

Lawyers without Rights

The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Germany after 1933

At the beginning of 1933 there were 19,276 lawyers in Germany. After the Nazis took power, many of them, according to the National Socialist ideology, were considered Jewish. On March 31, 1933, SA troops stormed the court houses in a number of German cities. The dismissal of all Jewish judges, prosecuting attorneys and lawyers was called for vociferously.



Max Alsberg (center) and two unidentified men in the early 1930s. Alsberg was one of the most outstanding lawyers in all of Germany. His analytical and rhetorical skills were extolled; he had also published numerous scholarly texts. Alsberg fled from Germany in the spring of 1933 but was unable to overcome the ostracism and loss of his profession and country. He committed suicide in Switzerland in the autumn of 1933.



Jewish lawyers wait outside the Berlin Bar building in early April 1933 to request their further acceptance to the legal profession. SA guards regulate the movement of the line.



Alfred Apfel, who defended Carl von Ossietzky in what was known as the Soldiers Trial ("All soldiers are murderers") was arrested following the Reichstag fire. He was later released and fled to France. His photo appeared alongside others on this poster. He died in 1940 in Marseille under circumstances that are not further known.

deprivation

Jewish lawyers made up about half of all lawyers in Berlin, whereas in other cities the percentage was not so high. All lawyers who were regarded as Jewish were confronted in some form or another with discriminatory measures.



In the beginning of April 1933, the Munich lawyer Dr. Michael Siegel (1882 - 1979) filed a complaint at police headquarters regarding the "protective custody" of a client. His pant legs were cut off and he was led barefoot through the city with a sign around his neck: "I will never complain to the police again!" Siegel was able to make it to Peru in 1940, where he died in 1979.



Anita Eisner was one of the few female lawyers in Berlin. As was the case with other Jewish lawyers, her acceptance to the Bar was immediately revoked in 1933. Afterwards she tried to make her living as an assets manager. She went into hiding in March 1943 to avoid deportation to an concentration camp. She survived - her mother and sister were murdered. In 1947 she was again accepted to the Bar, but the long period of persecution had taken its toll on her health. She died in 1950 at the age of 49.

isolation

persecution