

**Life under Siege:  
The Jews of Magdeburg under Nazi Rule**

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## **Declaration**

I certify that the contents of this thesis have not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. The extent to which I have availed myself of the work of others is acknowledged in the text of this thesis.

## Abstract

This regional study documents the life and the destruction of the Jewish community of Magdeburg, in the Prussian province of Saxony, between 1933 and 1945. As this is the first comprehensive and academic study of this community during the Nazi period, it has contributed to both the regional historiography of German Jewry and the historiography of the *Shoah* in Germany. In both respects it affords a further understanding of Jewish life in Nazi Germany.

Commencing this study at the beginning of 1933 enables a comprehensive view to emerge of the community as it was on the eve of the Nazi assault. The study then analyses the spiralling events that led to its eventual destruction. The story of the Magdeburg Jewish community in both the public and private domains has been explored from the Nazi accession to power in 1933 up until April 1945, when only a handful of Jews in the city witnessed liberation. This study has combined both archival material and oral history to reconstruct the period. Secondary literature has largely been incorporated and used in a comparative sense and as reference material.

This study has interpreted and viewed the period from an essentially Jewish perspective. That is to say, in documenting the experiences of the Jews of Magdeburg, this study has focused almost exclusively on how this population simultaneously lived and grappled with the deteriorating situation. Much attention has been placed on how it reacted and responded at key junctures in the processes of disenfranchisement, exclusion and finally destruction. This discussion also includes how and why Jews reached decisions to abandon their *Heimat* and what their experiences with departure were. In the final chapter of the community's story, an exploration has been made of how the majority of those Jews who

remained endured the final years of humiliation and stigmatisation. All but a few perished once the implementation of the 'Final Solution' reached Magdeburg in April 1942. The epilogue of this study charts the experiences of those who remained in the city, some of whom survived to tell their story.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all Jewish *Magdeburger*, past, present and future.

It is particularly dedicated, however, to those Jewish *Magdeburger*, who reached the safe shores of Australia and to their loved ones and friends, who did not and were subsequently consumed by the catastrophe which engulfed European Jewry. The Magdeburg interviewees have all remained a constant source of admiration, inspiration and deep respect throughout the lifespan of this research project and beyond.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AKPS     | <i>Archiv des Konsistoriums der Evangelischen Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen, Magdeburg.</i>  |
| ALJGSA   | <i>Archiv des Landesverbandes Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg.</i>   |
| ASGM     | <i>Archiv der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Magdeburg.</i>  |
| BAB      | <i>Bundesarchiv, Berlin.</i>   |
| BdM      | <i>Bund deutscher Mädel</i> (League of German Girls). The female branch of the Nazi youth movement.  |
| BLHA     | <i>Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Potsdam.</i>   |
| CAHJP    | The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem.  |
| CE       | Common Era.  |
| CJA      | <i>Archiv der Stiftung 'Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum', Berlin.</i>  |
| CV       | <i>Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens</i> (Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith).   |
| Gestapa  | <i>Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt</i> (Office of the Gestapo, the Secret State Police).   |
| HJ       | <i>Hitler Jugend</i> (Hitler Youth). The male branch of the Nazi youth movement.   |
| LBIA NY  | Leo Baeck Institute Archives and Library, New York.  |
| LHASA D  | <i>Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt – Abteilung Dessau, Dessau.</i>  |
| LHASA MD | <i>Landesarchiv Magdeburg – Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg.</i>   |
| NS-HAGO  | <i>Nationalsozialistische Handwerks-, und Gewerbe-Organisation</i> (National Socialist Organisation of Crafts, Commerce and Industry). Main Nazi middle-class interest group and most militant instigator of middle-class boycott activity of Jewish establishments. |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| RM     | <i>Reichsmark</i> . Unit of currency in Germany until 1945.   |
| SA     | <i>Sturmabteilung</i> (Storm Detachment). The storm troopers or 'Brownshirts,' founded in 1921 as a private army of the Nazi Party under Ernst Röhm. Hitler's first bodyguard, later eclipsed by the SS after the massacre of its leadership in June 1934 in the so-called 'Röhm <i>Putsch</i> .' |
| SD     | <i>Sicherheitsdienst</i> (Security Service). The intelligence branch of the SS, formed in March 1934. Composed of what was said to be the elite of the elite. The SD was responsible for the security of Hitler, the Nazi hierarchy, the Nazi Party and the Third <i>Reich</i> .                  |
| SJMA   | Sydney Jewish Museum Archives and Library, Sydney.  |
| SS     | <i>Schutzstaffel</i> (Protection Squads). Protection squads formed in 1925, the black-shirted personal bodyguard of Hitler which grew into the most powerful organisation in the Nazi Party and the Nazi State, under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler.   |
| STAM   | <i>Stadtarchiv Magdeburg</i> , Magdeburg.   |
| USA    | The United States of America.   |
| USHMMA | United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, D. C.   |
| YVA    | <i>Yad Vashem</i> Archives, Jerusalem.  |

## Glossary

*Abteilungsleiter* – Section or Department Head.

*Achte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* – Eighth Decree of the *Reich* Citizenship Law. This decree was enacted on 17 January 1939.

*Aliyah* (literally ‘Going up’) – Immigration to Palestine.

*Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Filiale Magdeburg* – Magdeburg branch of the General German Credit Bank.

*Allgemeiner Rabbinerverband Deutschlands* – General Union of Rabbis of Germany.

*Altreich* (literally ‘Old *Reich*’) – Germany, with the geographical boundaries of Germany prior to the annexations of foreign territory.

*Altstadt* – Old Town Centre.

*Bar Mitzvah* (literally ‘Son of the Law’) – Religious ceremony to mark a Jewish boy’s religious maturity at the age of thirteen.

*Bat Mitzvah* (literally ‘Daughter of the Law’) – Religious ceremony to mark a Jewish girl’s religious maturity at the age of twelve.

*Berufsbeamten-gesetz* – Law for the Restoration for the Professional Civil Service. This law was enacted on 7 April 1933.

*Betverein ‘Ahawas Reim’* – ‘Love of One’s Fellow Man’ Prayer Association. One of the *Shtibl* communities in Magdeburg.

*Beth Din* (literally ‘House of Judgement’) – Rabbinical Court of Law.

*Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* – Magdeburg Administrative Office of the Regional Bureau of the National Association of Jews in Germany.

*B’nai B’rith* (literally ‘Sons of the Covenant’) – Jewish service organisation.

*Brith Chaluzim Dathiim* (literally ‘Religious Pioneers of the Covenant’) – Zionist youth organisation in Magdeburg.

*‘Brucks höhere Handelsschule’* – Vocational business college in Magdeburg owned by Alfred Bruck and under the directorship of Albert Hirschland. The college was later renamed *‘Kaufmännische Privatschule’* (‘Private Business College’).

*Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen, Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt* – Union of National Socialist German Members of the Legal Profession for the Magdeburg-Anhalt District.

*Cheder* – Religious school in the Eastern European tradition attached to the *Shtibl*.

*Chevra Kadishah* (literally ‘Holy Society’) – Jewish burial society.

*Chuppah* (literally ‘Canopy’) – Canopy under which a Jewish wedding ceremony takes place.

*Der Schild* (literally ‘The Shield’) – National sporting association of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*.

*Einheitsgemeinde* (literally ‘United Religious Community’) – This concept arose out of numerical necessity in smaller communities in Germany. This permitted all acculturated German Jews to practise their Judaism according to their own wishes and respective levels of observance in a unified, culturally German-Jewish ethos, irrespective of their rabbi’s religious affiliation. At the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg*, this expression and practice ranged from Liberal Judaism to Neo-Orthodoxy.

*Elbstrombauverwaltung* – Municipal Authority for Construction on the River Elbe. This was a governmental agency in the government of the Province of Saxony, based in Magdeburg.

‘*Elsaß*’ – ‘Alsace’. Shoe repair shop in Magdeburg.

*Erste Verordnung des Herrn Reichspräsidenten zum Schutz von Volk und Staat* – First Decree of the *Reich* President for the Protection of the People and State. This decree was enacted on 28 February 1933.

*Frauenbund der Mendelssohn-Loge XII 357* – Women’s Association of the Mendelssohn Lodge XII 357.

*Fünfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* – Fifth Decree of the *Reich* Citizenship Law. This decree was enacted on 27 September 1938.

*Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt* – Nazi Governmental Administrative District of Magdeburg-Anhalt.

*Gauleiter* – District Leader of the Nazi Party.

*Gauwirtschaftsberater* – District Economic Advisor of the *Gauleiter*. Leading Nazi Party official in antisemitic economic activity.

*Generalgouvernement* (literally ‘General Government’) – Official name for Nazi-occupied Poland.

*Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* – Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour. This law was one of the Nuremberg Laws and was enacted on 15 September 1935.

*Haavara* (literally ‘Transfer’) – Scheme for the transfer of capital to Palestine.

*Habonim* (literally ‘The Builders’) – Socialist Zionist youth movement.

*Hachsharah* (literally ‘Training’) – Agricultural training farm of the Zionist movement for youth.

*Haushaltswarengeschäft* – Household goods shop.

*Hechalutz* (literally ‘The Pioneer’) – Pioneering Zionist youth movement.

*Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft zu Magdeburg* (literally ‘Israelites’ Burial Society of Magdeburg’) – Jewish Burial Society of Magdeburg.

*Israelitischer Frauenverein* (literally ‘Israelites’ Women’s Association’) – Jewish Women’s Association.

*Israelitischer Friedhof* (literally ‘Israelites’ Cemetery’) – Jewish cemetery.

*Israelitischer Witwen- und Waisen-Unterstützungs-Fonds* (literally ‘Israelites’ Welfare Fund for Widows and Orphans’) – Jewish Welfare Fund for Widows and Orphans.

*Israelitisches Altersheim* (literally ‘Israelites’ Home for the Aged’) – Jewish Home for the Aged.

*Judendorf* – Jewish settlement.

*judenfrei* – Cleansed of Jews.

*Judenhaus* (pl. *Judenhäuser*) – Jew house. Designated, segregated housing for Jews. Commencing in May 1939, Jews were forced out of their homes and crammed into designated apartments. Often such apartments and even rooms were shared.

*Jüdisch-liberaler Jugendbund ‘Heimat’* – ‘Homeland’ Liberal Jewish Youth Association.

*Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg* – Jewish Regional Credit Bank of Magdeburg.

*Jüdische Kultur-Gesellschaft zu Magdeburg* – Jewish Cultural Society of Magdeburg. Successor organisation of the *Jüdischer Verein Freundschaft zu Magdeburg*.

*Jüdische Kultusvereinigung* – Jewish Religious Association. The name given to each Jewish community on 28 March 1938, when all communities lost their legal status as incorporated bodies.

*Jüdische Vereinigung 'Ahduth'* – 'Solidarity' Jewish Association. One of the *Shtibl* communities in Magdeburg.

*Jüdische Winterhilfe* – Jewish Winter Relief.

*Jüdischer Hilfsverein zu Magdeburg* – Jewish Aid Association of Magdeburg.

*Jüdischer Jugendverein 'Ludwig Philippson'* – 'Ludwig Philippson' Jewish Youth Association. Jewish youth group attached to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg*, named in honour of Rabbi Dr Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889).

*Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba' zu Magdeburg* – 'Bar Kochba' Jewish Gymnastics and Sports Association of Magdeburg.

*Jüdischer Verein Freundschaft zu Magdeburg* – Jewish Friendship Association of Magdeburg. Jewish cultural organisation in Magdeburg.

*'Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend'* – 'Magdeburg and District Weekly Jewish News'.

*Jugend-Alijah* (literally 'Youth Aliyah') – Organisation for transferring young people to Palestine and caring for them there.

*Kashruth* – Jewish dietary laws.

*Kaufhaus* – Department Store.

*'Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch'* – 'Barasch Brothers' Department Store'. The largest and most modern department store in Magdeburg.

*'Kaufhaus Gebrüder Karfiol'* – 'Karfiol Brothers' Department Store'. One of Magdeburg's many department stores.

*Keren Hayesod* – Palestine Foundation Fund, which after 1948 became the United Israel Appeal.

*Kindertransport* (literally 'Children's Transport') – Organised groups of Jewish children and youth, who were unaccompanied emigrants from Germany between 1934 and 1939.

*Kleiderhof* – Clothing depot in mediaeval times.

*Kosher* – In compliance with Jewish dietary law.

*Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter* – Local District and Sector Leader of the Nazi Party.

*Kreisamtsleiter* – Local District Administrative Leader.

*Landesverband Mitteldeutschland des C. V.* – Central German State Union of the CV.

*Lederwarengeschäft* – Leathergoods shop.

*Maccabi* (also *Makkabi* [German spelling]) – International Jewish sports organisation.

*Mendelssohn-Loge XII 357* – Mendelssohn Lodge XII 357. The *B'nai B'rith* Lodge in Magdeburg.

*Mikvah* – Jewish ritual bathhouse.

*Minyan* – Group of ten adult Jewish males, the quorum required for communal prayer.

*Mischehe* – Mixed marriage.

*Mischling* (pl. *Mischlinge*) – Person of mixed race.

