

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:



Sarah Reza

Sarah Reza is the manager of the Museum's Law and Justice Initiative, overseeing programs for law enforcement, judges and attorneys. Her work includes developing programmatic strategies, building and maintaining partnerships, expanding program outreach, and spearheading programming and resource development. She has contributed to several institution-wide projects, including evaluations, outreach, and planning. Prior to coming to the Museum, she worked at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

She received a BA in film studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and an MA in museum studies from The George Washington University.