

Nazi Laws

1. Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service – April 7, 1933

As part of the Nazi "coordination" (*Gleichschaltung*) of all public offices, the Reich Ministry of the Interior under the leadership of Wilhelm Frick (1877-1946) issued the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" (also known as the Civil Service Law) on April 7, 1933, a week after the nation-wide boycott of Jewish businesses. This law excluded all racial and political "enemies" of the regime from the civil service.

The "Aryan Clause" established a racial criterion for continued employment in the civil service, effectively banishing Jews from government and administration; it also set a model that would soon be followed in other professions. Several days later, a law was passed that defined "non-Aryan" to mean descent from one or more "non-Aryan" grandparents; the law implies that grandparents are to be considered Jewish if they practiced the Jewish religion. A short-lived exception was made for veterans of the Great War (the "Hindenburg Exception") and for civil servants who lost a father or a son at the front.

Subsequent orders related to this law terminated the services contracts of non-salaried Jewish employees of the state, expelled "non-Aryan" honorary professors and untenured junior professors, and forbade any advancement of Jews protected under the "Hindenburg Exception." Those married to "non-Aryans" were also not granted admission to civil service positions.

2. Law on Admission to Legal Practice – April 7, 1933

The admission of lawyers of "non-Aryan" descent to the Bar was prohibited. It also denied non-Aryan members of the Bar the right to practice law. Similar laws were passed regarding Jewish law assessors, jurors, patent lawyers, notaries, and commercial judges. Other professions were soon barred to "non-Aryans" – tax consultant licenses were revoked and Jewish actors were forbidden to perform on the stage or screen. Restrictions were placed on reimbursements to Jewish doctors from state health insurance funds, and Jewish doctors were not permitted to treat non-Jewish patients.

3. Law on the Revocation of Naturalization and the Deprivation of German Citizenship ("Denaturalization Law") – July 14, 1933

Naturalizations completed between November 9, 1918 and January 30, 1933 were revocable if the naturalization was considered undesirable. In addition, German citizens residing abroad were deprived of their citizenship if their conduct threw doubt on their loyalty to the Reich or harmed German interests. Moreover, if a German national did not comply with an order to return to the Reich, their citizenship could be forfeited and their property confiscated by the government. Among those immediately affected by this law were the German Jews of Romanian, Polish or Russian origin naturalized during this time. Once stripped of their citizenship, they became stateless.

4. Law on the Seizure of Assets of Enemies of the People and the State – July 14, 1933

In conjunction with the Denaturalization Law, a law was passed that essentially served as the legal basis for the seizure of assets of emigrants. This law allowed the government to confiscate the assets of Communists and other designated enemies of the regime. Some use of this legislation was made to confiscate Jewish assets throughout the 1930s, particularly of Jews who had emigrated and those who had aroused the ire of the regime through their activities abroad.

5. Reich Flight Tax as Amended – May 18, 1934

During the Great Depression, the German government limited the free flow of capital and strictly controlled the exchange of foreign currency. To prevent capital flight in the wake of these measures, the government imposed a Flight Tax (*Reichsfluchtsteuer*) in 1931 to dissuade the wealthy from emigrating. Any citizen of the Weimar Republic as of March 31, 1929 who moved abroad before December 31, 1932 was subject to this tax.

After the Nazi Party's rise to power, the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* became a punitive anti-Semitic tax. Jews who left the German Reich had to pay a tax of 25 percent on their assets which they had registered in 1938. Individuals who were forced into concentration camps outside the Reich's borders also had to pay the *Reichsfluchtsteuer*.

By 1933, less than million marks had been raised through this tax. However, with the mass emigration subsequently caused by the government's escalating persecution of non-Aryans and other undesirables, revenue from this tax increased to 17 million Reichsmark in 1933 and eventually reached 342 million Reichsmark in 1938.

6. Reich Citizenship Law and Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor – September 15, 1935

At the seventh Nazi Party Rally held in Nuremberg in September 1935, Hitler announced two measures which were unanimously adopted by the Reichstag and became known as the Nuremberg Laws. The first was the Reich Citizenship Law, which declared those not of German blood to be *Staatsangehörige* (state subjects) while those classified as Aryans were *Reichsbürger* (citizens of the *Reich*). Essentially, Jews were no longer citizens of Germany and instead were made dependents of the state. Subsequent orders related to the Citizenship Law withdrew voting rights from Jews; repealed the "Hindenburg exception" to the Civil Service Law forcing all Jewish civil servants into compulsory retirement; enabled the removal of Jews from professions, occupations, and programs of study for which citizenship was required; and provided a legal definition for the racial categories of Aryan, Jew, and *Mischling* ("mixed-breed").

The second act, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor forbade marriage and sexual relations between Aryans and "non-Aryans". Marriages violating this law were voided and extra-marital relations prohibited. Marriages abroad were not recognized. A few months later, supplemental decrees were issued extending the application of the Nuremberg Laws to those who could produce "racially suspect" offspring -- Roma (Gypsies), blacks, or their offspring.

