



# THE NUREMBERG RACE LAWS

## The Nuremberg Race Laws



Massed crowds at the 1935 Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg

At the annual party rally held in Nuremberg in 1935, the Nazis announced new laws which institutionalized many of the racial theories prevalent in Nazi ideology. The laws excluded German Jews from Reich citizenship and prohibited them from marrying or having sexual

relations with persons of "German or related blood."

Feedback

Ancillary ordinances to the laws disenfranchised Jews

and deprived them of most political rights.

The Nuremberg Laws, as they became known, did not define a "Jew" as someone with particular religious beliefs. Instead, anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents was defined as a Jew, regardless of whether that individual identified himself or herself as a Jew or belonged to the Jewish religious community. Many Germans who had not practiced Judaism for years found themselves caught in the grip of Nazi terror. Even people with Jewish grandparents who had converted to Christianity were defined as Jews.

For a brief period after Nuremberg, in the weeks before and during the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin, the Nazi regime actually moderated its anti-Jewish attacks and even removed some of the signs saying "Jews Unwelcome" from public places. Hitler did not want international criticism of his government to result in the transfer of the Games to another country. Such a loss would have been a serious blow to German prestige.

After the Olympic Games (in which the Nazis did not allow German Jewish athletes to participate), the Nazis again stepped up the persecution of German Jews. In 1937 and 1938, the government set out to impoverish Jews by requiring them to register their property and then by "Aryanizing" Jewish businesses. This meant that Jewish workers and managers were dismissed, and the ownership of most Jewish businesses was taken over by non-Jewish Germans who bought them at bargain prices fixed by Nazis. Jewish doctors were forbidden to treat non-Jews, and Jewish lawyers were not permitted to practice law.



Feedback

Like everyone in Germany, Jews were required to carry identity cards, but the government added special identifying marks to theirs: a red "J" stamped on them and new middle names for all those Jews who did not possess recognizably "Jewish" first names—"Israel" for males, "Sara" for females. Such cards allowed the police to identify Jews easily.

## Key Dates

### **September 15, 1935**

#### **Nuremberg Laws are instituted**

At their annual party rally, the Nazis announce new laws that revoke Reich citizenship for Jews and prohibit Jews from marrying or having sexual relations with persons of "German or related blood." "Racial infamy," as this becomes known, is made a criminal offense. The Nuremberg Laws define a "Jew" as someone with three or four Jewish grandparents. Consequently, the Nazis classify as Jews thousands of people who had converted from Judaism to another religion, among them even Roman Catholic priests and nuns and Protestant ministers whose grandparents were Jewish.

### **October 18, 1935**

#### **New marriage requirements instituted**

The "Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People" requires all prospective marriage partners to obtain from the public health authorities a certificate of fitness to marry. Such certificates are refused to those suffering from "hereditary illnesses" and contagious diseases and those attempting to marry in violation of the Nuremberg Laws.

 Feedback

**November 14, 1935****Nuremberg Law extended to other groups**

The first supplemental decree of the Nuremberg Laws extends the prohibition on marriage or sexual relations between people who could produce "racially suspect" offspring. A week later, the minister of the interior interprets this to mean relations between "those of German or related blood" and Roma (Gypsies), blacks, or their offspring.