*Mizrachi* (literally ‘East’) – Religious Zionist movement and political party.

*Nebbich* (literally ‘a Nobody’) – A non-entity, a pitiable person, a drab person.

*Nordfront* (literally ‘Northern Front’) – Northern suburbs.

*Obermeister* – Head of a professional guild.

*Oberschullehrer* (f. *Oberschullehrerin*) – Teacher at a Secondary High School.

*Ostjuden* (literally ‘Eastern Jews’) – Eastern European Jews. Term often used in a derogatory manner.

*Palästina-Amt Berlin, Zweigstelle Magdeburg* – Magdeburg Branch of the Palestine Office. This organisation operated as a department of the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* under the auspices of the Jewish Agency.

*‘Parlophon-Haus Silbermann’* – ‘Silbermanns’ Musical Instrument Shop’. Musical instrument shop in Magdeburg.

*Paulus-Bund* – League of Saint Paul. Association of ‘non-Aryan’ Christians.

*Poale Zion* (literally ‘Workers of Zion’) – Socialist Zionist party.

*Polenaktion* – The deportation of stateless, Polish Jews from Germany from 27–29 October 1938.

*Polnische Juden* (literally ‘Polish Jews’) – Polish Jews. Term often used in a derogatory manner to describe Eastern European Jews.

*Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg* – Magdeburg Advisory Bureau of the Provincial Union for Jewish Social Welfare in Saxony-Anhalt.

*Purim* – Jewish festival which commemorates the deliverance of the Jews of Persia from Haman, as told in the biblical book of Esther.

*Rassenkunde* – Race Studies. Subject introduced into the German school curriculum during the Nazi period.

*Rassenverseuchung* – Race contamination.

*Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg* (literally ‘National Union of Jewish Front Soldiers, Magdeburg Branch’) – Magdeburg Branch of the National Union of Jewish War Veterans.

*Reichsbürgergesetz* – *Reich* Citizenship Law. This law was one of the Nuremberg Laws and was enacted on 15 September 1935.

*Reichsflaggengesetz* – *Reich* Flag Law. This law was one of the Nuremberg Laws and was enacted on 15 September 1935.

*Reichsfluchtsteuer* – *Reich* Flight Tax. Proclaimed in 1931 under the Brüning government to prevent flight of capital from Germany. Implemented by the Nazi government as a means to pilfer the property and assets of emigrating Jews.

*Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern* – *Reich* Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police of the *Reich* Ministry for the Interior. This position was occupied by Heinrich Himmler.

*Reichstag* – German federal parliament established in 1871. It was stripped of its legislative function during the Third *Reich* and its role was largely decorative.

*Reichskristallnacht* (literally ‘the *Reich*’s Night of Broken Glass’) – Pogrom of 9–10 November 1938 throughout Germany, Austria and the Sudetenland, so named by the Nazis.

*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* – *Reich* Main Security Office formed in 1939. Its departments included the Intelligence Division, the Gestapo, the Criminal Police and the SD.

*Reichsverband der jüdischen Kulturverbände in Deutschland* – National Union of Jewish Cultural Associations in Germany.

*Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* – National Representative Council of Jews in Germany, established by the Jewish communities of Germany on 17 September 1933 and headed by Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck.

*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* – National Association of Jews in Germany, a compulsory organisation for all Jews in Germany established by the Nazi regime on 4 July 1939, superseding the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*.

*Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung* – Reich Central Bureau for Jewish Emigration.

*Religionsschule* – Religious school in the German tradition attached to the synagogue.

'*Ring*', *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend* – 'The Ring', Union of German-Jewish Youth. Jewish youth association in Germany which espoused Jewishness within the German context, but not Zionism. Renamed the '*Ring*', *Bund jüdischer Jugend* (Union of Jewish Youth) in 1936.

*Schutzbrief* – Letter of Protection.

*Schutzjuden* – Protected Jews.

*Shoah* (literally 'Catastrophe') – Hebrew term which is now used to refer to the Holocaust.

*Shochet* – Ritual slaughterer of animals according to Jewish law.

*Shtibl* (pl. *Shtiblech*, *Shtibls* [English corruption]) – Prayer room in the tradition of Eastern European Jewry.

*SS-Untersturmführer* – A second lieutenant in the SS.

*Staatspolizeistelle für den Regierungsbezirk Merseburg* – State Police Bureau for the Administrative Region of Merseburg.

*Studienrat* (f. *Studienrätin*) – Teacher at a Secondary High School.

*Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg* – Synagogue Community of Magdeburg.

*Tallit* – Prayer shawl worn by Jewish males.

'*Taschen-Freiberg*' – 'Freibergs' Bags and Suitcases'. Leathergoods shop in Magdeburg.

*Torah* (literally 'Teaching' or 'Guidance') – The five books of Moses and the first third of the Hebrew bible. It is read aloud in the synagogue on the Sabbath and during the festivals.

*Union der Zionisten Revisionisten, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg* – Magdeburg Branch of the Union of Revisionist Zionists.

*Verband der liberalen Rabbiner Deutschlands* – Union of Liberal Rabbis of Germany.

*Verband Nationaldeutscher Juden* – Association of National-German Jews.

*Verband ostjüdischer Organisationen Magdeburgs* – Union of Eastern European Jewish Organisations of Magdeburg.

*Verein der Freunde Israels* – Association of the Friends of Israel.

*Vierte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* – Fourth Decree of the *Reich* Citizenship Law. This decree was enacted on 25 July 1938.

*Volksgemeinschaft* – The National People’s Community. Nazi slogan expressing the allegedly classless form of national solidarity to which the regime aspired.

*Volksgenosse* (pl. *Volksgenossen*) – Member of the German People or German National community.

*Winterhilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes* – Winter Relief Assistance of the German People.

*Yeshivah* – Talmudic college.

*Yom Kippur* – Day of Atonement.

*Zehnte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* – Tenth Decree of the *Reich* Citizenship Law. This decree was enacted on 4 July 1939.

*Zeiri Misrachi für Deutschland* (literally ‘Young Mizrachi in Germany’) – Young Mizrachi Movement of Germany.

*Zeiri Misrachi-Heim* – Young Mizrachi Home.

*Zentralstelle für jüdische Wirtschaftshilfe* – Central Bureau for Jewish Economic Aid.

*Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der deutschen Juden* – Central Welfare Agency for German Jews.

*Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg* – Magdeburg Branch of the Zionist Federation of Germany.

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In Jerusalem, much gratitude is due to the staff at both the Yad Vashem Archives and the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, who provided efficient and valuable assistance. Valuable discussions were also held there, in particular with Dr Stefan Litt, formerly of the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, whose interest in my project emanated from his own research into history of Magdeburg Jewry until 1350.

My short research visit to the USA could never have been as productive had it not been for the dedication and efficiency of the staff at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York City and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D. C. In this capacity I wish to express my deepest thanks to Viola Voss, Deborah Thorne and Michael Simonson of the Leo Baeck Institute and Dr Jürgen Matthäus, Dr Suzanne Brown-Fleming and Ellen Gerstein of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I would particularly like to thank Dr Matthäus for alerting me to the holdings on Magdeburg Jewry held in Washington.

In Sydney, I was always provided with much advice, support and sustenance from many colleagues and friends at numerous institutions and organisations, including The University of Sydney, The University of New South Wales and The Shalom Institute. Many thanks are due to all of them. I would like to make a very special thank you to the Sydney Jewish Museum family, and, particularly, the Sunday volunteers and staff, who always provided a sympathetic ear and the most profound insights into this most tragic chapter of Jewish history.

Finally, I would like to thank my long-suffering family and friends, who have been of much support and have maintained their patience with me since the commencement of this research project. I wish to particularly thank my parents, Carol and Philip Sprod, who have always supported my academic endeavours and have provided much moral support over many years, as has my best friend, Peter McKenzie-Morris.



## Introduction

### Aim and Focus

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to filling a void that has existed concerning scholarly research and writing on the history of the Jewish community of Magdeburg under Nazi rule. At its centre stands the attempt to reconstruct the life and destruction of this community from 1933 until 1945; how the community responded to the Nazi assault; and what remained after the architects and executioners of the 'Final Solution' had annihilated this small, diverse community in what was at that time the Prussian province of Saxony. This study is based on the combination of archival material and oral history material of Jewish refugees and survivors from Magdeburg, who settled in Australia. The focus of this thesis has been to document this community's history from the position of the victims; that is to say from an essentially Jewish perspective of daily Jewish life under siege.<sup>1</sup> In this respect this case study has been 'written from below.'

Whilst there has been extensive research on the evolution of policy toward the Jews in Nazi Germany, most of this until recently has focused on the larger communities. This focus on a small community enables a detailed study from the micro to the macro of Jewish life and of its destruction. This thesis limits itself to the experiences of the Jews in Magdeburg only and does not include the experiences of other Jews who at any time found themselves in or near the city, for example, Jews on forced labour detail in the local sub-camps of Buchenwald

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<sup>1</sup> See Dan Michman, *Holocaust Historiography from a Jewish Perspective: Conceptualization, Terminology, Approaches and Fundamental Issues* London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003 and Dan Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust* London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003.

Concentration Camp.<sup>2</sup> Prior to this thesis, no original research had been completed on this community. Hence, this study is the first of its kind on the history of Magdeburg Jewry under Nazi rule. This study is an empirical work and whilst it is reliant on archival sources and oral history, it is also limited by the sources themselves.

A number of studies on the history of this Jewish community before its destruction have been undertaken. Notable studies of the community have been written and published since 1866. Moritz Güdemann,<sup>3</sup> the renowned rabbi of Magdeburg from 1862 until 1866, had published a history of the community in 1866. He elucidated the milestones in the community's long history for the period prior to Germany's unification in 1871. In 1911, Emanuel Forchhammer<sup>4</sup> published a history of German Jewry, with an emphasis on the history of Magdeburg Jewry (and smaller local communities). The most recent history of Magdeburg Jewry, published in 1923, was written by Moritz Spanier,<sup>5</sup> a prominent journalist, editor, community member and one-time teacher of Jewish religious studies in Magdeburg (1881–1917). This succinct history of the community charts the community's entire history, but concentrates particularly on the period from Imperial Germany until the Weimar Republic. This volume also

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<sup>2</sup> See Tobias Bütow and Franka Bindernagel, *Ein KZ in der Nachbarschaft. Das Magdeburger Außenlager der Brabag und der 'Freundeskreis Himmlers'* Köln, Weimar und Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Moritz Güdemann, *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Magdeburg* Breslau: Verlag der Schletter'schen Buchhandlung (H. Skutsch), 1866.

<sup>4</sup> Emanuel Forchhammer, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden mit besonderer Beziehung auf Magdeburg und die benachbarte Gegend," *Geschichtsblätter für Stadt und Land Magdeburg: Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde des Herzogtums und Erzstifts Magdeburg*, vol. 46, number 1, 1911, pp. 119–178 and vol. 46, number 2, 1911, pp. 328–408.

<sup>5</sup> Moritz Spanier, *Geschichte der Juden in Magdeburg* Magdeburg: Verlag von L. Sperling & Co., 1923.

provides important documentation on the position of the Jewish community on the eve of the Nazi accession to power.

Since 1923, no sole publication has dedicated itself to the history of this Jewish community since its inception, nor since the *Shoah* has the story of this community's experiences under Nazism been the subject in any single volume dedicated exclusively to this purpose.

Until the period of German re-unification in 1990, access to archival records on Magdeburg Jewry was severely limited. Since 1990 the community's history has been included in a number of encyclopaedic-style reference works, the most informative to date being a volume dedicated exclusively to the histories of the Jewish communities of the new German federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, published in 1997.<sup>6</sup> An overview of the history of the community during the Nazi period was also included in a multi-volume work dedicated to the city's entire history, published in celebration of Magdeburg's 1,200-year anniversary in 2005.

During the past five years I have published a number of scholarly articles dealing with aspects of Jewish life in Magdeburg under Nazism, ranging from the experiences of Jewish pupils in public schools; the subject of identity of German-Jewish refugees; the experience of the *Reichskristallnacht*; and immigration from Magdeburg to Australia.<sup>7</sup> As the first of its kind, this doctoral thesis is in no way an all-encompassing study, as the results of this research, whilst comprehensive, are limited. Nevertheless, it has achieved its primary aim in its reconstruction of the experiences and responses of the Jews of Magdeburg under Nazi rule.

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<sup>6</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., *Geschichte jüdischer Gemeinden in Sachsen-Anhalt: Versuch einer Erinnerung* Wernigerode: Oemler Verlag, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> For a comprehensive list of these articles, see under Articles in the Bibliography.

### The History of the Community until 1933

The Jewish community of Magdeburg is one of the oldest Jewish communities in Germany, the oldest Jewish community in the former German Democratic Republic<sup>8</sup> and never numbered more than approximately 3,200 persons.<sup>9</sup> In 1933, the community resembled in structure, religious observance, political affiliations and social organisations the larger communities in the Prussian and Saxon metropolises and in Germany itself. Conversely, its reactions and eventual destruction mirrored that of other comparative communities. The Jewish community of Magdeburg was decimated and dispersed by the *Shoah*. In the shadow of this catastrophe the community reconstructed itself and throughout the life of the German Democratic Republic up until 1990 never numbered more than approximately 100 persons. Since the re-unification of Germany, the community has experienced a renaissance with an influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union. The community in its present form is steadily approaching 1,000 persons,<sup>10</sup> none of whom are survivors (or their descendants) of the former community destroyed during the *Shoah*.

