

PRESS INFORMATION

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The Darkest Chapter in the City's History: The Nazi Era

The National Socialists made use of Nuremberg's heritage as the "Treasure Chest of the German Empire" and in 1927, started holding their party rallies here. After the Nazis seized power in 1933, Adolf Hitler made Nuremberg the "City of the Party Rallies". Monumental structures, based on plans by Albert Speer, were erected in the Volkspark Dutzendteich, in the south eastern city districts. Until today these bear testimony to the Third Reich's megalomaniacal pretensions. Here, Julius Streicher, the "Frankenführer" (Franconian Führer), spread his anti-Semitic hate slogans. Here, the Nazis proclaimed their inhumane "Nuremberg Racial Laws" in



Nuremberg Trials (Photo: D'Addario)

1935. Here, more people than anywhere else were killed during the pogrom night of November 9/10, 1938. Nuremberg's Lord Mayor, National Socialist Willy Liebel, proclaimed "with pride" that 26 Jews had not survived the "Reichskristallnacht". Nuremberg also boasted a sad record in the "Aryanisation" of Jewish property: More than 150 businesses and about 570 plots of land changed hands during the expropriation of Jewish citizens. For the Jews who had not emigrated deportations began in autumn 1941: 1,631 Jewish citizens were deported to concentration camps until January 1944 – only 76 of them survived the mass murder.

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In January 1945, the city was razed to the ground in bombing raids. The court-house and adjacent prison were somehow spared. That is why the city was seen as a suitable venue for the legal procedures dealing with Nazi history: after the end of World War II, the Nuremberg Trials were held here, from November 20, 1945. The main war criminals had to face an international military tribunal and to take the responsibility for their crimes, including crimes against humanity and crimes against peace. The trials were based on the "Nuremberg Principles" which also were the foundation for the creation of a new international law and for the prosecution of human rights violations. For the first time, the persons responsible for war and for the death and suffering of millions of people were held personally responsible.

Between 1946 and 1949, there were 12 follow-up trials where other notorious National Socialist personalities and their helpers were tried, including medical doctors, judges and influential German entrepreneurs.

The motto for the reconstruction of the city was a careful synthesis of the old and the new. Ground plans and street patterns remained largely unchanged. Important buildings such as the Imperial Castle, the churches of St Lawrence and St Sebaldus, the Frauenkirche (Our Lady's Church) and the Town Hall were reconstructed in their old form. Outside the medieval city centre, new housing estates were built. But the city's historical heritage is still very much visible in today's modern metropolis.