



Nuremberg Laws

Racial laws implemented by the German Parliament in Nuremberg, on September 15, 1935. These laws became the legal basis for the racist anti-Jewish policy in Germany. Thirteen additional decrees were added to the Nuremberg Laws over the next 8 years. These included the first official definition of who was to be considered a Jew and who an Aryan. Jews with three or four Jewish grandparents were considered full-blooded Jews.

The first of the Nuremberg Laws was called the "Reich Citizenship Law," which declared that only Aryans could be citizens of the Reich. This stripped the Jews of their political rights and reduced them from *Reichsbürger* (citizens of the Reich like the Aryans), to *Staatsangehörige* (state subjects). The second law, entitled the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor," forbade marriages and extramarital sexual relations between Germans and Jews, the employment of German maids under the age of 45 in Jewish homes and the raising of the German flag by Jews.

In early anti-Jewish policy, exceptions were made for Jewish World War I veterans and state officials, who had worked for the government before the war's outbreak in 1914. The Nuremberg Laws nullified these exceptions, and Jewish war heroes were to be treated just as badly as any other German Jew.

By the summer of 1935, the need for laws like these had become urgent. The Nazi Party had no clear policy on the status of the Jews in Germany and party leaders and state officials were in conflict with each other about the "Jewish Question." Anti-Jewish rioting had broken out, the party and public were demanding clarification and Hitler felt pressed to provide a response. The Nuremberg Laws appeased those Nazi officials who had been calling for virulent anti-Jewish wording in the party's platform.

The Nuremberg Laws not only provided a "legitimate" legal mechanism for excluding the Jews from mainstream German culture, but also supplied the Nazi Party with a rationalization for the antisemitic riots and arrests they had carried out over the previous months.