

Activity 5: The Legal Effect: How Laws Can Persecute or Protect

A selection of Nazi anti-Jewish laws, 1933-39

1933

- **Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service** - This law removed Jews and political opponents of the Nazis from civil service positions, including school, university, and government jobs.
- **Law Against Overcrowding in Schools and Universities** - This law stated that Jewish students could make up no more than five percent of the student population of any public school or university. Many Jewish students had to leave public schools and start attending private schools. German schools taught Nazi racial ideas about the superiority of 'Aryans' and the inferiority of Jews.¹
- **Editors' Law** - This law forbade Jews from working in journalism.

1935

- **Reich Citizenship Law** - This law defined who the German government considered 'German' and who was a 'Jew'. The law defined Jews as a race identified by blood and genealogy. It did not identify Judaism as a religion or culture. Under this law, Jews lost their citizenship and became 'subjects of the state'.
- **Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour** - This law banned the marriage between Jews and non-Jews. It also made sexual relations between these 'mixed-race' couples illegal. This crime was called *Rassenschande* (race defilement).
- Together these two laws are called the **Nuremberg Race Laws**.

¹ The Nazis promoted a false notion that glorified the German people as members of the superior 'Aryan race', while defining Jews, Slavs, black people, and Roma and Sinti as 'non-Aryans' – racially inferior sub-humans.

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1938

- ***Law on the Alteration of Family and Personal Names*** - This law required Jews who did not have 'Jewish first names' to take the middle names 'Israel' (for men) or 'Sara' (for women). By 1 January 1939, all Jews needed to obtain new passports or identity cards listing their new names. These documents were marked with the letter 'J'.
- ***Decree on the Exclusion of Jews from Economic Life*** - This law prohibited Jews from owning businesses or engaging in trade. Jewish-owned businesses had already faced pressure to 'Aryanise', which meant that the Jewish owner would be forced to sell his or her business at a steep discount to a non-Jewish employee or Nazi supporter.
- **Other decrees:**
 - Expelled all Jewish children from school.
 - Removed driving licences from Jews.
 - Prohibited Jews from attending the theatre or cinema.
 - Barred Jews from all universities.
 - Prohibited Jews from attending sports facilities.
 - Barred Jews from entering 'Aryan' zones, which had been established in many cities.
 - Prevented Jewish doctors from treating 'Aryan' patients.

Sources

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Holocaust Encyclopedia: Anti-Jewish Legislation in Pre-war Germany* <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/anti-jewish-legislation-in-prewar-germany>> [accessed 7 March 2022]

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Laws and Decrees* <<https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/USHMM-Timeline-Activity-Laws-Decrees.pdf>> [accessed 7 March 2022]

