Before Hitler

By the mid-19th century most of the Jewish population had been accepted into their respective communities throughout Europe and the laws which restricted them to ghettos had been relaxed.

But with the growth of industrialisation gave new opportunities for the Jews to make money and it led to the revival of the anti-Semitic feelings by the beginning of the 20th Century.

The anti-Semitic feelings were expressed in Germany since Kaiser Wilhelm II, long before Hitler gained power, but were not expressed in such extreme ways.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Nazi leadership staged an economic boycott against the Jews of Germany. There were around 600,000 Jews living in Germany at this time, which equated to less than one percent of the total population.

Most Jews in Germany were proud to be Germans, citizens of a country that had produced many great poets, writers, musicians, and artists. More than 100,000 German Jews had served in for Germany in World War I, and many were decorated for bravery.

In August 1938, German authorities required the Jewish people in Germany with names from non-Jewish origin to add “Israel” and/or “Sara” to their names.

All Jews had to carry identity cards which proved their Jewish heritage and in the Autumn of 1938, all Jewish passports were stamped with the letter “J”.

Late 1938, Nazi leaders stepped up the “aryanisation” and enforced measures that succeeded in increasingly isolating and segregating Jews from the German nationals.

Banned from:
- Public Schools
- Universities
- Cinemas
- Theatres
- Sports Facilities

In most cities they were completely banned from entering “Aryan” zones. They were also banned from certain professions; a Jewish doctor could no longer treat an Aryan patient.

**Nazis and Anti-Semitism**

**Definition:** the belief that Jews are the lowest race in the social hierarchy and should be persecuted

Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, speaks at a rally in favor of the boycott of Jewish-owned shops. Berlin, Germany, April 1, 1933.

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