The Jewish community of Magdeburg represented the northern most point of Jewish settlement in the tenth and eleventh centuries. As early as 965 CE there were Jews living in the town and Otto I placed them under the jurisdiction of the archbishop. They traded in the *Kleiderhof* in the Merchants' Quarter and conducted their trade even beyond the River Oder. Their quarter was situated in the south of the city, in the archbishop's domain. In 1012 the Jewish community

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<sup>8</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted here that the population of the community is steadily growing, mirroring the tendency in the vast majority of other Jewish communities in Germany today.

took part in the funeral procession of Archbishop Walthard von Magdeburg. The Jewish cemetery of Magdeburg dates from the thirteenth century, the oldest gravestone bearing the year 1268. Later the cemetery was enlarged, in 1312 and again in 1383.<sup>11</sup> In 1213 the soldiers of Otto IV destroyed the *Judendorf*, and four years later the Jews moved to nearby Sudenburg at the southern end of the city, where numerous Jews already lived.

In 1260 the canons of the cathedral demanded jurisdiction over the Jews and laid claim to the fines they paid in silver, while those paid in gold were to remain the property of the archbishop. Some prominent Jewish figures who appear in the community's history during this period include Rabbi Hezekiah ben Jacob who corresponded with Rabbi Isaac Ohr Zaru'ah and Rabbi Chaim ben Paltiel, rabbi of Magdeburg in 1291, who was in correspondence with Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, the highly respected rabbi, who was incarcerated in Ensisheim in Alsace even though he had committed no crime and died in prison.

The community suffered from several persecutions and was persecuted in 1302 and again during the Black Death Disturbances from 1349 until 1357.<sup>12</sup> Despite the attempts of the archbishop and the city's authorities to protect them, Jews were attacked again in 1357 and 1384 when another epidemic broke out. Between the years 1361 and 1367, Archbishop Dietrich employed a Jewish court banker. In 1410 Archbishop Günther II issued a *Schutzbrief* for a period of six years, at a cost to the community of forty silver marks. During the fifteenth century the community maintained a flourishing *Yeshivah* and a *Beth Din*. Throughout the course of the community's early history, it is known that several prominent rabbis took up residence in Magdeburg and the community flourished

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<sup>11</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

during this period. In 1492 an argument erupted between two Jews and two monks, provoking prolonged riots, and in 1493 the Archbishop of Magdeburg decreed the expulsion of all the Jews from the city and from the entire archbishopric. Subsequently, the synagogue was converted into a chapel and the cemetery was destroyed.

Jews were re-admitted to the city in 1671 by the Great Elector of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm I, and *Schutzjuden* settled once more in Magdeburg.<sup>13</sup> From 1703 they were to be found in Sudenburg, from 1715 in the newer part of town, Neustadt, and from 1729 in the *Altstadt*. However, because of the city council's hostility, a permanent settlement was only established under French rule at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1811 the community numbered 255 persons and as early as 1809 a Jew was elected a member of the city council.<sup>14</sup> Over the course of the ensuing century the community grew continuously, due to the increasing industrialisation of the city. In 1834 the community founded a religious school and in 1839 a *Chevra Kadishah*. Noteworthy rabbis of this period include Dr Ludwig Philippson, who was the founder and editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, the newspaper of Liberal German Judaism, and Dr Moritz Güdemann, who wrote a history of the community.<sup>15</sup> A testimony to Philippson's achievements, the newspaper he founded continued to appear in Magdeburg even after he had left the city.

For many years the community lacked a synagogue and worshipped in small prayer rooms. This situation was rectified in 1851, when Rabbi Dr Philippson

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<sup>13</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> Shmuel Spector, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2001, vol. II, p. 782.

<sup>15</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., pp. 196–198.

opened the new building with an organ and choir on 14 September 1851.<sup>16</sup> In the following years the community grew to such an extent that it was felt necessary to enlarge and renovate the synagogue as well as to erect a new building for the religious school. Rabbi Dr Moritz Rahmer officially opened the renovated synagogue on 26 September 1897. The *Magdeburgische Zeitung* reported in glowing terms how this stately building in the Moorish style added to the city's elegance.<sup>17</sup>

The community was shaped profoundly by Dr Philippson, who was rabbi of Magdeburg from 1833 until 1862. Philippson was a leader of Liberal Judaism in Germany and initiated the establishment of the first Jewish religious schools in northern Germany in 1834. Dr Georg Wilde was the community's last rabbi, from 1906 until 1939, when he immigrated to England after the pogrom of the *Reichskristallnacht*.<sup>18</sup> Wilde's immigration was assisted by the British Chief Rabbi of the time, Dr Joseph H. Hertz. Magdeburg was also the birthplace of several prominent politicians, including Dr Georg Gradnauer, Minister-President of Saxony from 1918 until 1920 and Minister for the Interior in 1921, and Dr Otto Landsberg, Social Democrat and member of the city council and the *Reichstag* from 1912 until 1918 and then again from 1924 until 1933 and Minister for Justice in 1919.<sup>19</sup>

Magdeburg's Jewish population had steadily increased from 330 in 1817 to 559 in 1840; 1,000 in 1859; 1,815 in 1885; 1,925 in 1900; and approximately

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<sup>16</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 193–194.

<sup>18</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, Leo Baeck Institute Archives, New York (LBIA NY), p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Spector, ed., op. cit., p. 782.

2,356 in 1925,<sup>20</sup> and then dropped to 1,973 in 1933<sup>21</sup> which was 0.6% of the city's total population. At this time the community included many immigrants from Eastern Europe. This prosperous community proudly boasted thirty-three different political, social, commercial, charitable and cultural institutions, clubs, youth groups and lodges in 1933.<sup>22</sup> This included welfare organisations, branches of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*, the Union for Liberal Judaism and the German Zionist Organisation; a *B'nai B'rith* lodge and associations of the Jews from Eastern Europe. In 1923 the community's religious school had approximately 260 pupils and in 1927 a children's home was opened for thirty-five orphans and a vocational training centre for builders and carpenters was opened in the same year.

Essentially until the beginning of the 1930s, Jewish citizens were extremely involved in the city's administrative and commercial affairs. Most were business people involved in trade and industry, possessing shops, warehouses, banks and factories. In 1933 the city counted 422 Jewish business people as part of its citizenry, including three pharmacists, over fifty doctors (who, incidentally, founded their own club in 1903) and twenty-nine solicitors. At the time fourteen foundations supported the community financially.<sup>23</sup>

In 1933 the Jews were a firmly integrated component of Magdeburg's population. Magdeburg's Jews felt as much affection for their city and country as did their non-Jewish fellow citizens. Thirty-six Jewish men from Magdeburg

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<sup>20</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., pp. 186–187.

<sup>21</sup> Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933, Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich* Berlin: Verlag für Sozialpolitik, Wirtschaft und Statistik, Paul Schmidt, 1936, Bestand R 3102, Bundesarchiv, Berlin (BAB), pp. 15–33.

<sup>22</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

sacrificed their lives for their country in World War One.<sup>24</sup> The Jews of Magdeburg were, indeed, German citizens of the Jewish faith.<sup>25</sup> Like their co-religionists and, after the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935, anyone whom the Nazis defined as Jewish, nothing could have possibly prepared them for what was to come.

In recalling their lives and place in the cityscape prior to 1933, all of the interviewees felt a deep sense of pride and thorough connectedness to the life of the city and felt very little, if any, sense of separateness when the question of identity arose.<sup>26</sup> The majority of the interviewees proudly discussed their German-Jewish pedigrees, which for many of them extended beyond their own family's memories. One of the most common retorts was that the family had been in Magdeburg 'forever.' Gisela Kent recalls:

Of course it was our home. I had a schoolteacher who had gone to school with my grandmother! It was our home. It was never questioned!<sup>27</sup>

However, the latent antisemitism, extant throughout Germany in the years of the Weimar Republic, also featured in Magdeburg. Gerry Levy remarked on an incident involving his paternal uncle, Herbert Levy, a veteran of World War One:

One time he was in a *Kneipe* [local pub] and the discussion centred around what the Jews supposedly hadn't done during World War One and why the Germans had lost the war. Angrily, he pulled his shirt up and shouted at them to come over and take a look at what he 'got' from the war. This is the type of individual he was. Of course the response from those in the tavern was: "*Verzeihung Kameraden!*" ["Our apologies comrade!"].<sup>28</sup>

What is highly important here is the confidence Levy displayed in knowing that he could defend himself and, conversely, confirmed when those who sought to

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<sup>24</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>25</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 4 August 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 10 July 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Personal interview with Gisela Kent (recorded), Sydney, 12 January 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 1 October 1997.

besmirch the Jewish effort during the war felt honour-bound to offer their apologies.

As has been demonstrated here, Magdeburg's Jewish community before 1933 mirrors that of other like communities in the geographical region which became the political state of modern Germany after 1871. It is a history of persecution, of massacre, of expulsion, of return; and simultaneously a history of maintaining one's identity, of community-building, of emancipation, of success, of integration, of a sense of belonging, of nationalism and, for some, even assimilation.

With the introduction of boycotts and antisemitic laws in 1933, the Jews of Magdeburg were subjected to humiliation, malicious attacks and violence. At the same time the community's isolation commenced. It is both damning and yet, simultaneously, redeeming, hearing Jewish members of this community tell of the behaviour of their non-Jewish fellow citizens. The experiences of interviewees indicate behaviour of the most noble and admirable kind to acts that can only be described as despicable. Some members of the community prepared for emigration, whilst others waited for signs. By the end of 1933 the community's population had dropped below its 1,973 members.<sup>29</sup> For the majority of those individuals interviewed, their families, not unlike the majority of their co-religionists throughout Germany, the danger was not felt immediately, but unfolded:

Definitely at first, nobody thought it would last. But by the time I left, which was August 1938, people became quite desperate. I think they realised that he's [Hitler] here to stay. Because when I left, they said try and get us a permit, which, of course, I couldn't do.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>30</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

### Archival Material and Oral History

In commencing this research project, an extensive oral history program was undertaken, involving interviewing and recording the experiences of Jewish victims of Nazism who fled Magdeburg and, at various intervals, settled in Australia.<sup>31</sup> Simultaneously, the process of locating, accessing, assessing and copying archival material related to the community's history was commenced.<sup>32</sup> Upon completion of this second phase, material from both sources was combined and the process of documenting a reconstruction of the life experiences of the Jews of Magdeburg from 1933 until 1945 began.

Both the archival material and the oral history material utilised for this research have presented their own particular issues and limitations. With regard to archival material, the most significant issues encountered were chiefly gaining ready, ongoing access to the relevant material, as the major collections utilised for this research are located in far-flung archives in Germany, Israel and the United States of America (USA); combined with the often frustrating factor of the absence or incomplete and limited nature of material on certain subjects.

Having located and accessed archival material from the standpoint of both the victims and the perpetrators, for many of the discussed subject areas, it has been

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<sup>31</sup> For practical advice on interviewing techniques for oral historians, see Beth M. Robertson, *Oral History Handbook* Adelaide: Oral History Association of Australia (South Australian Branch), 2000.

<sup>32</sup> In the process of locating archival material, the majority of material was located by direct contact with the archives, libraries and institutions listed under Archives and Libraries in the Bibliography. A number of inventories provided by the aforementioned institutions were also utilised to refine the process. Of significant usefulness in this phase of the research process was Steffi Jersch-Wenzel and Reinhard Rürup, eds., *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in den neuen Bundesländer*, vol. 3, *Staatliche Archive der Länder Berlin, Brandenburg und Sachsen-Anhalt* München: K. G. Saur Verlag, 1999.

possible to combine archival sources and oral history to provide a more accurate and balanced picture. For a number of research areas a dearth of archival material was encountered, generally owing to the complete destruction by the Nazis of whatever material existed. This was certainly the case with regard to the records of all of the communal organisations, including synagogues, for the entire period under discussion. The surviving remnants of archival material from these organisations were largely found in the archives of the *Archiv der Stiftung 'Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum,'* Berlin; the *Archiv der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg,* Magdeburg; The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem; the Leo Baeck Institute Archives and Library, New York; and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, D. C. Whilst only a comparatively scant amount of material exists in these archives, when compared to the volume of archival material available detailing the activities of the perpetrators, the material remains of great significance in documenting how the Jewish community and its organisations responded to both communal needs and to the Nazi bureaucracy. Valuable documents such as synagogue newsletters, communal newspapers, minutes of board meetings, membership statistics, files on individuals and eyewitness reports of the time are but a component of this material which shed light on the lives and responses of Jews.

