

# TIMELINE

## LOOTED CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROPERTY

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*With Reference Primarily to Germany*

### 1933

April 1, 1933 - Reich-wide boycott of all "non-Aryan" businesses.

April 7, 1933 - [Law on the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service](#): The "Aryan Paragraph" (Paragraph 3), which is formulated in this law for the first time, prohibits the employment of "non-Aryans" in the civil service, who are to be immediately retired.

May 10, 1933 - [Book Burning](#): Book burnings take place in 34 university towns and cities with works of prominent Jewish, liberal, and leftist writers ending up in bonfires. The book burnings stand as a powerful symbol of Nazi intolerance and censorship.

July 1933 – The [Kulturbund Deutscher Juden](#) was founded by the doctor and conductor Kurt Singer in Berlin with the aim to create earning opportunities for the many Jewish artists and academics dismissed from their place of employment following the Law on the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. Based on the Berlin model, over 35 regional cultural federations with 70,000 members were set up throughout Germany.

September 17, 1933 - [Reich representation of German Jews established](#). The organization is headed by [Rabbi Leo Baeck](#).

September 22, 1933: [Law on the formation of the Reich Chamber of Culture](#): The Reich Chamber of Culture [Reichskulturkammer], a government agency in Nazi Germany, is established at the instigation of Reich Minister Joseph Goebbels as a professional organization of all German creative artists.

### 1934

January 24, 1934 – Establishment of the “[Plenipotentiary of the Führer for the Supervision of the Entire Intellectual and Ideological Enlightenment of the Nazi Party](#).”

May 18, 1934 - [Law Regarding Changes in the Reich Flight Tax](#) Regulations.

Individual Case: [Max Silberberg](#), who owns a 143-piece collection of Impressionist art, which is considered one of the finest private collections in Europe, is [forced to sell his art collection at one of the so-called “Jew-auctions” in Berlin](#). These auctions are organized by the Nazi Chamber of Culture throughout Germany between 1933 and 1938.

## 1935

April 1935 – Establishment of the “[Reichsverband Jüdischer Kulturbünde](#)” (“Reich Association of Jewish Cultural Federations”), thereby placing all members of the *Kulturbund Deutscher Juden* under this new umbrella organization tightly controlled by the National Socialist regime.

1936: *see general timeline, i.e. <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/resource-center/timeline.html>*

## 1937

July 18, 1937 - “[Great German Art Exhibition](#)”: the first Great German Art Exhibition (Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung [GDK]) opens at the House of German Art in Munich. The exhibition occurs annually from 1937 to 1944 and showcases hundreds of works by selected German artists.

July 20, 1937 – “[Degenerate Art](#)” exhibit opens: In 1937, Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels plans to show the public the forms of art that the regime deems unacceptable and organizes the confiscation and exhibition of so-called “degenerate” art.

## 1938

March - August 1938 - Antisemitic Regulations:

March 23, 1938 - [Recognition of Jewish organizations revoked](#): The third regulation to the Citizenship Law passes in Nuremberg defining Jewish businesses and enterprises. From then on, if an owner or partner in a business is defined as a Jew, the company is considered Jewish and has to be registered as such. This regulation paves the way for compulsory Aryanization and leads to the banishment of Jews from economic life under the provisions of the Four-Year Plan.

March 29, 1938 - [Implementation of Provisions on the Appointment of Temporary Administrators](#): attempts are made to control the “uncontrolled Aryanizations”. April 26, 1938 - [Decree on the Registration of Jewish Property](#).

April 13, 1938 - [Law on the Appointment of Temporary Administrators and Supervisors](#).

May 31, 1938 - [Law on the Confiscation of Products of Degenerate Art](#).

June 14, 1938 - Jewish businesses registered since April are marked.

June 18, 1938 - Reich Minister and head of the Reich Chancellery Hans Heinrich Lammers issues the [Führervorbehalt](#) (Führer Reservation) that provides Hitler with the legal basis to secure art and assets, something that already had taken place.

August 17, 1938 - [Compulsory middle name for Jews](#) (Law on Alteration of Family and Personal Names): “Israel” for men, “Sarah” for women March - April 1938 - “uncontrolled

This timeline represents the results of the current best research efforts by the JDCRP.  
The JDCRP makes no representation as to the accuracy and completeness.

(wild) Aryanizations" in Austria: The [annexation of Austria \(Anschluss\)](#) is accompanied by protracted antisemitic eruptions and humiliations of Jews by Austrian citizens under German patronage: Jews are dismissed from their positions in theaters, popular cultural institutions, and public libraries; soon afterwards, they are banned from universities and colleges; synagogues are desecrated and Jews are arrested and held in detention until they sign away their property.

