

## 12.6 Nazi Anti-Jewish Laws and Propaganda

**Source:** United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-propaganda>

**Nuremberg Laws:** In 1935, the Hitler announced new anti-Jewish laws at the annual Nazi party rally in Nuremberg. These laws institutionalized many of the racial and anti-Semitic theories from 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." Ancillary ordinances to the laws disenfranchised Jews and deprived them of most political rights. The Nuremberg Laws did not define a "Jew" by 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. Even people with Jewish grandparents who had converted to Christianity were defined as Jews.

### Questions

1. How did Nazis define "Jews"?
2. What excuse did the Nazis make for passage of these laws?
3. How did the Nazis use laws to isolate Jews and establish conditions for expulsion and genocide?

### Anti-Semitic Laws: Chronology

- Hitler declares Boycott of Jewish-owned Businesses (April 1, 1933).
- Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (April 7, 1933) forced all non-Aryans to retire from the legal profession and civil service.
- Nuremberg Laws instituted (September 15, 1935): 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.
- New marriage requirements instituted (October 18, 1935): 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.
- Nuremberg Law extended to other groups (November 14, 1935): 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.

**Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour:** Moved by the understanding that purity of German blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

**Article 1:** Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.

**Article 2:** Extramarital relations between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden.

**Article 4:** Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or national flag or display Reich colours.

**Propaganda:** Following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Adolf Hitler established a Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda headed by Joseph Goebbels. Its aim was to ensure that the Nazi message was successfully communicated through art, music, theater, films, books, radio, educational materials, and the press. Jews were a constant subject for attack, accused of aiding Germany's enemies and undermining German culture. Anti-Jewish, also known as anti-Semitic, propaganda created an atmosphere tolerant of violence against Jews.

### Questions

1. How did Nazi propaganda create conditions for the acceptance of anti-Jewish laws, violence, and genocide?
2. What themes, techniques, and approaches were used in Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda?
3. In your opinion, how can citizens "protect" themselves (and their nation) from propaganda in all of its forms?



The exhibition *Der ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew) attracted 412,300 visitors during its run at the Deutsches Museum in Munich from November 1937 to January 1938. Theater performances reiterated the exhibition's anti-Semitic themes.



A 1943 anti-Jewish poster by the artist "Mjolnir" intended to persuade Germans that Jews were responsible for starting the war. "Mjolnir" was the pen name of the artist Hans Schweitzer who created many of the most popular Nazi propaganda posters.



In this image a stereotyped Jew conspires behind the scenes to control the Allied powers, represented by the British, American, and Soviet flags. The caption reads, "Behind the enemy powers: the Jew."



Nazi films portrayed Jews as "subhuman" creatures infiltrating Aryan society. The *Eternal Jew* (1940), directed by Fritz Hippler, portrayed Jews as wandering cultural parasites, consumed by sex and money.