Peter Ledermann, business manager of the present *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg* and holder of a variety of communal positions in the Jewish community of Magdeburg today, has repeatedly indicated that the records and archives of Magdeburg's communal organisations were either completely destroyed during the pogrom of the *Reichskristallnacht* or were relocated and still

await discovery.<sup>33</sup> Such a discovery, in fact, occurred in 2002, when the entire records for the Jewish cemetery in Magdeburg were located inadvertently in Frankfurt am Main.

Whilst the archival material reporting on what the perpetrators were subjecting the Jews of Magdeburg to is also incomplete, it is far more comprehensive. The largest holding of material detailing the activities of a significant number of both non-governmental and governmental bodies with regard to the application of all antisemitic policies is located in the *Landesarchiv Magdeburg – Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt* in Magdeburg. Important and comprehensive documentation from this archive's holdings includes material on all aspects of the administration and application processes of antisemitic policy for the entire period, ranging from boycotts, to 'aryanisations,' to deportations. Further important material of this nature is also located in the *Stadtarchiv Magdeburg*, in Magdeburg and in the *Yad Vashem* Archives in Jerusalem.

Oral history material also presents a number of issues for the historian; particularly the verification of data and the accuracy of memory.<sup>34</sup> For the duration of this project, there have not arisen any instances whereby archival material and oral history material have conflicted. For the majority portion of this research the opposite has been the case. Both sources either corroborate one another or more often than not, what one source lacked, the other provided. There have also been instances whereby the oral history material is in fact the only

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<sup>33</sup> Personal interviews with Peter Ledermann, Magdeburg, 2001–2003.

<sup>34</sup> An extensive literature exists on this subject. See Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer, *Between Witness and Testimony: The Holocaust and the Limits of Representation* New York: State University of New York Press, 2001 and John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide, Volume 3, Memory* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Publishers, 2001.

surviving material with which to attempt to reconstruct a happening or events,<sup>35</sup> as was the case when exploring the daily experience of Jewish pupils in public schools in Magdeburg up until 1938<sup>36</sup> and the daily lives of Jews during World War Two. Conversely, the opposite situation has arisen, whereby archival material has presented the only evidence, as was the case when documenting the structure and dissolution of Jewish communal organisations.

Oral history interviews were conducted with fifteen individuals, with the oral history material totalling some fifty hours of recording time. Thirteen of the interviewees are Jews from the former community of Magdeburg, whose years of birth range from 1915 to 1932. All of the interviewees lived in Magdeburg for the period under discussion and the majority were also born there. The interviewees immigrated, either with family members or unaccompanied, via a variety of routes to Australia between the years 1936 and 1947. Of the two remaining interviewees, one was a non-Jewish girlhood friend of one of the previously mentioned interviewees and the other a daughter of one of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted between the years 1997 and 2005. In this respect the material gained is limited to a sample group from Magdeburg and does not purport to

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<sup>35</sup> See Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, "The Palestinian Village of Ijzim during the 1948 War: Forming an Anthropological History through Villagers' Accounts and Army Documents," *History and Anthropology*, vol. 13, number 1, 2002, pp. 13–30.

<sup>36</sup> Michael E. Abrahams-Sprod, "Survivor testimony bringing to life the school experiences of Jewish pupils in Magdeburg 1933–1945," in Yad Vashem, ed., *The Legacy of Holocaust Survivors: The Moral and Ethical Implications for Humanity* (CD-ROM) Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002. An extensive literature exists on this subject of representations of experiences of victims of the Shoah. See Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany – An Oral History* London: John Murray Publishers, 2005, pp. 3–138 and Eva Hoffmann, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

represent a complete cross-section of Magdeburg Jewry. This is especially so, since those interviewed largely represented the acculturated German Jews, rather than the Eastern European Jews, who were a separate group in Magdeburg. Nevertheless, the source material obtained from these oral history interviews spans all subjects to be explored. The only limitation that is noticeable occurs in the subject of emigration, which is limited to the experiences of those who immigrated to Australia. However, this thesis has focused on the period from 1933 to 1945 and does not deal with immigration experiences in their new host societies. All oral history material affords a personal and often private view of the unfolding events and associated experiences of the time.

In combining both archival and oral history material, the reconstruction of this community's history has been comprehensively documented, within the limitations of sources, both archival and oral. Where an absence of discussion of any given subject exists, this has resulted from an absence of such archival material and oral history material, as, for example, in the dealings of the community's hierarchy and the Magdeburg Gestapo. The experience of researching and documenting this subject has proven that the weaving together of both archival and oral history material can produce a clearer picture of the events being researched.<sup>37</sup> In many instances in this thesis it has been through this combination of archival material and oral history material that the reconstruction has been successfully achieved in representing both the personal and the broader view.

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<sup>37</sup> Suzanne D. Rutland, "Intermeshing archival and oral sources: Unravelling the story of Jewish survivor immigration to Australia," in History Program and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra, ed., *Visible Immigrants: Six*, 2002, p. 129.

In the case of reconstructing the history of the Jews of Magdeburg under Nazism both sources complement one another. Given that this research project set itself the task of examining the experiences of a group of individuals at a given point in time, it is my firm conviction that this reconstruction could not have been written as comprehensively to effectively depict the situations of the time, without the use of oral history material. It has been my experience that only owing to the effective integration of the aforementioned sources has it been possible to reconstruct the history of this community.

### **Historical Approaches and Interpretation**

In exploring the histories of German-Jewish communities during the Nazi period and the interpretation of such histories, historical approaches have undergone much change. From the period of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961 until the recent past, histories remained traditional and they largely reconstructed the persecutions and the actions of the perpetrators toward the Jews. Many Jewish communities in the Federal Republic of Germany were documented in this manner. This period of documentation and these histories were undertaken during a period which was also characterised by a silence of the surviving Jewish victims, now spread across the globe in the German-Jewish diaspora. Particularly from the 1970s, Jewish survivors of the *Shoah* have contributed to a vast body of oral history, which continues to grow. During the past decade a vast literature on the experiences of Jews during the Nazi period has been published and oral histories recorded, so that this historical imbalance has been rectified. In documenting the history of the Jews in Magdeburg, the approach of utilising both archival material and oral history has been undertaken, and the interpretation of the accessed

material has reflected a paramount interest in the daily lives of the Jews of that city.<sup>38</sup>

In the years surrounding the Eichmann trial, much interest in the events of the *Shoah* and the experiences of Jews under Nazism evolved. In Germany, in particular, this led to a growing interest in the historical experiences of its own Jewish communities decimated under Nazism. As a result, the researching and writing about these German-Jewish communities at a local, regional and national level, utilising a traditional approach, developed in the Federal Republic of Germany. Such histories reconstructed the historical persecution of German Jews with a ‘view from the top down.’ Studies of the larger communities, such as Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main, were published over the successive period. In the wake of German re-unification in 1990 the documentation of communities in the former German Democratic Republic also gathered much momentum. The majority of these publications bear the similar pattern of documenting and describing the stages of persecution.<sup>39</sup> Recently smaller German-Jewish communities have attracted considerable attention, with an even greater focus on the Jewish perspective of that time.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998 and Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 1: The Years of Persecution 1933–1939* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997.

<sup>39</sup> Lists of such studies of German-Jewish communities have appeared annually in the bibliography of the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* since 1956.

<sup>40</sup> As has been emphasised by Yehuda Bauer, it is not only incumbent on historians to document the most populous communities destroyed by the Shoah, but also to document the smaller communities, in order to possess as complete as possible a record of the rich tapestry of the Jewish world that existed prior to the Shoah, personal interviews with Yehuda Bauer, Jerusalem, 2000. See also Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. For the most recent social history of German Jewry under Nazism see Marion A. Kaplan, ed., *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618–1945* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

This thesis does not purport to shed any groundbreaking light on the history of German Jewry under Nazism. Its chief purpose is to fill the void on Magdeburg's Jewish history for the period from the Nazi consolidation of power in 1933 until the capitulation of Nazi Germany in 1945. As with all studies of similar local and regional communities, it contributes to the comprehensive picture of how Jews navigated their difficult lives in different places at that time. In this respect, the documented experiences of this Jewish community are reflective and representative of the experiences of German Jewry in general.<sup>41</sup> This study of Magdeburg Jewry also highlights a number of features of this community and its experiences under Nazism which remain of special significance to its own particular history. It also has a specific focus in that the oral history material utilised for this research emanates from Jews from Magdeburg who found refuge in Australia.

In charting the quotidian experiences of the Jews of Magdeburg and how they responded to Nazism, this study's structure can be divided into two distinct periods of time; the period from and including 1933 up until the *Reichskristallnacht* in 1938 and the period from the pogrom up until liberation in April 1945. For this first period, this study charts the communal structures in place in 1933; how they attempted to continue to fulfil their duties; how they responded to antisemitic measures; and the circumstances of their dissolutions. This is followed by an exploration of the destruction of Jewish livelihoods and how varying personal circumstances greatly impacted on the ability to earn a living. The subjects of daily life for Jews in both the public and private domains illustrate the escalating exclusion, humiliation, vilification and ultimately degradation

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<sup>41</sup> Kaplan, op. cit.

which the Jewish community endured and attempted to adjust to; as well as the private discussions on such topics as emigration which were simultaneously taking place in homes. Finally, for this time period the situation of Jewish children and youth is explored, with particular reference to their schooling experiences, the importance of Jewish youth groups and the emigration of unaccompanied Jewish youth.

The second period explores the events of the *Reichskristallnacht*, its ramifications and the subsequent escalation in persecutions which continued until liberation. This component follows the dehumanising persecutions administered ruthlessly, leading ultimately to permanent segregation, forced labour and deportation for the majority of Jews. This study ends with the liberation of only a handful of Jews, predominantly those in mixed marriages, children of such marriages or those in hiding. By April 1945 the majority of Magdeburg's Jews had perished, either at the hands of the Nazis and their helpers or during the Allied bombardment of the city.

## Chapter One: The Structure of the Jewish Community

### Religious, Social, Cultural and Economic Structures

From Moritz Spanier's<sup>1</sup> history of the Jewish community, it is clear that the Magdeburg Jewish community was highly organised and effectively financed, with a large allocation of funds to foundations providing every type of service to a variety of sectors of the community.<sup>2</sup> It catered for every aspect in the areas of religious, social, cultural and economic welfare, contributing to a richly diverse and well-organised community.

Spanier's detailed insight remains the most recent history of the community. There exists neither a comprehensive report nor a study into the workings of the community beyond 1923. What does exist, however, are two reports, similar in content, authored by the board of the reconstructed community immediately after the *Shoah*. The first is dated 22 January 1947<sup>3</sup> and the second dates from 1 March 1948.<sup>4</sup> Both reports provide useful data on the situation of the community when the Nazis took power in 1933.

A limited picture is also presented for the period up until the beginning of 1933 in the Jewish community's newsletter, the *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für*

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<sup>1</sup> Spanier, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 39–46.

<sup>3</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner detailing the destruction of the Jewish community of Magdeburg under Nazism, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, Archiv der Stiftung 'Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum', Berlin (CJA), pp. 238–253.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, Berlin detailing the historical development of the Jewish community of Magdeburg and reporting on the post-war situation and future developmental aspirations of the community, 1 March 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 208–214.

*Magdeburg und Umgegend*.<sup>5</sup> Through these newsletters, we are provided with the weekly calendar of two of the congregations in Magdeburg: the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg* and the *Jüdische Vereinigung 'Ahduth'*. This publication also confirms the existence of a community *Mikvah* and of the mixed choir attached to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.<sup>6</sup> Quite succinctly, the existence of both of these establishments, arguably, represents the religious pluralism and cultural diversity that existed in this small community.

The term 'Jewish community' has to be defined. For the purposes of this study the definition of the 'Jewish community' is such that it includes all persons of the Jewish faith, regardless of affiliation or national origin, and those defined as Jewish after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws on 15 September 1935.