November 12, 1938 - [Decree for the Elimination of Jews from German Economic Life and Atonement Tax on the Jews of German Nationality](#).

November 21, 1938 - [JUVA - Judenvermögensabgabe](#) (Jewish Capital Levy).

November 1938 - February 1939: "[Judenaktion](#)" - The so-called "Judenaktion" refers to the concentrated "seizure" of art and cultural objects by the Gestapo in Munich. More than seventy private residences of Jewish collectors are invaded. The Gestapo officers enter the homes of Jewish collectors, each with an art expert, to keep a record of the art objects, antiques, carpets, furniture, silver objects, or porcelains to be seized, most of which are "museum-worthy." In most cases, the objects are immediately transported away. Only in individual cases are they stored in sealed rooms and collected later.

December 3, 1938 – “Decree on the Use of Jewish Property” orders the forced sale of movable and immovable assets. Jews are only allowed to sell cultural and valuable objects worth more than 1,000 Reichsmark through state agencies.

## 1939

February 21, 1939 – Third Order on the Registration of Jewish Property: All gold, platinum and silver objects, as well as precious stones and pearls have to be surrendered to public purchasing offices.

March 1939 – Italy: Ministry of Education issues circular “Measures for the Defense of the National Artistic Heritage now in the hands of the Jews” (circular, No. 43), which asks the offices responsible for granting export licenses for antiques and artworks to hinder and discourage such exports.

May 30 - June 29, 1939: [Galerie Fischer \(Luzern\) exhibition: Gemälde und Plastiken Moderner Meister aus Deutschen Museen](#).

June 26, 1939 – Hitler appoints [Hans Posse](#), one of his chief advisors and the highly respected director of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, to take charge of the “Sonderauftrag Linz” (Special Project Linz). (After Posse’s death in 1942, [Hermann Voss](#) takes over the Sonderauftrag Linz.)

October 6, 1939 - “Haupttreuhandstelle Ost” (HTO, Central Trustees Office-East). established in Poland to counter unorganized looting.

October 1939 - “Kommando Paulson” starts confiscating archival records and libraries in Warsaw.

November 15, 1939 - “[Vermögensverkehrsstelle](#)” (Property Transaction Office) established.

December 16, 1939 - Hans Frank issues a decree to loot all art collections in Poland (By January 1940, Frank amends his decree to also include libraries and archival holdings.)

## 1940

January 15, 1940 - [Decree on the Treatment of Enemy Property](#).

January 29, 1940 – Adolf Hitler orders Alfred Hitler to loot Jewish and Masonic cultural treasures.

January 24, 1940 - Jewish property in Generalgouvernement registered.

January 29, 1940 - Establishment of the “[Hohe Schule](#)” (Advanced School): The Hohe Schule, to be established after the war, is envisioned as the center for National Socialist ideological and educational research and an alternative to universities for Nazi elites.

March 1940 - Inauguration of the [Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question](#) (“Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage,” IEJ) in Frankfurt.

May 23, 1940 - Ordinance on Enemy Property in the Occupied Territories of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

June 17, 1940 – Enemy Property Ordinance enacted in northern France.

June 21, 1940 – Enemy Property Ordinance enacted in France’s Departments Seine, Seine-et-Orse and Seine-et-Marne.

July 4, 1940 – Enemy Property Ordinance enacted in remaining occupied French territory.

July 17, 1940 – Establishment of the [Einsatzstab Reichleiter Rosenberg \(ERR\)](#) and Establishment of the Western office of the ERR (“Amt Westen”) in German-occupied Paris.

September - December 1940 - [Confiscation of “ownerless” Jewish art collections](#): Hitler orders Rosenberg to confiscate all Jewish art collections as these objects are now deemed "ownerless" by Nazi decree. At that time, Jews in most of Europe are labeled "stateless" and thereby no longer hold property rights.

Fall 1940 - ERR sets up a unit in Paris, headed by Bruno Lohse and Kurt von Behr.

September 7, 1940 - [VUGESTA \(The Gestapo Office for the Disposal of the Property of Jewish Emigrants\)](#) starts operating in Vienna.

September 7, 1940 - [Decree on Jewish Property in Luxembourg](#)

October 1940 - Antisemitic regulations in the Vichy regime:

October 4, 1940 - Proclamation of the “Statut Juif.”

October 5, 1940 - Vichy decree pertaining to the administration of Jewish-owned assets under sequestration.

October 7, 1940 – Vichy decree retracted the 1871 Crémieux-laws resulting in the loss of French citizenship for Jews from Algeria.

