

# Lawyers

Jewish Lawyers in Germany  
under the Third Reich

# without Rights

EXHIBITION presented by  
the German Federal Bar in cooperation  
with the American Bar Association and its  
Section of International Law



# Lawyers Jewish lawyers in Germany under the Third Reich Without Rights

EXHIBITION presented by  
the German Federal Bar in cooperation  
with the American Bar Association and its  
Section of International Law

## Forewords

The relatively peaceful times of the Weimar Republic came to an abrupt end on January 30, 1933, when Hindenburg granted power to Adolf Hitler. The democratic state ceased to exist. On that day the fate of German Jews was sealed.

Jews were excluded from all areas of social life. In justice, too, a distinction was made between Jews and non-Jews. As early as in March 1933 a decree was issued, which refused all Jewish judges, public prosecutors and lawyers access to the courts from the following day. The exhibition reflects a time in Germany when the individual rights and the rule of law were utterly neglected. Many non-Jewish German lawyers in those days kept silent. They did not say a word. There was no real resistance. Most of them did not even try to help their colleagues. Why? We do not know, and this exhibition does not give an answer to this question either. They failed to act and so did the lawyers' organizations. What the exhibition does, however, is reminding us to raise this question again and again.

Since it was first displayed in 2000, "Lawyers without rights" has been shown in more than 70 cities in Germany and all over the world. A great number of people have visited the exhibition and it has met with a lot of attention. Whole school classes were markedly impressed by it. Most of the German Regional Bars have started research into their history and in the fate of their Jewish colleagues now. This is a difficult undertaking, as most of the written information has been destroyed during the Second World War. 12 books have been published, the last one by the German Federal Bar with an overview of the regional research activities and results.


The German Federal Bar is deeply grateful that "Lawyers without rights" is now supported and presented by the American Bar Association and its International Section in the United States.

Axel C. Filges  
President  
German Federal Bar (BRAK)



The exhibition "Lawyers without Rights" presented in the USA is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office





Lawyers Without Rights is an exhibition that speaks for itself. Its message resonates with all persons who understand and appreciate the concepts and ideals of a just rule of law. It is a commentary and a lesson for all people everywhere about the dangers when lawyers or minorities are attacked or the law itself is unjustly applied.

The German Federal Bar sponsored, researched, underwrote and has presented throughout Germany, in Europe, Israel and elsewhere, this compelling Exhibition. It is a series of stories about the Nazi mistreatment of a huge percentage of German lawyers - those who happened to be Jewish.

We all know about the Holocaust, but until this exhibition was put together, no one really knew the details of the attacks upon the lawyers, and how those attacks succeeded in permitting the continuation of history's most monstrous outrage against humanity.

Our profession is the first line of defense against incursions and attacks on the just rule of law. When lawyers, the judicial system and the just rule of law are undermined, when the abuses go unchecked and are permitted to flourish, only great tragedy can follow. And that was what happened under the Third Reich.

Attacking lawyers and their ability to defend society against the excesses of heartless dictators is something that all free people on earth must fight against - if necessary, with our very lives. The slippery slope that starts when the defenders' rights to defend are compromised worsens with each abuse until there is no justice and no hope for justice. That message is one that the American Bar Association has historically promulgated. Defending liberty and pursuing justice are the foundation of our profession. The Federal German Bar stands for the same values, and by its efforts in presenting this exhibition, is to be commended.

Lawyers Without Rights has relevance at many different levels. Its relevance is for human rights and for a just rule of law. Its relevance is for mankind. Its message is a universal message; but perhaps its most important message is for and about lawyers everywhere.

The American Bar Association and its Section of International Law are proud and privileged to join the German Federal Bar in presenting Lawyers Without Rights.

Carolyn Lamm  
President  
American Bar Association (ABA)

Glenn Hendrix  
Chair  
American Bar Association  
Section of International Law

Aaron Schildhaus  
Chair "Lawyers Without Rights"  
US Exhibition and Immediate  
Past chair ABA International