The Jewish community in Magdeburg was not dissimilar to the majority of Jewish communities in Germany. It was not one homogenous body, but consisted of Jews who adhered to the traditional German-Jewish religious practice and observance, as well as those Jews who belonged to the Eastern European religious tradition. Whilst it can, arguably, be maintained that this community of Jews was, indeed, one grouping, religious observance and national origin did create a rigid divide in the community. However, in a number of aspects of social life there existed social intercourse between the two groups. According to the census figures of June 1933, the city counted 1,973 Jews,<sup>7</sup> of whom 748 or 37.9% were

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<sup>5</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 30. Dezember 1932, Nr. 53, 7. Jahrgang, Archiv der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Magdeburg (ASGM), pp. 339–344. Copies of this weekly newsletter for the period 1925–1932 inclusive are to be found in the ASGM and copies for the period 26 March 1926 to 22 June 1928 inclusive are also to be found in the Periodicals Collection, File P-B453a, LBI NY.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>7</sup> Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933*,

immigrants.<sup>8</sup> Of this figure, 976 were male and 997 were female and they constituted 0.64% of the city's population.<sup>9</sup>

Three separate religious congregations co-existed: the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg*, the *Betverein 'Ahawas Reim'*<sup>10</sup> and the *Jüdische Vereinigung 'Achduth'*.<sup>11</sup> There is also some evidence to suggest that a third *Shtibl* existed.<sup>12</sup> The *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, under the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Dr Georg Wilde, was the largest congregation and was located at *Große Schulstraße 2c*. The *Betverein 'Ahawas Reim'* was located at *Blaubeilstraße 12* and, whilst it has not been possible to definitively provide the location of the *Jüdische Vereinigung 'Achduth'*, it is known that one *Shtibl* was located at *Im Katzensprung*<sup>13</sup> and this may have been its address. It is also known that the Magdeburg branch of the *Zeiri Mizrachi* organisation possessed rooms known as the *Zeiri Mizrachi-Heim* at *Kleine Klosterstraße 1*.<sup>14</sup>

The vast majority of interviewees recalled and knew of the *Shtiblech*, but only two interviewees had ever visited one. They spoke of the vast difference in

*Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich*, Bestand R 3102, BAB, op. cit., pp. 15–33.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> The population of Magdeburg in 1933 was 306,894. See Statistisches Amt der Stadt Magdeburg, *Festschrift anlässlich des fünfzigjährigen Bestehens des Statistischen Amtes der Stadt Magdeburg* Magdeburg: Trommer-Verlag, 1935, Collection 0.8, File 277, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem (YVA), p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the extraordinary, urgent General Meeting for the liquidation of the association *Jüdische Kultur-Gesellschaft e. V. Magdeburg*, 14 May 1933, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2306, Landesarchiv Magdeburg – Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg (LHASA MD), pp. 81–89.

<sup>11</sup> Religious notices in the *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 30. Dezember 1932, Nr. 53, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>12</sup> According to oral history a third *Shtibl* existed. However, no reference to it has been located in archival material.

<sup>13</sup> Personal interview with M. F. (recorded), Sydney, 27 June 1999. This piece of information was only recalled owing to the unusual name of the street, which literally means 'at the cat's leap,' which translates idiomatically to 'at a stone's throw.'

<sup>14</sup> Religious notices in the *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 30. Dezember 1932, Nr. 53, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit. p. 342.

culture, practices of worship and of the separation of these congregations from the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. The majority did not recall the locations of these smaller congregations.

The majority of community members belonged to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and somewhere between 30% and 50%<sup>15</sup> of the community were members of the *Shtiblech*. Whilst the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* conformed to the practice and observance of the liberal form of Judaism, it could also be characterised as an *Einheitsgemeinde*.<sup>16</sup> When the Nazis took power in 1933, Rabbi Dr Wilde occupied the position of rabbi at the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, remaining in this position up until his immigration to England in 1939.<sup>17</sup> The synagogue's cantor was Max (Meier) Teller, the sexton was Max Arensberg<sup>18</sup> and the teachers at the *Religionsschule* were Rabbi Dr Wilde and Rudolf Rosenberg.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast, the members of the *Shtiblech* practised their Judaism in accordance with the strict codes of Eastern European Orthodoxy. However, these religious divisions were sometimes only a generational occurrence. One interviewee, Hemmi Freeman (born Hermann Frühman) recalled:

There were about 600 families all up and at a maximum, half that number were German-born. The temple had at least 300 families and the rest used to go to one or two little *Shtibls*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 10 July 1997.

<sup>16</sup> The concept of the *Einheitsgemeinde* arose out of numerical necessity in smaller communities in Germany. This permitted all acculturated German Jews to practise their Judaism according to their own wishes and levels of observance in a unified, culturally German-Jewish ethos, irrespective of their rabbi's religious affiliation. At the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* in Magdeburg, this expression and practice ranged from Liberal Judaism to Neo-Orthodoxy.

<sup>17</sup> Personal file on Rabbi Dr Georg and Mrs Martha Wilde, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 50, ASGM.

<sup>18</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 16 December 1997.

<sup>19</sup> Personal interview with Sigrid Freeman (recorded), Sydney, 13 May 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview with Hemmi Freeman (recorded), Sydney, 13 May 1998.

Not atypically, Hemmi Freeman's family, who originated from Eastern Europe but had lived in Magdeburg since before World War One, had adopted the liberal form of Judaism and belonged to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. Interestingly though, the family maintained a kosher home and lived according to modern Orthodox tradition. This typical pattern of acculturation in Jewish communities in Germany was also evident in this small community and indicative of the religious pluralism within the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* itself.

In 1923 five paid employees of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* were listed with their positions: Dr Georg Wilde as rabbi, Max (Meier) Teller as cantor and teacher, Meyer Steinhardt as teacher, Samuel Nußbaum as sexton and Max Arensberg as *Shochet*.<sup>21</sup> As testimony to the stability of this small, but, thriving congregation, both the positions on the synagogue board and those of the paid employees of the synagogue remained constant with only minor changes until the issuing of the synagogue's budget for the year 1936–1937.<sup>22</sup> In assessing the synagogue's budgets for the years from and including 1933 until 1937,<sup>23</sup> the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* employed between seven and nine staff, including those already mentioned, and office staff. Most staff changes occurred due to retirement, followed in the latter years by emigration. The number of retired staff members varied between four and six members per year. All drew a pension from the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.

The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* possessed a sizeable amount of real estate allocated to various functions for the entire community. The congregation's administrative

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<sup>21</sup> Spanier, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Magdeburg (STAM).

<sup>23</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1936/1937, *ibid*.

offices were located in the same building as the synagogue, whilst both the religious school and the *B'nai B'rith* Lodge Home were located in the adjacent building at *Große Schulstraße* 2b. The congregation owned the *Israelitisches Altersheim* located at *Arndtstraße* 5, the *Israelitischer Friedhof* situated at *Fermersleber Weg* 40–46, a market garden in the same street and owned a one-acre parcel of land adjacent to the cemetery (Field IV), designated for its future expansion.<sup>24</sup> The congregation also assisted in the management and operation of the *Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft zu Magdeburg*, which operated according to its own constitution.

The constitution of the congregation was detailed, setting out the rules for the elections of the board of directors and the assembly of community representatives. The committee of management was responsible for the operations of all of the aforementioned communal bodies as well as the synagogue and the religious school, with the exception of *B'nai B'rith*<sup>25</sup> and the *Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft*,<sup>26</sup> which operated independently according to their own constitutions. The only copies of various versions of this document which have survived are those which were used to lodge and register any legal changes made to the constitution to the city authorities of the city of Magdeburg, as was the case with

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<sup>24</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>25</sup> *Gesetze der Mendelsohn-Loge XII. Nr. 357 U. O. B. B. zu Magdeburg* Magdeburg: L. Sperling & Co., 1911, Collection D/Ma3, File XII.9, The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem (CAHJP). An earlier edition of the constitution from 1900 published by the same publisher also exists in the cited file.

<sup>26</sup> *Satzungen der Israelitischen Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft zu Magdeburg* Magdeburg: C. Loewenthal & Co., 1903, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, pp. 11–23.

one of the later versions of the document, which dates from 30 January 1935.<sup>27</sup> One complete earlier version of the document, dating from 18 June 1934, lists the Magdeburg city councillor, Eugen Petzall, as president of the board of directors and Dr Ernst Merzbach as president of the assembly of community representatives.<sup>28</sup>

Until the pogrom of November 1938, the organisational framework of the congregation appears to have been maintained, whilst its powers were simultaneously diluted. In viewing the material lodged with city authorities concerning changes to the congregation's constitution, this position appears to be supported.

In spite of the deteriorating circumstances, synagogue staff maintained meticulous record-keeping. The community also maintained highly comprehensive population statistics, detailing the departure of members as well as the arrival of new members. An incomplete dossier of index cards of synagogue members from 1937<sup>29</sup> and the community-based statistics for the period inclusive from March up until June 1937<sup>30</sup> confirm this. In examining the incomplete dossier of some thirty-four typed index cards containing the comprehensive personal particulars of the members of the synagogue, what is noticeable are the handwritten entries on some of the cards, indicating the city or country for which a number of members had left Magdeburg. Destinations include Berlin, South Africa and the United States of America (USA). Included in type-written form

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<sup>27</sup> Constitution of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. A III, Signatur Nr. 2486 60.4a, Band 2, STAM.

<sup>28</sup> Correspondence to the Oberpräsident in Magdeburg concerning changes to the constitution of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, 18 June 1934, Collection JM, File 11266.2, YVA, pp. 213–229.

<sup>29</sup> Personalbögen der Zu- und Abgänge, 1937, Collection D/Ma3, File VIII.8, CAHJP.

<sup>30</sup> Mitgliederzahl der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Stichtag 1937, *ibid.*

also is any information concerning the subject of the member's non-Jewish spouse and/or children.<sup>31</sup> In March 1937 the community's population was 1,264; in April it was 1,270; in May it was 1,272 and in June it dropped to 1,256.<sup>32</sup> These data indicate that the community continued to function in its structural and administrative capacity and to maintain effective management of its affairs. The documentation also bears witness to the departure of community members.

The religious community attempted to meet the immediate and ever-changing needs of its members, within the structure of the communal organisations, which existed in pre-Nazi Magdeburg. On a political front, however, and particularly so, in the defence of the community, the regional branch of the *Centralverein* (CV), the *Landesverband Mitteldeutschland*, attempted to act and represent both individuals and the community as a whole, when dealing with the authorities.<sup>33</sup>

The exact date of the dissolution of the official status of any of the religious congregations in Magdeburg cannot definitively be established. However, all congregations lost their status as corporations under public law on 28 March 1938.<sup>34</sup> The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* became known as the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg)*. Further to this, the community was later officially incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* on 27 May 1941 and became known as the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle*

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<sup>31</sup> Personalbögen der Zu- und Abgänge, 1937, Collection D/Ma3, File VIII.8, CAHJP, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Mitgliederzahl der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Stichtag 1937, ibid.

<sup>33</sup> For a complete history of the CV see Avraham Barkai, "*Wehr Dich!*" *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C. V.) 1893–1938* München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Avraham Barkai, "Self-Help in the Dilemma: 'To Leave or to Stay'," in Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German Jewish History in Modern Times, Volume 4, Renewal and Destruction: 1918–1945*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 318.

Magdeburg.<sup>35</sup> The former *Synagogen-Gemeinde* in its altered state continued to function in its various capacities.<sup>36</sup>

As demonstrated, it is possible to establish a limited picture of what the community's bureaucracy consisted of and how it functioned. A far more comprehensive and diverse picture of the community's structure, however, is provided when an examination of the rich cultural fabric of its communal organisations is made. Many of these were connected to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and in this respect they provide further insight into its organisational framework.<sup>37</sup>

The social structure of the community was reflective of the difference in religious affiliation.<sup>38</sup> This religious division can also be translated into national origin. The separation of the two groups was evident for the entire period under discussion, irrespective of the persecutions inflicted. In fact, a number of interviewees reflected that it was not really until the deportation of stateless, Polish Jews on 27–28 October 1938 that they had had much involvement with their fellow Jews of Polish background.<sup>39</sup> The differences which formed the various barriers within the overall community were most evident in synagogue

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<sup>35</sup> Correspondence from Dr Max Israel Kaufmann to the Amtsgericht Abtlg. 8 in Magdeburg, 8 October 1941 indicates this change of name for the community and the correspondence uses both the old and the new letterheads, Collection JM, File 11266.7, YVA, p. 297. In addition to this, numerous other documents from as early as 5 November 1941 bear the new name on the community's official letterhead as, for example, correspondence bearing the abovementioned new letterhead to the Gerichtskasse Magdeburg, 5 November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, p. 298.

<sup>36</sup> No archival material has survived indicating any imposed name changes or changes of status of the Shtiblech for the period.

<sup>37</sup> A wealth of both archival and oral history material in this subject has facilitated an excellent picture of the operations of this sphere of the community.

<sup>38</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998. Freeman estimated that a minimum of 30% of the Jewish population belonged to Shtiblech, with the figure possibly even being as high as 50%.

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 7 November 1996.

and religious practice, in chosen professions, in domicile and in both cultural and social mores, in addition to regular social intercourse.<sup>40</sup>

There is mixed agreement amongst interviewees from the community that the ‘German Jews did not mix with the *Ostjuden* [Eastern European Jews].’<sup>41</sup> The overall feeling was that Magdeburg’s community was the same as most other German-Jewish communities in that German Jews did not mix with ‘Jews from the East.’<sup>42</sup> None of the interviewees felt that this division was positive, but nevertheless had accepted it. Terms most commonly used to describe immigrant Jews were *Ostjuden* and *polnische Juden*.

Most members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* were involved in the professions and in business in the city. This included grain merchants, tradespeople, technicians, engineers, business people owning and operating establishments ranging from single shops to department stores, manufacturers and factory owners, solicitors, judges, doctors, teachers and bankers.<sup>43</sup> They belonged to the middle and upper classes of Magdeburg society. Conversely, the majority of the members of the *Shtiblech* belonged to the lower middle class and some to the working class. Gisela Kent recalled that ‘many of these people had small businesses and were involved in trading in clothing; many actually sold on the

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<sup>40</sup> This pattern in Magdeburg is reflective of the general relationship between German-born and immigrant Jews in Germany. For a comprehensive discussion on this relationship see Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jews in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982.