October - December 1940 - Registration and administration of Jewish properties

October 22, 1940 - Registration of Jewish businesses in the Netherlands.

October 28, 1940 - Registration of Jewish property in Belgium.

December 1, 1940 - "[Oneg Shabbat](#)" [clandestine archives](#) established: Emanuel Ringelblum, a Warsaw-based historian prominent in Jewish self-aid efforts, establishes a clandestine organization that aims to provide while the ghetto exists an accurate record of events taking place in German-occupied Poland.

December 12, 1940 - Creation of an administrative office for Jewish and emigrant assets in Luxembourg.

## 1941

February 7, 1941 - Jewish property and that of other emigrants in Luxembourg is placed under German administration.

February - August 1941 - Netherlands: Administration of confiscated Jewish property.

March 21, 1941 - "[Economic Judaization Ordinance](#)": The enactment creates the basis for the "Aryanization" of Jewish businesses in the Netherlands. Jewish businesses can now be taken over, expropriated, and sold by administrators or trustees (administrative or liquidation trustees).

April-May 1941 - Croatia- Legal Provisions on the Confiscation of Art.

April 19, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Preservation of Croatian National Property](#).

April 30, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Appointment of Commissioners in Business Enterprises](#).

May 2, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Establishment of an Office for Economic Reconstruction](#).

May 16, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Duties and Rights of Commissioners Appointed by Business Enterprises](#).

May 23, 1941 – Jews in Belgium are forced to declare their property.

May 29, 1941 - [Decree issued by the Führer and the Reichskanzler regarding the utilization of confiscated property from enemies of the Reich](#) August 8, 1941 - [First "Liro Ordinance"](#): The first "Liro Ordinance" compels Jews in the Netherlands to deposit cash amounts and checks above an exemption limit of 1,000 guilders into an account of Bankhaus Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co. (Liro Bank) that serves as an administrative agency for the registration and liquidation of Jewish assets.

June 2, 1941 – Jews in the unoccupied French territories need to be registered.

June 5, 1941 - [Implementation Order on the Legal Provisions on the Vacating and Occupancy of Residential and Business Premises for Reasons of Public Safety](#).

June 5, 1941 - [Legal Provisions on Preventing the Concealment of Jewish Property](#).

June 5, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Expropriation of Buildings in Favour of the State](#).

June 12, 1941 - [Legal Provisions on the Expropriation of Printing Houses](#).

June 24, 1941 - [Legal Provision on the Establishment of the State Directorate for Reconstruction](#).

July 22, 1941 - Economic destruction of Serbia's Jewry with forced aryanizations.

Summer 1941 - Bulgaria: Jewish businesses and apartments expropriated.

September 1941 - ERR divisions in Vilnius and Kaunas established with the goal to systematically loot Jewish cultural and religious possessions (i.e. Strashun, Balosher, and YIVO libraries).

October 10, 1941 - [Legal Order on the Nationalization of Jewish Property and Jewish Business Enterprises](#).

October 30, 1942 - [Legal Provision on the Nationalization of Jewish Property](#).

November 25, 1941 - [Eleventh Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law](#): The 11th Ordinance to the Reich Citizenship Law states that Jews who reside abroad lose their German citizenship and become stateless, thereby losing their property which automatically falls to the German Reich. In an additional circular, this provision is also extended to Jews deported to the occupied territories, ghettos, and concentration camps.

November 27, 1941 – Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) decree concerning Jewish movable property: Jews are forbidden to dispose of their movable property.

December 3, 1941 – Extension of the Eleventh Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law to include Jews located in the occupied territories and those that had been deported.

## 1942

March 13, 1942 – Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) decree on identifying Jewish apartments with a black Star of David on the entrance doors.

March 1942 - “[M-Aktion](#)” (*Möbel-* or Furniture Aktion): Furniture and furnishings are confiscated from the homes of deported or escaped Jews in France and the Benelux countries. The objects are transported to collection warehouses and used by the administrations of the occupied Eastern territories, and later resold to German citizens, especially to the bomb-damaged

May 1942 - “[Dienststelle Westen](#)” opens with Kurt von Behr at its head.

May - November 1942 - Netherlands: Continuation of antisemitic regulations.

May 21, 1942 - The [second "Liro Ordinance"](#) in the Netherlands lowers the exemption limit from 1,000 to 250 guilders and obliges Jews to hand over all assets to the Liro Bank.

August 15, 1942 – Reich decree of the Reich Ministry of Finance concerning the assets of deported Jews: the assets are forfeited to the Reich.

September 1, 1942 – Reich decree of the Reich Ministry of Interior concerning the estate of deceased concentration camp prisoners: the assets are forfeited to the Reich.

