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# **LAWS AND DECREES**

# REICHSTAG FIRE DECREE



- On February 27, 1933, an arsonist burned down the *Reichstag*, the German parliament building.
- The “Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and the State,” known as the “Reichstag Fire Decree,” declared a state of emergency.
- With Nazi encouragement, President von Hindenburg suspended freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to assemble. The government could arrest political opponents without charge, dissolve political organizations, and censor newspapers.

## FEBRUARY 28, 1933

# ENABLING ACT



- The German parliament passed the “Law for Rectification of the Distress of Nation and Reich,” commonly called the “Enabling Act.” The law allowed Hitler to propose and sign legislation into law without consulting the parliament.
- This law effectively created a dictatorship in Germany.
- This propaganda flyer exclaims, “The Reichstag in Flames!” and urges, “Choose Hitler!”

## MARCH 23, 1933

# CIVIL SERVICE LAW

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY, FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1933

## NAZI "PURGE" OF THE UNIVERSITIES A Long List of Dismissals

We publish below a detailed list of the professors who have been dismissed from their posts in German universities between April 13 and May 4. There are also in the list a few assistants or lecturers who have been dismissed and several professors who have resigned their posts.

The list is for the most part compiled from announcements in the German press, and we have made it as complete and accurate as the sources permit. Many famous names are included in the list, and if many others are unknown to British readers we think that the list will be found impressive both in itself and in the comprehensiveness of the subjects covered. Most of the professors have been dismissed because of their Jewish origin, a few possibly because of their liberal sentiments.

### DISMISSED ON APRIL 13

#### Frankfurt-on-Main

Professor Heller, Public Law. Formerly of Berlin. Acted for the Prussian Government before the Supreme Court in its appeal against the appointment of a Commissioner.

Professor Rothemann, Philosophy. Head of the Institute of Sociology.

Professor Loewe, Economics. (Formerly of Kiel.)

Professor Mannheim, Sociology.

Professor Tillich, Philosophy and Sociology.

(Well-known religious Socialist. Formerly editor of "New Pages for Socialism.")

Professor Staeheiner, Sociology and Law.

One of the creators of German labour legislation.

Well-known through his book on the legal structure of the League protocols.

Professor Weil, Oriental Languages.

Professor Pribram, Economics.

Professor Richard Koch, History of Medicine.

Dr. Glaser, Jewish Religion.

Professor Pleasner, Oriental Languages.

Professor Sommerfeld, German Philology.

Professor Walter Frickel, Metallurgy.

Professor Fritz Mayer, Chemistry.

Professor Ernst Kahn, Commercial Journalism.

Professor Neumark, Economics.

Professor Ernst Cohn, Private and Commercial Law.

Professor Braun, Hygiene and Bacteriology.

Professor Ludwig Wertheimer, Banking Law.

Professor Altshul, Methods of Marketing Research.

#### Marburg

Professor Hopke, Political Science.

Professor Jacobson, Indogermanic Philology. On April 27 he threw himself in front of a train and was killed at once. He was 55 years old.

#### Göttingen

Professor Haug, Criminal Law.

Professor Courant, Mathematics.

Professor Born, Theoretical Physics.

Professor Emmy Noether.

Professor Barusch, Statistics.

Professor Bondi.

#### Königsberg

Professor Hensel, Public Law (may be reappointed).

#### Königsberg—Commercial Hochschule

Professor Bogusky, Practical Economics.

Professor Häntler.

Professor Kürbs.

#### Kiel

Professor Cohn, Economics.

Professor Neiser, Economics.

### DISMISSED ON APRIL 28

#### Heidelberg

Professor Radbruch (former Reich Minister of Justice), Criminal Law. Well known as a champion of penal reform.

#### Berlin—German Hochschule für Politik

A free institution founded in 1920.

Transferred into a State institution end of April with resignation of the President and Directors—Professor Dr. Jachk (a well-known writer on international affairs), Professor Dr. Süssner, Professor Dr. Drews.

#### Berlin—University Institute for Cancer Research

Director resigned on May 1—Professor Dr. Ferdinand Bismuthal, a pioneer of cancer research. A special chair was established for him in this subject in 1929.

### DISMISSED ON MAY 1

#### Halle

Professor Frankl, History of Art.

Professor Kusch, History of German Law.