7. Decree on the Registration of Jewish Property – April 26, 1938

On April 26, 1938, Field Marshal Hermann Göring ordered that Jews possessing more than 5,000 RM worth of assets register their property. A similar process of property registration was repeated for Jews attempting to emigrate and those awaiting deportation. German allies and collaborating states such as Vichy France, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovakia, and Hungary, all introduced similar measures against Jewish property as did the Nazi authorities in the countries Germany occupied directly. This inventory of Jewish property served as a means for its subsequent systematic confiscation by the state; Göring's rationale was that data concerning the property was needed in order to determine how it could best be used to meet the needs of the German economy.

8. Law on the Confiscation of Products of Degenerate Art – May 31, 1938

The “House of German Art” opened on July 19, 1937, and its first show was the “Great German Art Exhibition” which displayed what the Nazi regime considered Germany’s finest art. The following day the disparaging “Degenerate Art” exhibit opened. For the latter, thousands of artworks were confiscated from museums throughout Germany; records indicate that a total of 15,997 works of fine art were confiscated from 101 German museums. The majority of these “degenerate” works were later sold on the international art market as a source of foreign currency or as barter. The plundering continued until 1938 and was eventually legalized. The law stated that “degenerate art” in museums or collections open to the public before the law went into effect could be appropriated by the government without compensation.

9. Decree for the Elimination of Jews from German Economic Life – November 12, 1938

The goal of the legislation was to "exclude the Jews from the economic life of Germany", and it stipulated the immediate liquidation of businesses owned by Jews. Regulations adopted pursuant to this legislation prohibited all economic activity of Jews except for certain services that could be rendered to Jews only.

10. Atonement Tax on the Jews of German Nationality – November 21, 1938

In the aftermath of the assassination of Ernst Eduard vom Rath, a German diplomat posted at the embassy in Paris, and the Pogrom of November 1938 (*Kristallnacht*), the Decree on an Atonement Tax on the Jews of German Nationality (also known as *Judenvermögensabgabe* or JUVA tax) was promulgated. It levied a sum of one billion Reichsmarks on German Jewry. Göring demanded that Jews atone for their hostile attitude against the German people.

All Jews with assets of 5,000 RM or more were obligated to pay 20 percent of their assets in four installments of five percent each between December 15, 1938 and August 15, 1939. A fifth payment was added in October 1939 making the total contribution 25 percent of an individual’s assets. The tax brought a total of 1.126 billion RM into the coffers of the Reich.

11. Decree on the Utilization of Jewish Property – December 3, 1938

This law made Aryanization of all Jewish businesses, regardless of the nationality of the Jewish owner, compulsory and imposed a deadline for the sale or liquidation of a Jewish firm. The state could also appoint a trustee to oversee the Aryanization at the expense of the business owner. Under this decree, the Reich levied a tax in connection with the Aryanizations in the amount of 70 percent of the difference between the officially assessed value and the actual purchase price. In addition, the law provided for the sale of Jewish owned stocks and securities; authorized the blocking of Jewish owned accounts; prohibited Jews from purchasing real property; and barred Jews from selling or purchasing precious metals and jewels.

12. Decree on Guardianship for Absentees – October 11, 1939

This decree essentially denied exiled Jews the use of their property in Germany though it preceded legislation regarding enemy property that was passed three months later. Guardian/trustees could be appointed to govern the property of individuals who left Germany and relocated to regions considered hostile to Germany.

13. Decree on the Treatment of Enemy Property – January 15, 1940

This decree as well as three subsequent supplemental orders governed the treatment of property in Germany owned either directly ("enemy property") or indirectly ("under decisive enemy influence") by enemies of Germany. The decree blocked all enemy property in its existing ownership; no property could be transferred except by an Administrator appointed by the local Court of Appeal in an *ex parte* proceeding brought by the Reichskommissar for Enemy Property. Neither the owner nor the shareholders of a company were represented or consulted. The Reichskommissar was a German government official in charge of the administration of all enemy property. An Administrator was appointed for individual companies. The Reichskommissar alone could determine whether property was under decisive enemy influence and whether the appointment of an Administrator was necessary. The shareholders of any company affected could not review these decisions in any way nor could they remove the Administrator appointed. The individual appointed Administrator took over the functions of the officers, board of directors, and stockholders of the company.

14. The Eleventh Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law –November 25, 1941

This law legalized the automatic confiscation of property from German Jews deported to the East. It deprived German Jews who resided abroad of their German nationality. Hence, the authorities were empowered to terminate the pensions and confiscate the property belonging to all deported Jews on the grounds that they transferred their normal residence abroad. All that was needed to seize an individual's property was the assertion that the person maintained his "normal residence" in a foreign country.