October 2, 1942 - Disposition of Jewish property.

November 21, 1942 - The Liro Bank is ordered to close all accounts of so-called "Volljuden" and to transfer the assets to a collective account by the end of 1942. All funds received as of the beginning of 1943 have to be booked to this collective account resulting in the fact that individual accounts and credit balances of Jews can no longer be traced and are effectively liquidated.

## 1943

January 5, 1943 – [Inter-Allied Declaration Against Acts of Dispossession Committed in Territories Under Enemy Occupation or Control](#).

June 23, 1943 – [Roberts Commission](#), officially known as the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, established and chaired by Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts.

(June) 1943 – [Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Program \(MFA &A\)](#), under the Civil Affairs and Military Government Sections of the Allied armies, established in order to help protect cultural property in war areas during and after World War II. (The MFA&A is dissolved in 1946.)

July 1943 - ERR establishes *Aussenstellen* (foreign branches) located in Belgrade, Riga, Dorpat (Tartu), Reval (Tallinn), Vilna, Minsk, Gorki, Smolensk, Kiev, Charkov (Kharkiv), Dnjepropetrovsk, and Simferopol.

July 1, 1943 - The Thirteenth Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law stipulates that the Reich is the legal heir to all property of a deceased Jew.

Summer 1943 - Bulgaria: Bulgarian Commissariat of Jewish Affairs undertakes house to house expropriations of Jewish property.

September - November 1943 - Expropriation of Italian Jews.

September 8, 1943 - Looting of cultural objects commences in Italian territories directly under German occupation ("Operationszone Alpenvorland"). On the Italian peninsula the spoliation is carried out by Italian authorities by the newly established Repubblica Sociale Italiana.

November 24th, 1943 - Salo's Council of Ministers discusses a specific law that will allow the "sequestration of artworks and of Archaeological Historical and Bibliographical Artifacts" belonging



to either Jews or Jewish institutions. This sequestration is put into effect by circular No. 665 and allows for the “requisition of Jewish-owned artworks.”

November 30th, 1943 - The Salo Republic promulgates a provision allowing for the sequestration of all Jewish assets.

1943 – On the advice of art historian Igor Grabar, Stalin forms the Bureau of Experts to document cultural losses and to make a list of “eventual equivalents,” European masterpieces in Axis countries that would serve as substitutes for the works that had been lost.

## 1944

Early 1944 - Expropriation of Italian Jews continues.

January 4, 1944 - Italian legislation passed declaring all property owned in Italy by persons ‘of the Jewish race’ to be confiscated in favor of the State.

Early 1944 - The ERR “Sonderkommando Italien” (Special Command Italy) commences its activities.

1944 - The library of the Collegio Rabbinico Italiano (Italian Rabbinical College) in Rome and that of the Jewish Community in Rome are stolen. [The library of Rome’s Jewish Community is still missing.](#)

April 1944 - Expropriation in Hungary.

April 16, 1944 - The Hungarian Government continues to register Jews and confiscates their property, as was already done under the Horthy regime.

April 30, 1944 - Requirement to report all artworks as well as other cultural property or simple luxury items. Art treasures owned by Jews are collected by the Government Commission for the Registration and Safekeeping of Artworks Sequestered from Jews.

July 1 to 22, 1944 – The Bretton Woods Conference, officially known as the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, gathers 44 national delegates in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Agreement upon a series of new rules for the post-WWII international monetary system. Chapter VI of the Final Act outlines details on looted property’s control and restitution. Neutral countries are instructed to undertake immediate measures preventing any dispositions or transfers of property taken from occupied countries or citizens. Special attention is given to art disposals and transfers.

October - December 1944 - Restitution ordinances under provisional French government.

November 14, 1944 - “Acts of Spoliation” committed by the Nazis or under its oversight are declared null and void.

November 24, 1944 - “[Commission de récupération artistique](#)” formed.



November 21, 1944 - Establishment of the [Art Looting Investigation Unit](#) (ALIU): The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) establishes the Art Looting Investigation Unit to collect and disseminate information about art properties that had been looted and confiscated across Europe.

December 13, 1944 - September 30, 1949 - "[Office des Biens et Intérêts Privés](#)" [OBIP] created: The agency is specifically tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the recovery of stolen assets and property and their return to rightful owners. Of the 100,000 artworks looted by the Germans, 60,000 are returned by the Allies to France, of which 45,000 are returned to the original owners, some 13,000 are auctioned off, and some 2,200 are kept as the MNR artworks.