<sup>41</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241.

streets.<sup>44</sup> There existed, nevertheless, some notable exceptions such as Hermann Broder, who owned the department store '*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*' and the clothing retailer Pinkas Frühman. Both were not German-born and both were highly successful and respected businessmen. Their success, however, did not gain them complete social acceptance. This is evident in the membership of the majority of the community's social and cultural institutions.

The professional division was but an extension of the religious and national division. Pedigree played a pivotal role in social acceptance. Given the varying socio-economic circumstances, the two groups were geographically separated as well. The majority of the members of the *Shtiblech* lived in the area where they worked, that is, in the vicinity of *Jakobstraße*, whilst the members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* tended to live in the leafy and more affluent suburbs at the northern end of the city, known as the *Nordfront*, or in areas where they wished to reside, quite often geographically distant from the remainder of the community, such as the suburb of Sudenburg.

Nevertheless, both culturally and socially the divisions were not as entrenched as they might appear on the surface. This is particularly noticeable in the social activities of children and youth, at school and in activities organised by Zionist groups for both adults and children and youth. However, on the adult level in the spheres of social and cultural activities the separation was relatively complete,<sup>45</sup> with the notable exception of those adults involved in Zionist activities. Gisela Kent, in discussing the relationship between the two groups, expressed it with mild sarcasm:

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<sup>44</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>45</sup> Personal interview with Hemmi and Sigrid Freeman (recorded), Sydney, 13 May 1998.

We saw them very little. They were invisible. Those people had nothing to do with us. They were migrants and they gave us a bad name. We were good Germans. They lived almost like in a ghetto. There was a street called *Jakobstraße* and you knew if you went there you would meet a Polish Jew. We just didn't mix! There was no hostility between the two groups. However, the German Jews were always belittling them. And they came with torn clothes and it didn't take them very long before they had a business and then it went bankrupt, and then they put the business in the name of the wife. They did all sorts of funny things that we good Germans never did!<sup>46</sup>

These sentiments demonstrate the tensions between the two groups. The feeling of superiority is present, yet simultaneously there is expressed a criticism of German-born Jews, who quite clearly are capable of all the foibles they attach to the immigrant Jews. What is interesting here is the description of the largely separate world that the immigrant Jewish community occupied. It must also be noted that socially, even as the persecutions unfolded, community members relied on their already long established friendships and, prior to the pogrom of 9–10 November 1938, they generally did not move beyond their known and trusted religious and social circles. However, after November 1938 many of the traditional barriers collapsed. As Hemmi Freeman expressed, in reference to acceptance in the community: 'It became easier in the later years. I can't complain about this.'<sup>47</sup>

A final area which separated the two groupings and is inter-related to all of the subjects is the area of social mores. Quite clearly, the Eastern European Jews who had settled in Magdeburg lived, ate, worked, prayed and socialised according to the conventions of their former communities. For them, as with any immigrant group, it would be one or perhaps two generations before the culture of the adopted country would be integrated into their way of life. For most of the members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, foreign customs were not accepted and the expectation was that, not dissimilar to what they themselves had all done in

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<sup>46</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>47</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

varying periods of their own families' histories, the newcomers would acculturate and adopt the German-Jewish way of life and religious observance.<sup>48</sup>

Inge-Ruth Herrmann recalled the home of a Polish-Jewish girlfriend, and her experience exemplifies the separate social mores of the two groups of Jews and of the gulf which existed:

I don't think that relations between the two communities were too good. Look, there was such a difference in their way of living! This girl I was friendly with, Miriam Kohl, was Polish and the first time I was invited to her home, I thought I would fall over when they opened the door. The garlic just hits you! It was so bad I didn't know how to get out of there! At home we didn't have garlic; in my house we didn't even eat onion! I mean, you walked into the place of my friends who were German Jews, you didn't have that. And the mother looked so peculiar. She looked such a *Nebbich!* And yet to have such a large flat like they had, they couldn't have been poor. But that's the difference between the German Jews and the Polish Jews. If they were fairly well off, they dressed well, they looked nice; but the Polish people, they looked just the same. It doesn't matter how much they had!<sup>49</sup>

What can be concluded is that regardless of the constantly deteriorating situation for all Jews between the years 1933 and 1938, the two groupings still retained their separateness. Gerry Levy recalled the division very well and lamented the situation. From all of the oral history material collected, another very interesting, yet not surprising, observation can be made. Within one or two generations the newcomers had acculturated and were more often than not marrying into the wider German-Jewish community and, whilst even maintaining a diluted form of Orthodoxy, moved from the *Shtibl* to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. Acceptance may have been slow, but the majority had shed Yiddish and their old social mores, with many even objecting to references to this past, particularly to

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<sup>48</sup> For a highly comprehensive study of the lives and position of Eastern European Jews in Germany between 1918 and 1933 see Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918–1933* Hamburg: Hans Christian Verlag, 1986 and between 1933 and 1939 see Trude Maurer, "Ausländische Juden in Deutschland, 1933–1939," in Arnold Paucker, ed., *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. The Jews in Nazi Germany 1933–1943* Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1986, pp. 189–210.

<sup>49</sup> Personal interview with I. Poppert (recorded), Sydney, 9 January 1998.

the use of Yiddish, as articulated by Hemmi Freeman, when discussing the use of Yiddish in their home: 'My father, for sure not. If he knew it, he objected to it. My mother possibly, but they never spoke it in my presence.'<sup>50</sup>

Gerry Levy recalled that his parents did not have any friends who were Polish Jews, but tells the story of an uncle:

My mother's youngest brother married a very beautiful girl, whose father was a very religious Polish Jew. This man was very well respected in my family as a learned man in Judaism and who could teach Hebrew. He married a lady from Wolfen, near Dessau, who was totally German-Jewish in background. This was seen as a '*Mischehe*.' This aunt, together with her brother and sister, and the whole family were treated as ordinary Jews in Magdeburg. There existed these overlaps.<sup>51</sup>

The 'overlaps' referred to in the quotation were a feature of the Jewish community. What can be concluded is that for the period under discussion, the two groupings maintained their separateness according to the level of acculturation of those Jews of Eastern European origin. The most interesting exceptions were children and youth, as well as those individuals involved in Zionist activities.

The richness of the community's cultural life is reflected in its cultural institutions. In Karliner's report<sup>52</sup> on the former community, he made extensive references to the community's cultural life, indicating that eleven institutions and associations existed in 1933. He included the *B'nai B'rith* Moses Mendelssohn Lodge, associations dedicated to Jewish history and literature, youth and synagogue clubs and the social welfare support system and its agencies.

Characteristically, he noted that both the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and Rabbi Dr

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<sup>50</sup> Personal interview with Hemmi Freeman (recorded), Sydney, 3 June 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Levy, *op. cit.*, 4 August 1997.

<sup>52</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

Wilde must be placed at the centre of the community's 'exemplary and pulsating [cultural] life.'<sup>53</sup>

The community's cultural organisations and institutions can largely be divided into three categories: those that fell under the auspices of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*; those that were regional divisions of national organisations; as well as those which were independent organisations. All organisations and institutions operated according to their own constitutions, and whilst a number operated out of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* with its direct involvement, a sizeable number did not. For example, there is little evidence to support the direct involvement of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* in the prolific number of Zionist groups in the city. Zionism remained a force primarily with community members of Eastern European origins. Spanier lists all of the cultural organisations of the day,<sup>54</sup> in addition to social welfare agencies and charitable foundations for that time. While no such listing for the period after 1933 has been identified, a number of the organisations for the period after 1933 bear the same names.

The most obvious organisations operating from the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* were the mixed choir and possibly the youth group, the *Jüdischer Jugendverein 'Ludwig Philippson'*. Whilst the choir was a feature of the synagogue until services officially ceased,<sup>55</sup> it cannot be established whether or not this youth group was still functioning when the Nazis came to power.<sup>56</sup> One of the most

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<sup>53</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>54</sup> Spanier, op. cit., pp. 33–43.

<sup>55</sup> Personal interview with H. B. and R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 15 August 1997.

<sup>56</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 9. Dezember 1927, Nr. 28, 3. Jahrgang, Periodicals Collection, File P-B453a, LBIA NY, p. 221. This youth

famous of the cultural institutions in the city was the *B'nai B'rith* Lodge, known as the *Mendelssohn-Loge XII 357*. Founded on 31 May 1885, it also operated the *Frauenbund der Mendelssohn-Loge*.<sup>57</sup>

Magdeburg possessed its own branch of the CV, the *Centralverein Deutscher Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens – Landesverband Provinz Sachsen, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg*<sup>58</sup> and its own branch of the World War One Jewish veterans' association, the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg*.<sup>59</sup> The branch also included the sports group of the veterans' association, *Der Schild*, which attracted a substantial membership, particularly amongst its youth.<sup>60</sup> The Magdeburg branch of the popular youth movement known as the 'Ring', *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*, renamed the *Bund Jüdischer Jugend* in 1936,<sup>61</sup> was also well represented numerically.<sup>62</sup>

Of particular interest due to its role as a cultural and educational wing of the community was the *Jüdischer Verein Freundschaft zu Magdeburg*, established on 18 March 1928, which eventually became the *Jüdische Kultur-Gesellschaft zu Magdeburg* on 12 January 1933.<sup>63</sup> Two other organisations, which appear to have

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group did not feature in any of the public notices in the Magdeburg Jewish press for 1932, however, it did feature in previous years.

<sup>57</sup> *Gesetze der Mendelssohn-Loge, XII Nr. 357 U. O. B. B. zu Magdeburg*, Collection D/Ma3, File XII.9, CAHJP, op. cit. Historical details of and membership list of the Mendelssohn Lodge for 1928, Archiv des Landesverbandes Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt (ALJGSA).

<sup>58</sup> Correspondence from the Magdeburg branch of the CV to the head office of the CV in Berlin, 9 April 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives (USHMMA), p. 426.

<sup>59</sup> This was an important organisation, given the large number of war veterans in the community, together with the families of the thirty-six men who gave their lives for their country in World War One. See Spanier, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>60</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 7 November 1996.

<sup>61</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>62</sup> Personal interview with Hans Jensen (recorded), Sydney, 14 June 1999.

<sup>63</sup> *Jüdischer Verein Freundschaft zu Magdeburg; Jüdische Kultur-Gesellschaft zu Magdeburg*, Collection JM, File 11266.4, YVA, pp. 1–92.

been Magdeburg-based, were the youth group, the *Jüdisch-liberaler Jugendbund 'Heimat'* and the sports association, the *Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba' zu Magdeburg*,<sup>64</sup> which was a member of the German and the international Maccabi federations. Two further organisations advertised in the local Jewish press of the day, which also appear to be Magdeburg-based, were the *Israelitischer Frauenverein* and the *Walter Rathenau-Club*.<sup>65</sup>

The remaining organisations and institutions were all Zionist-based. The *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg* also operated the *Palästina-Amt Berlin, Zweigstelle Magdeburg*.<sup>66</sup> Magdeburg was also home to a branch of the *Zeiri Misrachi für Deutschland* and to the *Poale Zion*.<sup>67</sup> Both *Habonim* and *Hechalutz*<sup>68</sup> were operational, as the youth groups also organised a local *Hachsharah*,<sup>69</sup> in addition to operating the *Brith Chaluzim Dathiim*.<sup>70</sup> Another organisation that appears to have been active was the *Union der Zionisten Revisionisten, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg*.<sup>71</sup>

Whilst this discussion has only addressed the subject of the structure of Jewish cultural organisations and institutions in Magdeburg, what must not be overlooked is that within the social and cultural framework of the city until 1933, Jews fully

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<sup>64</sup> *Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba' zu Magdeburg*, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2346, LHASA MD, pp. 9–13, 27, 39, 47.

<sup>65</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 30. Dezember 1932, Nr. 53, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>66</sup> Correspondence from Walter Heinemann to Pastor W. Lüdecke, 21 March 1935, Bestand Rep. A, Spec. K, Signatur Nr. 2429, Archiv des Konsistoriums der Evangelischen Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen, Magdeburg (AKPS), unnumbered page, one page.

<sup>67</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 16. Dezember 1932, Nr. 51, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM.

<sup>68</sup> H. and S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Protokoll der Hauptversammlung des Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, 11. März 1934, ALJGSA, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 16. Dezember 1932, Nr. 51, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 328.

participated in and were thoroughly integrated into the social and cultural fabric of the city.<sup>72</sup>

As already mentioned, the community was divided into two religious-cultural groups: one sought identification through its traditional German and Jewish roots, in which Zionism did not feature; the other identified solely with one or more of the Zionist philosophies. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the congregants of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* subscribed to the former, whilst the majority of the congregants of the *Shtiblech* subscribed to the latter. Within this division the community provided a rich and varied social and cultural life for itself. All avenues of interest, irrespective of age, gender or Zionist inclinations, were catered for. In viewing the variety of Zionist organisations, it becomes apparent that the full range of religious and political ideologies was also represented. Until their dissolution these organisations provided much psychological and physical sustenance to community members, and this influence continued even after their complete dissolution, as they assisted community members to create their own home-based structures in order to survive, as their ‘social death’ ensued at a rapid pace.<sup>73</sup>

According to Karliner,<sup>74</sup> the Jewish community of Magdeburg was financially secure at the time of the Nazi accession to power. In addition to the seven pieces of real estate previously mentioned, the community possessed liquid assets in the

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<sup>72</sup> Personal interview with George Mannings (recorded), Sydney, 17 August 1999.

