

Berlin

Capital of Germany. When Adolf Hitler rose to national power in January 1933, about 160,000 Jews lived in Berlin, constituting one-third of German Jewry. The city's Jewish leaders had to deal with many new challenges, such as creating expanded school and social welfare systems after Jewish students were banned from public schools and Jewish professionals were fired from their jobs. One of the Jewish community's main responsibilities was to organize emigration. By the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, half of Berlin's Jewish population had left the country.

Anti-Jewish measures reached a new high in 1938. On the night of November 9, a preplanned pogrom, *Kristallnacht*, was launched in Berlin, and spread throughout Germany. Most of the city's synagogues were burnt to the ground, Jewish stores and businesses were pillaged, and Jewish institutions were attacked. Tens of Jews were murdered and thousands were deported to concentration camps. In the aftermath, Jewish institutions were shut down and their property was taken away. Over 1,200 Jewish businesses were confiscated as part of the aryanization process. In December, the Nazis began taking over Jewish homes in the wealthier areas of Berlin, and restrictions were put on Jewish movement.

In September 1941 the Jews were forced to wear the Jewish badge (see also badge, Jewish). When Jewish emigration was totally forbidden in October 1941, the Nazis immediately began deporting Jews from Berlin. From October 1941 to January 1942, 10,000 Berlin Jews were deported to Riga, Lodz, Kovno, and Minsk. In June 1942 the Germans launched transports to Theresienstadt, and in July, they initiated direct deportations to Auschwitz. In November 1942, Alois Brunner, an SS officer and representative of Adolf Eichmann, took control of the deportations. By January 1943, the Gestapo called for the total liquidation of the Berlin Jewish community. Within the next two months, thousands of Jews were deported to Auschwitz. Berlin was declared free of Jews in June 1943, although 7,000 Jews remained in the city. In all, over 55,000 Berlin Jews perished in the Holocaust.