Professor Künzler, Criminal Law.

Professor Ditts, Philosophy.

Professor Hart, Sociology (Viennese by birth, and now in Vienna. He wrote as a young man a well-known book, "Moderne Rassenlehre," opposing the theories of Siegfried Houston Chamberlain).

Privat Dozent Dr. Baer, Pure Mathematics.

### DISMISSED ON MAY 2

#### Berlin

Professor Dr. Peter Bona, Colloid Chemistry and Physiology.

Professor Dr. Friedrich Franz Friedmann, Tubercular Research.

Professor Dr. Hans Friedenthal, Physiology.

Professor Dr. Franz Blumenthal, Dermatology.

Professor Dr. Rimbaum, Psychiatry.

Professor Dr. Mitthoeck, Semitic Philology.

Professor Dr. Julius Pokorny, Celtic Philology, author of studies of the culture and literature of Ireland.

- The German government issued the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service."
- The law removed Jews and political opponents of the Nazis from civil service positions, including school, university, and government jobs. People were exempt only if they had been in that job before August 1914, had fought in World War I, or had lost a father or son in the war.
- Most Jewish lawyers were also forbidden to practice law.

# APRIL 7, 1933

# EDUCATION LAW



- The German government issued the “Law Against Overcrowding in Schools and Universities.”
- The law stated that Jewish students could be no more than 5 percent of the student population of any public school or university.
- Many Jewish students had to leave public school and start attending private school.
- German schools taught Nazi racial ideas about the superiority of “Aryans” and the inferiority of Jews.

**APRIL 25, 1933**

# STERILIZATION LAW



- The German government passed the “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases.”
- The law allowed the government to forcibly sterilize people with physical or mental disabilities so they could not have children.
- Under the law, 400,000 Germans were sterilized from January 1934 to May 1945.
- The caption of this propaganda slide reads “Life only as a Burden.”

**JULY 14, 1933**

# PRESS CENSORSHIP LAW



- The “Editors’ Law” forbade Jews from working in journalism.
- The German Propaganda Ministry kept registries of “racially pure” editors and journalists. New reporters had to register and show they were not Jewish.
- Newspapers could not publish any information that would “weaken the strength of the Reich abroad or at home.”
- Journalists who broke this law could be sent to concentration camps.

**OCTOBER 4, 1933**



# LAW AGAINST “CRIMINALS”



- The German government passed a “Law Against Dangerous Habitual Criminals.”
- The government was authorized to hold prisoners indefinitely, even if they had successfully served a prison term, if Nazi officials decided the prisoner was a “dangerous habitual criminal.”
- Instead of being released from jail, the prisoner would often be transferred to a concentration camp.

## NOVEMBER 24, 1933

# MANDATORY MILITARY SERVICE



- The German government enacted a conscription law, which applied to all men between 18 and 45.
- After May 1935, drafted soldiers had to show evidence that they were “Aryan.” Jews were forbidden to serve, and Jehovah’s Witnesses refused to join the military.
- Hitler also officially announced that Germany would begin rebuilding its military (which it was already secretly doing). This was a violation of the Treaty of Versailles, which had limited the size of Germany’s military after World War I.

## MARCH 16, 1935

# JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ORGANIZATION BANNED

Konzentrationslager \_\_\_\_\_  
Abteilung II

**Erklärung.**

Ich, - der - die \_\_\_\_\_  
geboren am: \_\_\_\_\_ in: \_\_\_\_\_  
gebe hiermit folgende Erklärung ab:

1. Ich habe erkannt, dass die Internationale Bibelforschervereinigung eine Irrlehre verbreitet und unter dem Deckmantel religiöser Betätigung lediglich staatsfeindliche Ziele verfolgt.
2. Ich habe mich deshalb voll und ganz von dieser Organisation abgewandt, und mich auch innerlich von dieser Sekte freigemacht.
3. Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich mich nie wieder für die Internationale Bibelforschervereinigung betätigen werde. Personen, die für die Irrlehre der Bibelforscher an mich werbend herantreten oder in anderer Weise ihre Einstellung als Bibelforscher bekunden, werde ich unverzüglich zur Anzeige bringen. Sollten mir Bibelforscherschriften zugesandt werden, so werde ich diese umgehend bei der nächsten Polizeidienststelle abgeben.
4. Ich will künftig die Gesetze des Staates achten, insbesondere im Falle eines Krieges mein Vaterland mit der Waffe in der Hand verteidigen und mich voll und ganz in die Volksgemeinschaft eingliedern.
5. Mir ist eröffnet worden, dass ich mit meiner erneuten Inschutzhaftnahme zu rechnen habe, wenn ich meiner heute abgegebenen Erklärung zuwiderhandle.