<sup>73</sup> This term, expressing the exclusion of Jews from all avenues of German society and the subsequent ramifications of such exclusion, was introduced by Marion A. Kaplan in the previously cited work by her.

<sup>74</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241.

forms of bank deposits and fixed interest annuities.<sup>75</sup> It is also possible that the community possessed further liquid and real estate assets, unknown to Karliner, as he indicates in his report that quite clearly he could only list what was known to him and to other members of the reconstituted community.<sup>76</sup>

The religious communities and the cultural and social organisations operated according to their own constitutions and budgets until they were dissolved. In addition, the vast majority organised their own premises. An examination of archival material relating to the plethora of effective religious, cultural, social and welfare organisations extant in the community corroborates Karliner's assessment, as does the consensus of those interviewed.<sup>77</sup> It should also be noted that whilst the vast majority of religious, social, cultural, and welfare organisations operated independently, the community as a whole was funded by fourteen charitable foundations.<sup>78</sup>

The only archival material relating to operational budgets and general finances which have survived is that concerning the financial operations of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*. This latter area of communal support only continued to increase as community members became more impoverished. In exploring this subject it is possible to gain a greater understanding of how the

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<sup>75</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> H. and S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>78</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., pp. 187–188 and Spanier, op. cit., pp. 39–41. Spanier provides a detailed list of all the charitable foundations which supported the community in 1923.

economic structure of a number of communal organisations and institutions functioned as the situation deteriorated.<sup>79</sup>

The budgets of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* for the years from and including 1933 to 1937<sup>80</sup> display remarkable stability considering the strain the community was encountering. The synagogue continued in its myriad of functions. A number of important observations from these documents further an understanding of events and their ramifications at that time. For the 1933–1934 budget the allocation was RM 98,930.71.<sup>81</sup> In 1936–1937 the allocation dropped to RM 80,167.46.<sup>82</sup> For the period after the 1933–1934 budget all the ensuing budgets remained close to the figure indicated in the last budget. The greatest reduction in expenditure occurred in the number of paid staff at the synagogue. Yet, regardless of this drop in income and expenditure the documentation provides evidence of the financial stability of the synagogue's operations, as its roles and responsibilities did not suffer as a result of this fiscal difference.

Also of note are the figures indicating the revenue generated by membership of the synagogue. Payment of membership dues dropped by one third in the period from the 1933–1934 budget to the 1934–1935 budget.<sup>83</sup> This situation indicates the financial strain that approximately one third of the congregation was already experiencing. The synagogue dues for the remaining budgets remained stable.

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<sup>79</sup> A number of organisations were omitted from the previous component discussing the cultural structure of the community. Some of those omitted fall partially into the cultural domain, however, for the greater part those to be included in this discussion operated primarily as social welfare organisations and institutions and for this reason they have been included in this component.

<sup>80</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, STAM, op. cit.

<sup>81</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1936/1937, *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, *ibid.*

The expenditure for social welfare projects displays only moderate variation for the entire period. The 1936–1937 budget was signed off by the synagogue board on 10 February and 12 March 1936.<sup>84</sup> In interpreting the expenditure for social welfare within the synagogue community it may indicate one of two possibilities: firstly, that up until this point the majority of community members were not seeking unusual levels of assistance, or secondly, that they were not seeking direct assistance from the synagogue, but from the various social welfare organisations in the community. It is more likely that the latter was the case after investigation of the files of the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege*.<sup>85</sup> With regard to the examination of these budgets, however, it is evident that the synagogue as an economic structure was functioning quite normally and fulfilling all of its roles and responsibilities until this point.

The operations of organisations and institutions which assisted in social welfare provide further insight into the economic structure of the community and how it responded to the ever-changing needs of its members. Two important organisations which continued to operate in meeting the needs of communal members were the *Israelitisches Altersheim* and the *Israelitische Beerdigungsgesellschaft*. As far as can be ascertained, they operated according to their own budgets and constitutions under duress, until they were forcibly incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*.

The following organisations were dedicated solely to social welfare projects.

One organisation about which very little is known was the *Verband ostjüdischer*

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<sup>84</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, STAM, op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> Correspondence to and from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg, 11 September 1933 – 6 May 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA.

*Organisationen Magdeburgs*.<sup>86</sup> This organisation indicates that the Jews of Eastern European origin in Magdeburg operated separate welfare organisations. The *Israelitischer Witwen- und Waisen-Unterstützungs-Fonds*, the *Jüdischer Hilfsverein zu Magdeburg*, the *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg* and the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege* all operated as organisations dedicated to various forms of social welfare.

The *Israelitischer Witwen- und Waisen-Unterstützungs-Fonds* had served the Jewish community of Magdeburg since 1871.<sup>87</sup> It is known that the organisation was required by the Gestapa to submit membership lists for each quarter. The documentation confirming this only provides data for the period from 1 January 1936 until 13 December 1937.<sup>88</sup> During this time Benno Kallmann was the president of the foundation. On 1 January 1936, Kallmann indicated there were 279 members, and on 13 December 1937 that the membership stood at 201.<sup>89</sup> The data supplied to the Gestapa provides all the personal particulars of members, including statistics of emigration, immigration and deaths. The documentation confirms the extensive nature of welfare work being undertaken, as well as providing on an individual level information on the extent of the large number of members who had already changed professions and addresses, resulting from financial hardship. What is also of interest is that emigration statistics for each

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<sup>86</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 16. Dezember 1932, Nr. 51, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 328. This organisation was listed in the public notices of this newsletter. No other archival material detailing this organisation has been located.

<sup>87</sup> Spanier, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>88</sup> Mitgliederliste des Israelitischen Witwen- und Waisen- Unterstützungs-Fonds und Nachträge, dazu Briefwechsel mit der Gestapo, Collection D/Ma3, File X.G5, CAHJP.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

quarter were still relatively low, the figure being generally between three to four people per quarter.<sup>90</sup>

The remaining three organisations, the *Jüdischer Hilfsverein*, the *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse* and the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege*, to a large extent worked in cooperation with one another and for this reason they shall be overviewed as one unit. The *Jüdischer Hilfsverein* had been founded in 1912<sup>91</sup> and worked closely with the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege*. The former organisation continued its important work until its dissolution, even though it was under constant surveillance by the Gestapo. Also recorded is the departure of its members. Documentation confirms the financial viability of the organisation in the operations of its welfare work for the duration of its existence.<sup>92</sup>

The *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse* was founded on 28 March 1934 to meet the growing financial needs of members of the Jewish communities of Burg, Dessau, Gardelegen, Halberstadt, Magdeburg, Oschersleben, Salzwedel, Schönebeck and Stendal.<sup>93</sup> This was an important economic initiative of the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege* under the presidency of Rabbi Dr Wilde as a response to the overburdened work of its organisation and, most importantly, as a direct response to the economic strangulation community members were experiencing.

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<sup>90</sup> Mitgliederliste des Israelitischen Witwen- und Waisen- Unterstützungs-Fonds und Nachträge, dazu Briefwechsel mit der Gestapo, Collection D/Ma3, File X.G5, op. cit., CAHJP.

<sup>91</sup> Jüdischer Hilfsverein zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2305, LHASA MD, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–71.

<sup>93</sup> Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg, Collection JM, File 11266.6, YVA, pp. 1–4.

The *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege* provides the greatest insight into the work of social welfare within the community as a result of the extensive archival material available which spans the years from and including 1933 through to 1938.<sup>94</sup> Closely tied to the national organisation, the *Zentralstelle für jüdische Wirtschaftshilfe*, based in Berlin, it emerged as the chief source of social welfare assistance for Jews in Magdeburg. Through its affairs it is possible to chart the economic deterioration of Jews in addition to the changing roles of the organisation as it attempted to respond to these new and difficult situations.

For the years 1933 to 1934, one of its chief tasks appears to have been as an employment agency and as an agency facilitating retraining. From 1935 until the middle of 1937 this situation remained the same, in addition to the matter of employment for school leavers becoming a serious priority; and from the middle of 1937 until the middle of 1938 the priority had become the emigration of children and youth to the USA, England, New Zealand and Australia.<sup>95</sup> The areas of migration, financial assistance to needy members and accommodation feature as ongoing matters from 11 March 1934,<sup>96</sup> yet simultaneously voluntary financial contributions from community members to the organisation continued to support its valued work.<sup>97</sup>

The economic viability of the community's organisations and institutions in their plethora of ever-changing roles is clear. Simultaneously, the documentation

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<sup>94</sup> Correspondence to and from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg, 11 September 1933 – 6 May 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Protokoll der Hauptversammlung des Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, 11. März 1934, ALJGSA, op. cit., pp. 1–3.

<sup>97</sup> Correspondence to and from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg, 11 September 1933 – 6 May 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit.

details the financial hardship of community members, which only continues on a downward spiral. Most notable is the evident professionalism in all business matters conducted and the continued generosity of community members who were still financially stable.

In conclusion, communal frameworks already in existence in 1933 provided the Jews in Magdeburg with a firm foundation to rely and draw on, once antisemitic measures were enacted. The large number of organisations and institutions for such a small community is a testimony to the vibrancy and the diversity of the community. This fact, no doubt, positively assisted all community members attempting to navigate their lives as they altered dramatically for the worse.

The situation in Magdeburg, both prior to and after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 is difficult to fully explore. What is quite clear is that up until the Nuremberg Laws, the community appears to have been focused on adjusting to its new position. The focus was on retraining, complying with the authorities, valuing Jewishness and simultaneously defending its rights. From the period toward the end of 1937 there arose a greater focus on the evacuation of the young and on emigration. The initial phase represented the hope of retaining lives and livelihoods; the second phase distinctly represented for some, and although not the majority, the end of those hopes. As social isolation ensued, communal structures were to prove of vital importance, both physically and psychologically. The Nazi regime targeted particular structures for immediate or early dissolution. The continued existence of Jewish organisations and institutions related directly to their roles in both Nazi ideology and bureaucracy, as will be demonstrated in the next section of this chapter.

### The Dissolution of Communal Organisations

Jewish communal organisations in Magdeburg suffered the same fate as elsewhere in Germany and were dissolved at various intervals, with the vast majority having been closed down before the pogrom of November 1938. A small number continued to operate after 1938, but by 1943 all had ceased to function. This section will focus on those that had ceased operating by the end of 1938.

On 28 February 1933, the *Erste Verordnung des Herrn Reichspräsidenten zum Schutz von Volk und Staat* enabled the outlawing of any assemblies of Jewish organisations. On 11 July 1935, the *Staatspolizeistelle für den Regierungsbezirk Merseburg*, based in the city of Halle an der Saale, acknowledged receipt of a memorandum and directive, dated 31 May 1935, from the Gestapo in Berlin addressing this very issue.<sup>98</sup> This memorandum had been dispatched to all Gestapo, including in Magdeburg, and thus the contents of this memorandum shed light on what ensued with regard to the dissolution of Jewish organisations. It discussed the rising number of activities of German-Jewish organisations, which were referred to as ‘assimilatory.’ It was also indicated that the growth and further activities of these organisations could and would not be tolerated. Dr Werner Best,<sup>99</sup> signatory of the memorandum, issued a subsequent ban on assemblies and

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<sup>98</sup> Memorandum from the Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt, Berlin, An alle Staatspolizeistellen concerning the subject of the assemblies and activities of Jewish organisations, 31 May 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 052, ASGM.

<sup>99</sup> Dr Werner Best had been active in the Nazi Party since 1930. In March 1933 he was appointed special commissioner for Hesse and within four months he was governor of the state. In 1935 he was made section leader of the Gestapo under Reinhard Heydrich. Hitler depended upon Best to explain away the ‘many unfortunate incidents’ in Gestapo prisons. Best presented a positive view: ‘As long as the police carries out the will of the leadership, it is acting legally.’ Best later served on the staff of the military commander in France from 1940 to 1942. From November 1942 until May 1945 he was Reich Commissioner for occupied Denmark. For a detailed biographical account on Dr Werner Best see Ulrich Herbert, *Best. Biographische*

activities of all Jewish organisations, with noted exceptions which fell into three categories. The first group consisted of regional, cultural organisations which were members of the *Reichsverband der jüdischen Kulturverbände in Deutschland*; the second consisted of sporting organisations; and finally, the third of Zionist organisations. Any organisation in receipt of this exemption found guilty of 'anti-state propaganda' or propagating the idea that there was a future for Jewish life in Germany, was to be dissolved immediately.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, a cogent framework was provided indicating which organisations would continue to exist according to the regime's own plans. Of relevance is the importance of the regime's policy on race and separation. This ranges from the purely literal, for example, in the name of an organisation, to the practical and physical of forbidding Jews access to German culture and public space. Best's memorandum of May 1935 articulates the concern that there were too many organisations espousing the compatibility of Germanness and Jewishness. Clearly, the observation can also be made that in these early years of the regime that German Jews sought to prove their allegiance to their much-loved homeland. This was very much the case also for the Jews of Magdeburg.

