

Law, Justice, and the Holocaust: How the Courts Failed Germany



In the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s *Law, Justice, and the Holocaust* program, participants critically examine the pressures faced by German jurists under the Nazis. Using legal decrees, judicial opinions, and case law of the period, program participants study the role of judges in the destruction of democracy and the establishment of the Nazi German state. Judges were among those within Germany who might have effectively challenged Hitler’s authority, the legitimacy of the Nazi regime, and the hundreds of laws that restricted political freedoms and civil rights. And yet the overwhelming majority did not. This program’s close scrutiny of the past provides a framework for an exploration of the role of the judiciary and legal profession in a democracy.

By the end of program, participants will be able to:

- Identify legal professionals’ actions during the Nazi rise to power that facilitated the transition from democracy to dictatorship in Germany
- Understand how the courts played a role in implementing the Nazi racial, antisemitic agenda through reinterpreting existing laws in response to the Nazi rise to power and by applying new Nazi laws
- Reflect on the motivations and pressures legal professionals faced under the Nazi regime

Speaker:



Kendal Jones

Kendal Jones is a program coordinator for the Museum’s Law and Justice Initiative, facilitating programs for judges, attorneys, and law enforcement agencies. Previously, she worked in the Museum’s Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, where she coordinated outreach to professional audiences interested in mass atrocity prevention. Prior to joining the Museum, she worked at several human rights organizations, including Corrymeela, a peace and reconciliation center in Northern Ireland.

She has a BA in history with a minor in international peace and conflict resolution from American University, and an MA in applied human rights from the University of York in the United Kingdom.