

## Summary of talk by Werner Frank for JGSLA

In 1933, the National Socialist Party seized control of Germany and began to issue several thousand anti-Semitic decrees over the next decade. Well-known is the notorious April 1933 boycott of Jewish businesses followed quickly by the "Law of the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" that denied employment to Jewish civil servants and restricted the practices of Jewish lawyers and doctors. Paramount, however, were the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 that formally stripped Jews of their German citizenship, defined who was an Aryan and prohibited marriages and sexual contact between "ethnic" Germans and Jews.

The tipping point of German-Jewish relations occurred in November 1938 when the infamous *Kristallnacht* pogrom caused the destruction of hundreds of synagogues and thousands of Jewish-owned shops and homes, as well as the incarceration of 30,000 thousand Jewish males in concentration camps Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen. Adding to this pre-cursor of evils-to-come were two lesser-known constricting actions by xenophobic Germany:

- The April 30, 1939 edict, "Law on Tenancies with Jews." This law forced the Jewish population to give up personal residences and be crammed into specially designated houses called *Judenhaus*, the Jews' House, or sometimes called a "small ghetto."
- The October 1940 mass deportation of Jews from three German states in southwest Germany. Some 6,500 Jews ended up in Camp de Gurs, a Vichy located internment facility from which survivors were ultimately transported to death at Auschwitz in 1942.

Werner Frank chronicled these despicable acts in two books that will be highlighted in his talk:

- "*Judenhaus*," that tells the story of his family's residence in a "small ghetto" located in the city of Mannheim. Here, many families experienced the pogrom of *Kristallnacht* and the massive October 1940 deportation, the latter including 2,000 Jewish residents of that city.
- "*The Curse of Gurs*," that identifies 700 family members among the thousands who were deported throughout the State of Baden and follows their fate from Gurs to Auschwitz.