

How did the persecution of the Jews escalate after 1933?

History - Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1919 - 1939

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The boycott of Jewish shops and business (1933)

Hitler became Chancellor on the **30th January 1933** and soon after began to target Jews. Germans were persuaded to **boycott** Jewish shops and businesses. The **boycott** was a reaction to stories in the foreign media which criticised the Nazis. The Nazis claimed that these stories were created by Jews living abroad. So, on March 30th 1933, the Nazi Party announced that an **official boycott** would begin the next day of all **Jewish business, doctors and lawyers**. The **boycott** began on **Saturday 1st April**, and lasted a day. Members of the **SA** placed themselves at entrances to Jewish shops and other places of business, discouraging people from entering. The **SA vandalised many businesses by painting the Star of David or the word Jude (Jew) on shop doors and windows**. The police rarely stopped the SA, even when there were acts of physical violence.



The Nuremberg Laws (1935)

As the Nazis were increasing their authority and power in Germany they introduced the Nuremberg Laws on the 15th September 1935. Two of these laws increased the persecution of Jews. These two laws were the **Reich Citizenship Law** and the **Reich Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour**. The **Reich Citizenship Law** stated that only those of German blood could be German citizens and **banned Jews from being German citizens**. As a result of Jews were seen as 'subjects' and as part of losing their citizenship they also lost the right to vote as well as other civil rights. By removing their civil rights, the Nazis had **legally pushed Jews to the edge of society**. **The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour banned marriage or sexual relations between Jews and German citizens**. Marriages that had occurred before this law were still classed as legal but German citizens were encouraged to divorce their existing Jewish partners.



Kristallnacht (1938)

The 1936 Olympic Games saw an easing of persecution but once this was over the persecution of the Jews began to increase and worsen. This escalated even further when in November there was a **violent outburst of antisemitism** in Germany. On 8th November 1938 a young Polish Jew (*Herschel Grynszpan*) shot a German representative in Paris. He was protesting against the treatment of his parents, who had been deported from Germany to Poland and he was angry at the way they had been treated. **Goebbels** used this as an opportunity to use the **SA, SS and Gestapo** to attack local **synagogues** and houses of local Jews. Things **escalated on the 9th November** when **Goebbels and Hitler** decided to make this an attack on Jews across the whole of Germany. Instructions were sent to **SS** groups to arrest as many Jews as they could fit in their prisons and the police were told not to interfere and stop any violence against Jews. **Nazi leaders were told to do this under cover.**



So on the **9th and 10th November 1938 the violence escalated.** Gangs **smashed and burned Jewish property, attacked Jews** and so many windows were smashed this became known as **Kristallnacht**, meaning 'Night of the Broken Glass'. **Some of the gangs were in their uniforms, however others were not. This gave the impression that it was the general public who had organised and taken part in the attack.**

Some Germans were shocked and horrified with what they saw, others watched in enjoyment and some joined in. The official figures, so it is likely to be higher, **estimate that 100 Jews were killed and 20,000 sent to concentration camps. Approximately 7,500 Jewish businesses and 191 synagogues were destroyed.** The Nazis were anxious to portray **Kristallnacht** as a spontaneous act of vengeance by Germans. **Hitler officially blamed the Jews themselves** for having provoked the attacks and used this as an excuse to increase the campaign against them. **He punished the Jews by fining them 1 billion marks as compensation for the damage caused.**



Glossary

Antisemitism - Discrimination, hostility or prejudice towards Jewish people because of their faith, Judaism.

Boycott - When you refuse to have dealings with a person, group or organisation or refuse to buy particular products of from particular shops.

Kristallnacht - (Crystal Night) or the Night of Broken Glass, refers to the thousands of shattered windows between the 9th and 10th November 1938.

Synagogue - Jewish place of worship.

