs. This regulation applied to public school teachers, university professors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc.—all Jews who held government positions of any kind. Non-“Aryans” were defined as Jews, the children of Jews, and the grandchildren of Jews.
- A general boycott of all Jewish-owned businesses was proclaimed. Officially it lasted for one



day, but actually it continued for much longer in many localities.

- Membership in the Reich Chamber of Culture was prohibited. This meant that Jews could not hold jobs in radio, in the theaters, or sell paintings or sculptures.
- Mass bonfires were ignited throughout Germany. Books written by Jews and anti-Nazis were burned.
- Jews were prohibited from owning land.
- Jewish lawyers and judges were barred from their professions.
- Jewish doctors were barred from treating “Aryan” patients.
- Jews were prohibited from producing kosher meat.

### 1935

- The Reichstag adopted the Nuremberg Laws, which defined Jews by racial criteria and determined that Jews could no longer be citizens of Germany.
- Marriage and intimate relations between Jews and those of “Aryan” blood were declared criminal acts.
- German females under the age of 45 were prohibited from being employed by Jews.
- Jews were forbidden to wave the Reich’s flag or to display the flag’s colors.

### 1936

- Hitler temporarily relaxed the antisemitic propaganda and other measures against Jews in order to avoid criticism by foreign visitors attending the Summer Olympic Games in Berlin.

### 1937

- “Aryanization,” the confiscation of Jewish businesses and property, intensified greatly.

### 1938

- The Reich Supreme Court declared that being a Jew was cause for dismissal from a job.
- The Nuremberg Laws were extended to Austria after the *Anschluss*, the annexation of Austria.
- All Jews had to add the names “Israel” and “Sarah” to their identification papers, and passports were marked with the red letter J, for *Jude* (Jew).
- Jews could no longer attend plays and concerts, own phones, or have drivers’ licenses, car registrations, etc.
- *Kristallnacht Pogrom*: approximately 1,400 synagogues were burned and 7,000 stores owned by Jews and hundreds of homes were damaged and looted.
- 30,000 Jews, most of them leaders in the Jewish communities, were sent to concentration camps. Many were offered the opportunity to leave the camps provided they could prove they had arranged their emigration from Germany.
- Very few Jewish children remained in German schools.
- All Jewish shops were ordered to close by December 31, 1938.
- Jews had to abide by curfews.