

Jewish Daily Life in Prewar Nazi Germany (1934–38)

Abstract

These images depict daily life for Jews in Germany during the early years of the Nazi regime. While many Jews faced prejudices in their interactions with neighbors and increasing persecution from local and state authorities, they also maintained important traditions in an attempt to create some semblance of normalcy. Families celebrated important rituals like the Passover Seder (depicted here in the image from 1934 of a Jewish family in the Rhineland), while others continued to participate in their regular social clubs and associations (seen, for example in the photo of the Berlin Jewish Community Choir in 1934). After the pogrom of November 9–10, 1938, an additional wave of Jews decided to emigrate from the Reich, as the last image shows. Most families, however, did so with continued reluctance, as departure ended careers, educations, and relationships. In many cases, emigration was infeasible: elderly relatives found it difficult to travel, few states after 1938 were willing to accept Germany's fleeing Jews, and the Nazi regime made emigration a financially ruinous process. All of these factors meant that families were often separated during the emigration process, as some relatives stayed behind to allow the younger generations an opportunity to start a new life abroad. It is estimated that between November 10, 1938, the day after Kristallnacht, and September 1, 1939, the beginning of World War II, 115,000 Jews decided to leave Germany. The total number of Jews who left Germany between January 30, 1933, and September 1, 1939, is estimated to be 400,000.

Source





Source: 1) Seder celebration of a school class on the evening before Passover at the home of their teacher Hugo B. Herzelbroich in the Rhineland. Unknown photographer. bpk-Bildagentur image no. 30022561.

2) Childrens' choir rehearsal in the Jewish congregation center on Berlin's Fasanenstrasse, 1934. Photo: Abraham Pisarek. bpk-Bildagentur image no. 30022594.

3) Emigrants on board a ship leaving Bremerhaven, 1938. Photo: Herbert Sonnenfeld. bpk-Bildagentur image no. 30004717.

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