\_\_\_\_\_, den \_\_\_\_\_

Unterschrift \_\_\_\_\_

KL/47/4.43 5000

- The German government banned the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, a Jehovah's Witness publishing house. Local laws had already banned the Jehovah's Witness organization entirely. Many Witnesses violated laws against practicing their religion and distributing religious literature.
- Jehovah's Witnesses also refused to swear allegiance to Hitler or Nazi Germany or to serve in the military.
- Witnesses faced persecution and arrest. To be released from imprisonment, they could sign a form like this one, swearing allegiance to Nazi Germany. Few did so.

## APRIL 1, 1935

# REVISION OF PARAGRAPH 175

2. Hinter § 175 des Strafgesetzbuchs wird als § 175 a folgende Vorschrift eingefügt:

## § 175 a

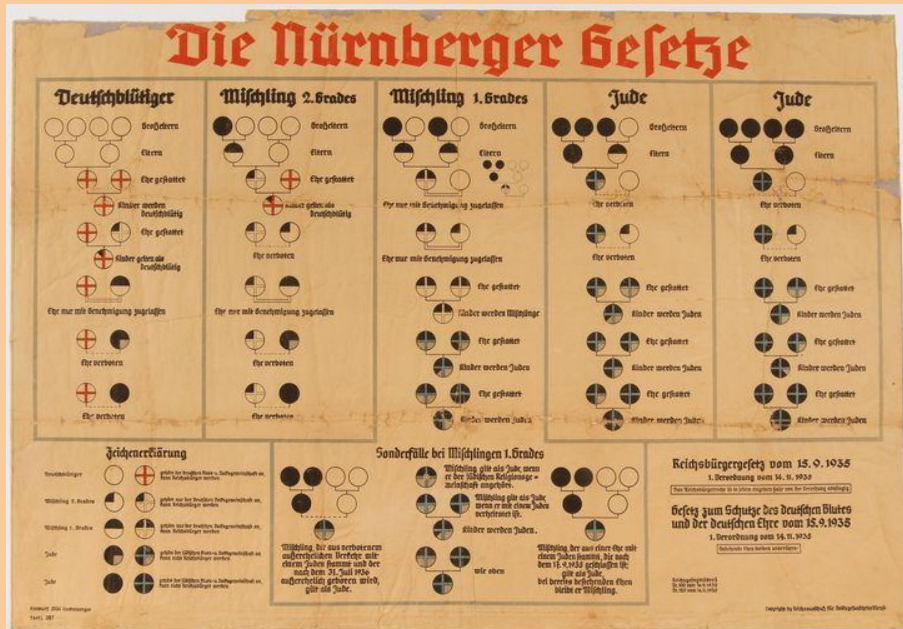
Mit Zuchthaus bis zu zehn Jahren, bei mildernden Umständen mit Gefängnis nicht unter drei Monaten wird bestraft:

1. ein Mann, der einen anderen Mann mit Gewalt oder durch Drohung mit gegenwärtiger Gefahr für Leib oder Leben nötigt, mit ihm Unzucht zu treiben oder sich von ihm zur Unzucht mißbrauchen zu lassen;

- The German government revised an existing law that already outlawed male homosexuality.
- The revision expanded what activities qualified as sexual contact and increased the punishments for those acts.
- Gay men were persecuted because they were seen as corrupting “German values” and not adding to the population. Because lesbians could still have biological children, they were usually not targeted.

## JUNE 28, 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.”
- This law and the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor” are called the “Nuremberg Race Laws.”

## SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

# LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND HONOR



- The German government 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].
- This law and the “Reich Citizenship Law” are called the “Nuremberg Race Laws.”