1944 - Publication of Cultural Losses of Poland: Index of Polish Cultural Losses during the German Occupation 1939-1943.

## 1945

February 21, 1945 - Stalin signs a decree of the State Committee of Defense on the [establishment of permanent commissions ordering the Soviet military to remove industrial equipment and materials from Poland and Germany](#). This sets in motion the creation of the Soviet Trophy Brigades that are ordered to also take artworks, libraries, and archives.

March 1945 - First seizures by the Soviet Trophy Brigades.

March 1945 - Restitution Law of Jewish Properties and Rights in Bulgaria. (Laws only enforced months later.)

April - May 1945 - U.S. military discovers art repositories.

April 8, 1945 - [US military raid on Merkers mine](#).

April 1945 - France restitution laws.

April 11, 1945 - Ordinance No. 45-824 pertaining to the inheritance of specific categories of tangible assets stolen by the enemy and recovered by the French government, on French territory.

April 16, 1945 - Decree regarding the declaration of specific categories of assets and property, removed by the enemy and recovered by the French government, on French territory.

April 21, 1945 - Ordinance No. 45-770 amending ordinance of November 12, 1943, declaring null and void all acts of spoliation committed by the enemy or under its oversight and enacting measures for restitution to victims of those spoliations of those assets and property that were disposed of under those acts.

May 1, 1945 - [Austria passes the constitutional law on the restoration of law and order](#).

1945 - Registration Act of 1945 obliges any person holding aryanized assets, including artwork, to register them with Austrian authorities

May 8, 1945 - [U.S. troops enter the salt mine of Altaussee](#): The Altaussee salt mine is one of the largest repositories for plundered art, which includes art objects looted for the Führermuseum as well as for Hermann Göring's art collection. The mines house roughly 6,500 paintings, in addition to books, statues, furniture, and jewels from museums and private collections.

May 15, 1945 - Annulment Act declares null and void all legal transactions which had been entered into after the Anschluss. (Between 1946 and 1949 the Republic of Austria passes a total of seven restitution acts which deal with the restitution of seized assets.)

May 31, 1945 - Greece: Decree 788/31.05.1945 declares that restitutions of Jewish property should only go to the rightful owner.

June 1, 1945 – On about June 1, 1945, the United States Army decides to establish four Central [Collecting Points](#) in Marburg, Offenbach, Wiesbaden, and Munich to house recovered cultural property.

June 10, 1945 - [Establishment of an ALIU interrogation center at Bad Aussee](#).

August 1, 1945 - 52. [U.S. military government Asset Freeze and Control Act](#).

Fall/Winter 1945 – SOVIET TROPHY BRIGADES

1945 - The [Red Army/Trophy Brigades occupy Berlin and find the museum collections of Dresden, Leipzig, Dessau, Schwerin, Gotha, Weimar and Warburg](#).

Fall 1945 - An estimated [1,200,000 books](#) are shipped to Minsk: while most are books that were looted from Belarus, half a million of these books were looted from their owners in France, the Benelux countries, and former Yugoslavia and found by Red Army Trophy Brigades in the spring of 1945 in warehouses in a Kattowitz (now Polish Katowice) suburb. [This also includes the book collection of the Estonian Jewish book collector and art historian Julius Genss](#).

November 1945 - The [Special Commission of the Ukrainian Government](#) comes to Berlin and subsequently sends cultural trophies directly to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine and the Council of Peoples Commissars of the Ukraine. In addition, the Soviet Trophy Brigade is active in Berlin.

December 10, 1945 - Switzerland: Federal Council orders that looted art, which reached the territory of the Federation, needs to be returned. (The restitution deadline is set with December 31, 1947.)

1945 - Poland: Ministry of Culture creates “Bureau for Restitution and Reparations” to identify cultural losses and prepare restitution claims.

1945 - Croatia: Post-War Restitution Laws: [Establishment of the Commission for Ascertaining War Damages Inflicted by Occupying Forces on Cultural and Historical Objects and Natural Landmarks; Regulation on the Education of the Commission for Gathering and Protecting Cultural Monuments and Antiquities on the Territory of Federal Croatia](#).

1945-1946 - The Soviet Trophy Commission is at its height: Trains filled with German industrial equipment and museum treasures, including the Pergamon Altar, arrive in Moscow with the

Committee of Arts placing thousands of boxes of pictures and sculptures in Soviet museums. The Osoby Archive (TsGOA), now part of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA), is the repository of much of the trophy Jewish archives. It is estimated that the Osoby Archive receives more than 1,350 archival fonds, in addition to looted material from Jewish organizations and parties, including religious and ceremonial objects, as well as material from Jewish intellectuals.