



The Exhibition – The American Bar Association and the Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer (German Federal Bar) co-sponsored this exhibition and released a book, highlighting the meaning of the rule of law through the historic lens of the tragic fate of Jewish lawyers in Nazi Germany after 1933.

The partnership evolved after the German Federal Bar in late 2011 asked the ABA for assistance to introduce to the nation's capital this compelling exhibit of 25 panels depicting the humiliation, degradation and purge from the German legal profession of roughly 5,000 lawyers simply – because they had Jewish ancestry. In 2004, this exhibition – *Lawyers Without Rights: Jewish Lawyers in Germany under the Third Reich* debuted in the U.S. at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

In fall of 2012, the two bar groups formalized an arrangement to work together to display the exhibit in the United States and explore other projects. Since then, more than 65 U.S. venues have hosted the exhibit without charge, from New York City to Los Angeles, in addition to Mexico City and Toronto. Host venues have included federal courthouses and state supreme courts, public libraries, law schools, Jewish community centers, synagogues and private venues. The project now falls under the ABA Center for Global Affairs.

The Book – The November 2018 release of the English translation of the book, *Lawyers Without Rights: The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Berlin after 1933*, marked an exciting new step for this project. This book on the fate of Jewish lawyers in Berlin after 1933 underscores our shared interest in passing on to future generations the horrors of the Holocaust as well as fostering a better public understanding of the rule of law.

The occupational bans on Jewish lawyers in Berlin, the capital city and home to the largest bar in Germany, was first detailed more than 20 years ago and updated in 2007. By 1938, Nazi law had eliminated all but a handful of Jewish legal "consultants" from the profession. Hundreds of German Jewish lawyers subsequently died in concentration camps or committed suicide; scores fled the Nazi regime emigrating across the world, including the United States. A few earned U.S. law degrees, like lawyer Hanna Katz, one of 19 Jewish women lawyers in Berlin whose biography in the book notes that she became a member of the American Bar Association.

This book represents one of the most significant looks at the systematic exclusion through unjust law of German lawyers of Jewish origin from the legal profession. The author, Simone Ladwig-Winters, determined that of the 3,890 lawyers in the Berlin Court of Appeals district, nearly half – 1,835 – had Jewish origin. The fate of about 1,400 of these attorneys are detailed in the biographical section of the book.

The English-translation of *Lawyers Without Rights: The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Berlin after 1933* includes three significant additions – forewords from the Honorable Stephen G. Breyer, associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; Benjamin B. Ferencz, who recently passed away in April 2023 at the age of 103 years old - until then he was the sole surviving prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials; and Ronald D. Abramson, a lawyer and philanthropist whose family foundation, the Anne and Ronald Abramson Family Foundation, provided support.

These stories, summarized in the exhibit and comprehensively detailed in the book, provide a chilling description of how the Nazis dismantled the rule of law as a prelude to their reign of terror in Germany and other parts of Europe. The individual bios provide a chilling reminder of the human horror of the Holocaust as well as irrefutable evidence of heinous acts by the Nazis - later judged in the Nuremberg trials (for the first time) as crimes against humanity.

The MSU College of Law is grateful for the encouragement and support for this exhibition from the following units at Michigan State University. In this joint venture, we recognize the contributions of the German Federal Bar and the American Bar Association for their initiative to establish the facts of this vital piece of history... a history that not only informs us about the past, but may well serve as a warning about the future.

We Thank:

***The Lori E. Talsky Center for Human Rights
of Women and Children – College of Law***

***The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute
for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel***

James Madison College

Residential College of Arts and Humanities

Our Daily Work / Our Daily Lives

Department of History

The exhibition will be on display in the third floor gallery area from January 1, 2024 through June 2024.