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

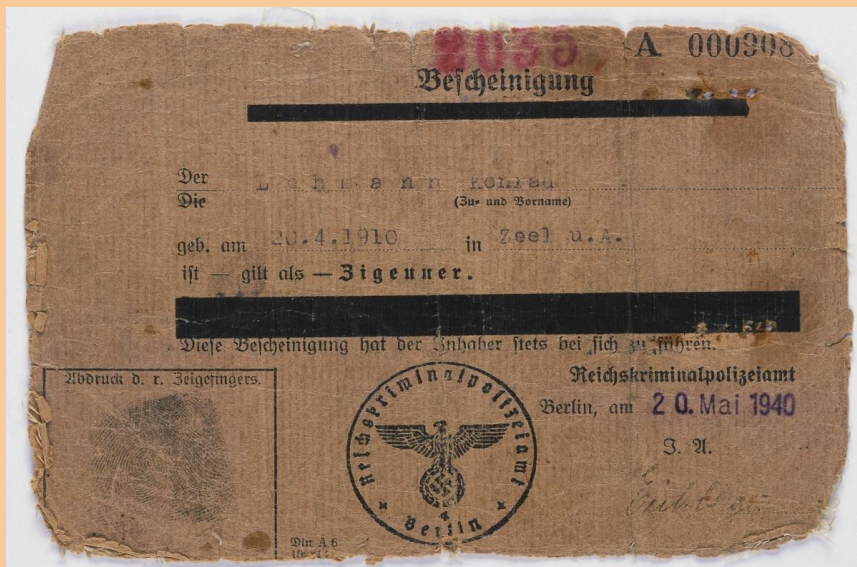
# RACIAL DEFINITIONS EXPLAINED



- The German government issued the “First Regulation” to the September 15, 1935 Reich Citizenship Law.
- The regulation clarified that Germans who were descended from one or two Jewish grandparents would be considered *Mischling* (mixed race). Those who had three or more Jewish grandparents were classified as Jews.
- *Mischling* were still permitted to vote and hold civil service jobs.
- German Jews who served in World War I lost their exemption from the April 7, 1933 law. They had to retire from civil service jobs by the end of the year.

## NOVEMBER 14, 1935

# NUREMBERG LAWS EXTENDED



- The Reich Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, announced an expansion of the September 15, 1935 Reich Citizenship Law.
- Frick stated that the citizenship law also applied to Roma and Sinti (so-called “gypsies”) and to Afro-Germans.
- Roma, Sinti, and Afro-Germans lost their citizenship and were not permitted to marry “Aryan” Germans.
- This racial identity card identifies Konrad Lehman as a *Zigeuner* (Gypsy).

## NOVEMBER 26, 1935



# JEWISH NAME LAW



- The “Law on the Alteration of Family and Personal Names” required Jews who did not have “Jewish first names” to take the middle names “Israel” (for men) or “Sara” (for women).
- By January 1, 1939, all Jews needed to obtain new passports or identity cards listing their new names. These documents were marked with the letter “J.”

