

## Aryanization

(*Arisierung*), the transfer of Jewish-owned businesses to German ownership throughout Germany and German-occupied countries. The Aryanization process included two stages: from 1933–1938 the Jews were gradually removed from German economic life, termed by the Nazis as "voluntary" exclusion; after 1938, Jewish businesses and property were forcibly confiscated by the Nazis.

Before the Nazis rose to power in January 1933, Jews owned 100,000 businesses in Germany, including stores, factories, publishing houses, newspapers, and private professional practices. Soon after taking over the German government, the Nazis imposed unofficial economic boycotts on the Jews (see also Boycott, anti-Jewish). They first targeted stores and then the professions. The Nazis tried to intimidate Jews into selling their businesses by publishing advertisements that denounced Germans who bought from Jews. Uniformed guards were posted outside Jewish businesses to harass customers, and public institutions were forbidden to patronize them. Thus, Jewish businesses either went under, or were forced into being sold for a fraction of their value. Of the 50,000 Jewish-owned stores that existed in 1933, only 9,000 remained in 1938.

Aryanization was organized by government economic counselors within each district in order to ensure that the best businesses were given to longstanding Nazi Party members. In some cases, Jewish business owners were jailed until they agreed to give up their ownership; in others, the government just confiscated the businesses. After the 1936 Olympics Aryanization was intensified. During the summer of 1938 Jewish professionals were banned from their jobs.

After the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 1938, the Nazis legalized forced Aryanization—allowing the forcible confiscation of Jewish property. The German Jewish community had to pay a fine of one billion reichsmarks for the damage inflicted upon them during the pogrom. Jewish businesses not yet sold were put under government trusteeship, and Jews were forced to register all their property with the Nazis. Their money was put into blocked accounts

from which they could only draw small amounts each month. Jews who emigrated had to leave most of their valuables behind. Those Jews deported to Theresienstadt had to sign away their property. Eventually, all Jewish money and property was confiscated by the Nazis and used to finance the deportation of the Jews.