## AUGUST 17, 1938

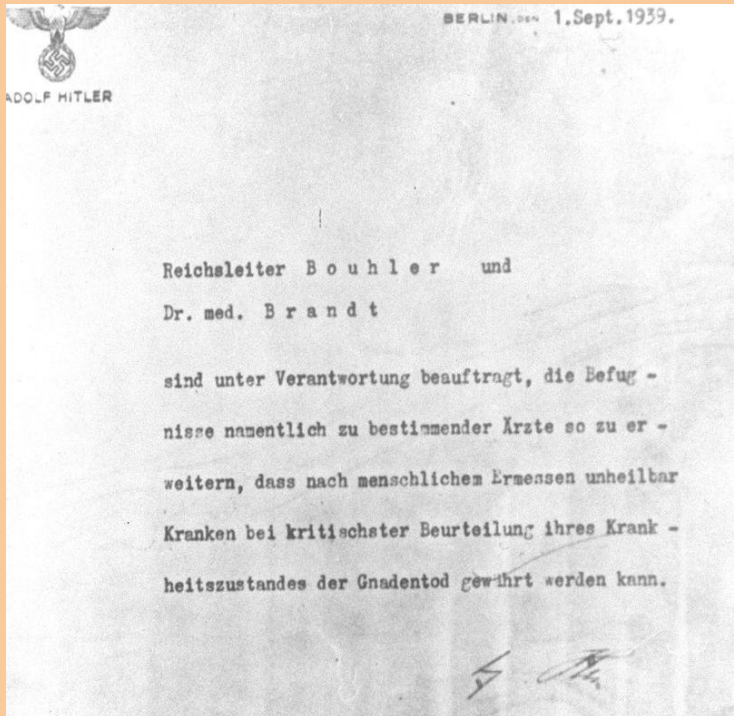
# ANTI-JEWISH ECONOMY LAW



- The “Decree on the Exclusion of Jews from Economic Life” prohibited Jews from owning businesses or engaging in trade.
- Jewish-owned businesses had already faced pressure to “Aryanize,” 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.
- This photo was taken at Arthur Lewy’s cigar shop in Berlin in the 1930s. After this decree, Arthur was forced to “Aryanize” his shop and could no longer work.

## NOVEMBER 12, 1938

# EUTHANASIA DECREE



- In the fall of 1939, Hitler signed a note that authorized designated physicians to carry out “mercy killings.” In fact, the letter was meant to protect doctors participating in the “euthanasia” program, a secret program of mass murder targeting institutionalized people with disabilities.
- The Nazi euthanasia program was called “Operation T-4” because the address where it was planned was Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin.
- Operation T4 was Germany’s first program of mass murder. Historians estimate 250,000 people were murdered as part of the Nazi euthanasia program.

## SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

# GERMAN MILITARY ISSUES COMMISSAR ORDER



- Commissars were officials in the Soviet Communist Party assigned to Soviet military units. They spread patriotic, pro-communist propaganda to Soviet troops.
- This order authorized and encouraged German soldiers to execute commissars.
- The commissar order sent a message to the German military that they did not have to follow the international laws of war.

## JUNE 6, 1941

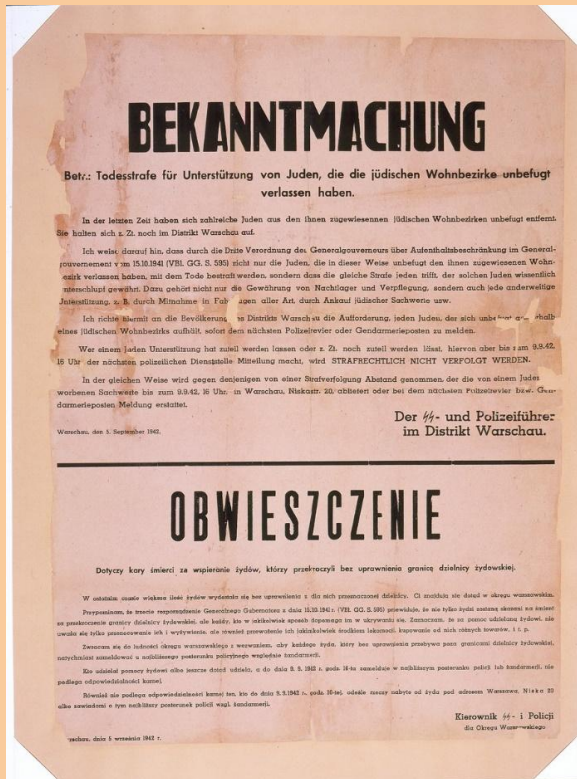
# JEWISH BADGE INTRODUCED IN GERMANY



- A “Jewish badge” was not unique to Nazi Germany but had a long history. In pre-modern times, Jews were sometimes forced to wear badges, patches, medals, or other means of identification. These orders were almost always accompanied by antisemitic laws.
- Nazi Germany forced Jews to wear badges—most often a yellow patch in the shape of a Star of David—as an easy way to identify them.
- Geography mattered. Jews in German-occupied Poland were forced to wear a badge beginning in 1939; Jews in the Netherlands didn’t have to wear one until 1942.

## SEPTEMBER 1, 1941

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEATH PENALTY FOR AIDING JEWS



- Non-Jews were often warned against assisting Jews. Although this poster was issued in Warsaw in September 1942, this warning was not new or limited to Poland.
- The poster warned that Jews in hiding would be subjected to the death penalty. Anyone caught hiding Jews or helping them—transporting them, buying valuables from them, or providing them with food—would also be sentenced to death in Poland.
- Very few non-Jews were willing to risk their lives to help Jews.

## SEPTEMBER 5, 1942