For the period commencing with the Nazi accession to power until the receipt of the abovementioned memorandum, no documentation has been located confirming the forced dissolution of any Jewish organisations in Magdeburg. The sole organisation which was dissolved and deregistered in this period did so voluntarily. The *Jüdische Kultur-Gesellschaft* met for the last time on 14 May

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*Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903–1989* Bonn: Verlag J. H. W. Dietz, 1996.

<sup>100</sup> Memorandum from the Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt, Berlin, An alle Staatspolizeistellen concerning the subject of the assemblies and activities of Jewish organisations, 31 May 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 052, ASGM, op. cit.

1933 for the purpose of dissolving the society voluntarily. The president, Maurycy Jakubowicz, explained at the 'Extra-Ordinary, Urgent General Assembly' that of the over forty original financial members, barely half remained. He continued that, of the remaining membership, the majority were no longer in a situation to support the society financially or alternatively they hoped to leave in a relatively short time.<sup>101</sup> The contents of the society's library were donated to the *Betverein 'Ahawas Reim'* and at the conclusion of the meeting Jakubowicz, together with the society's board, thanked those assembled 'for their constantly cheerful and self-sacrificing co-operation.'<sup>102</sup> They expressed 'the hope that all the friends gathered should continue to maintain their faithfulness and friendship, just as they had done so in the past.'<sup>103</sup> The organisation was officially deregistered on 1 August 1933.<sup>104</sup> It would appear that this organisation was not affiliated to any national body and operated independently. The reasons for its dissolution appear clear, as it occurred directly due to the change in the political regime.

The next dissolution was that of the *Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba'*,<sup>105</sup> which had served the community under the leadership of Joachim Freiberg since 1923.<sup>106</sup> It was forcibly dissolved on 20 August 1935.<sup>107</sup> Whilst this sports organisation was a member of the national and international Maccabi federation, it appears that it also was wholly independent and Magdeburg-based.

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<sup>101</sup> Protokoll über die ausserordentliche General-Versammlung zum Zwecke der Auflösung des Vereins 'Jüdische Kultur-Gesellschaft' e. V. zu Magdeburg, 14. Mai 1933, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2306, LHASA MD, p. 89.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>105</sup> Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba' zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2346, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>106</sup> Very limited documentation exists on this organisation and its dissolution.

<sup>107</sup> Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba' zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2346, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 47.

On 23 May 1936, the Gestapa issued a two-month ban on the ‘Ring’, *Bund Jüdischer Jugend*,<sup>108</sup> previously known as the *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*.<sup>109</sup> This became permanent on 30 December 1936, when it was dissolved. The Gestapa indicated that the dissolution had arisen due to the organisation’s members’ continued wearing of uniforms and the practice of military-style exercises in spite of the ban on both practices.<sup>110</sup> This organisation was subsequently dissolved in Magdeburg, where it had a large membership of youth who fondly recall both the uniform and the activities.<sup>111</sup>

On 10 April 1937, all organisational bodies of the *B’nai B’rith* in Germany were eliminated, associated property and bank accounts confiscated and strict instructions given to all branch offices of the Gestapo on how to execute the dissolutions. Particular attention was to be paid to the collection of all files, particularly those on personnel, and the directive was given for the imprisonment of the office-bearers of each lodge until the process of liquidation was completed. The homes of all office-bearers were to be searched for material associated with their respective lodges.<sup>112</sup> At that time the registered address for the *Mendelssohn Loge* in Magdeburg was *Breiter Weg* 139–140 and the president and vice-

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<sup>108</sup> Correspondence from the Prussian office of the Gestapo, Berlin to the president of the Berlin Regional Union of the ‘Ring’, *Bund Jüdischer Jugend*, 23 May 1936, Bestand 1, 75C Ar 1, Signatur Nr. 5, CJA, p. 67.

<sup>109</sup> For an extensive discussion on the reactions of the ‘Ring’, *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend* (and the re-named ‘Ring’, *Bund Jüdischer Jugend*) to Nazism, see Chaim Schatzker, “The Jewish Youth Movement in Germany in the Holocaust Period (I) – Youth in Confrontation with a New Reality,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XIX, 1974, pp. 157–181 and Chaim Schatzker, “The Jewish Youth Movement in Germany in the Holocaust Period (II) – The Relations between the Youth Movement and the Hechaluz,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXIII, 1988, pp. 301–325.

<sup>110</sup> Auflösung des ‘Rings’, *Bund jüdischer Jugend*, 30. Dezember 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, p. 163.

<sup>111</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>112</sup> Auflösung des ‘Unabhängigen Ordens Bne Briss’, 10. April 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, pp. 15–19.

president were Rabbi Dr Wilde and Georg Schäfer, respectively.<sup>113</sup> No record has been located detailing the actual detention of the office-bearers of the Magdeburg lodge.

An interesting memorandum from the Magdeburg Gestapa dated 30 March 1938, concerns the activities of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten* and its sporting association, *Der Schild*.<sup>114</sup> This memorandum sheds light on and highlights the inconsistency of some Nazi policies. The memorandum reinforced the position that the activities of the veterans' association were to be restricted.<sup>115</sup> However, it informed officials that whilst in the past, numerous activities of the sporting association had been prohibited, the Gestapo did not wish to hinder the sporting activities of the association and thereby granted approval for its continued operations, under police surveillance.<sup>116</sup> Oral history confirms that this was the case. Beyond this period limited activities of both organisations continued until they were forcibly incorporated into the *Reichvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* in 1939.<sup>117</sup>

The '*Staatszionistische*' organisations were the final group to be dissolved by a decree authored in Berlin on 25 July 1938 and instituted in Magdeburg on 3

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<sup>113</sup> Auflösung des 'Unabhängigen Ordens Bne Briss', 10. April 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>114</sup> Betätigung des Reichsbundes jüdischer Frontsoldaten, 30. März 1938, *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>115</sup> The activities and reactions of the Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten under Nazism have been dealt with extensively in numerous articles in the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*. For a detailed discussion on the subject see Ruth Pierson, "Embattled Veterans – The Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XIX, 1974, pp. 139–154.

<sup>116</sup> The reactions of the youth sporting association Der Schild (Sportbund der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten) to Nazism are discussed in Schatzker, op. cit.

<sup>117</sup> Avraham Barkai, "In a Ghetto Without Walls," in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 355.

September 1938.<sup>118</sup> All property belonging to the organisations was confiscated because the organisations were deemed enemies of the people and of the state, and that as such the organisations had used, or would continue to use, the confiscated property to pursue these ends.<sup>119</sup> Given the proliferation of Zionist organisations in Magdeburg, these dissolutions would have been deeply felt.

Documentation concerning the dissolutions of three other organisations was also received in Magdeburg from the Berlin Gestapa. However, it is not known whether or not these organisations were at any time operational in Magdeburg.<sup>120</sup> The first organisation was that of the *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden*,<sup>121</sup> which was dissolved on 9 December 1935,<sup>122</sup> the second was the *Paulus-Bund*,<sup>123</sup> which

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<sup>118</sup> Auflösung der Staatszionistischen Organisationen nebst sämtlichen Unterorganisationen, 25. Juli 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> No documentation confirming the existence and operations of these organisations in Magdeburg has been located.

<sup>121</sup> The ultra-nationalist *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden*, as an organisation, was extremely offended by its exclusion from the ‘national resurgence’ in Nazi Germany. Regardless of its exclusion it remained hostile to the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, as it refused to act co-operatively in a common organisation which included *Ostjuden* and the Zionists. It continued in its adulation of ‘German values’ until it was forcibly disbanded. For a detailed history of this organisation up until 1933 see Carl J. Rheins, “The *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden* 1921–1933,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXV, 1980, pp. 243–268.

<sup>122</sup> Memorandum from the Reich and Prussian Minister for the Interior to the State Governments and to the offices of the Gestapo concerning the dissolution and the banning of the *Verband nationaldeutscher Juden*, 9 December 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, p. 296.

<sup>123</sup> In June 1933 the Reich Association of Christian-German Citizens of Non-Aryan or Not Purely Aryan Origin was established in Berlin. In 1936 it was re-named the *Paulus-Bund, Vereinigung nichtarischer Christen*. These baptised Jews and their offspring did not see themselves as part of the Jewish community. They avoided any contact with Jewish organisations, which they viewed as alien and not a component of their own world and lives. The main purpose of this organisation was to prevent their decline into the even more stigmatised and discriminated status of the ‘full Jew.’ The organisation also assisted in finding suitable marriage partners after September 1935 and set up sections within its administration for welfare, job placement and legal and educational advice. For a complete account of the roles and activities of this organisation see Werner Cohn, “Bearers of a Common Fate? The ‘Non-Aryan’

was dissolved on 18 May 1937<sup>124</sup> and the third was that of the *Verein der Freunde Israels*, which was dissolved on 21 December 1937.<sup>125</sup>

After the pogrom of November 1938, a number of organisations remained operational until they were dissolved or were officially incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. Their survival was directly linked to the nature of their work. On 19 January 1939, the *Jüdischer Hilfsverein* was dissolved and deregistered.<sup>126</sup> Documentation concerning the activities of its partner organisation, the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*, ended in May 1938.<sup>127</sup> Given the nature of its work and the general co-ordination of such operations from Berlin, it is most likely that it continued with its tasks until it was incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. On 29 September 1939, the *Israelitisches Altersheim* in Magdeburg was incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* by order of § 5 der *Zehnten Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* from 4 July 1939,<sup>128</sup> as was the *Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft* on 3 October 1939,<sup>129</sup> followed in succession by the

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Christian ‘Fate-Comrades’ of the Paulus-Bund, 1933–1939,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXIII, 1988, pp. 327–366.

<sup>124</sup> Betrifft: Paulus-Bund, 18. Mai 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831 Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>125</sup> Betrifft: Verein der Freunde Israels, 21. Dezember 1937, *ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>126</sup> Jüdischer Hilfsverein zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2305, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>127</sup> No documentation concerning any of its roles or activities beyond May 1938 has been located.

<sup>128</sup> Correspondence from the Reich Minister for the Interior to the Israelitisches Altersheim in Magdeburg, 29 September 1939, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2481, LHASA MD, p. 92.

<sup>129</sup> Correspondence from the Head of the SS and the SD, Berlin to the Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft, 3 October 1939, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 293.

*Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse* on 5 December 1939,<sup>130</sup> which was subsequently forced into liquidation.

The memorandum from Werner Best in May 1935 explains the change in pace of the dissolution of communal organisations in Magdeburg. Organisations which espoused any links between Germanness and Jewishness and a sense of German nationalist identity for Jews were dissuaded from doing so and ultimately disbanded. The ‘Ring’, *Bund Jüdischer Jugend* is a good example. The organisation was forced to rename itself from the ‘Ring’, *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend* in 1936 to the abovementioned name, deleting the reference to ‘German.’ The notable exception to this was *Der Schild* of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*. The various exemptions from a number of antisemitic decrees given to war veterans and their families have been well documented, and this skewed sense of honour on the part of Nazi bureaucracy and policy appears to have played a vital role in the allowing the continued operations of both *Der Schild* and the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*.<sup>131</sup>

In contrast to the situation of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*, any organisation or institution which contained philosophies the regime deemed ‘hostile to the state’ were dissolved. In Magdeburg the most documented case of this situation was that of *B’nai B’rith*. This institution had always been viewed suspiciously by the regime, which believed it to be a Jewish version of Freemasonry. The Magdeburg lodge was dissolved in April 1937.

Unaffiliated, local organisations were at greater risk of dissolution than local branches of national organisations, which had a greater support system, but which,

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<sup>130</sup> *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg*, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2235, LHASA MD, p. 50.

<sup>131</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

importantly for Nazi bureaucracy, could be monitored and even managed more effectively. This accounts for the dissolution of the Jewish sports group *Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba'* in 1935. Given its non-nationalistic ideology and its Zionist leanings, its early dissolution cannot be explained, other than by postulating that as it was a local non-affiliated organisation, the local Gestapo wished it disbanded or perhaps its board members fell foul of the authorities.<sup>132</sup>

All the discussed organisations in Magdeburg were required to register all of their gatherings and activities with the Gestapo, which on a number of occasions revoked permission for assemblies. Further to this, all the dissolved organisations were instructed not to attempt to re-open or to instigate any new or similar organisation.

The two groupings of organisations which were permitted to continue operations until they were either dissolved in the years 1938 and 1939 or which were eventually incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* in 1939 were those of Zionist ideologies promoting Jewish emigration and Jewish welfare agencies. Zionist organisations were of considerable use and value to the regime as long as emigration was their main agenda. Once this was no longer the case they also were disbanded. In Magdeburg, the vast majority of documented welfare agencies continued their vital work until they were incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. Of the surviving organisations, they were the only ones of any practical use to the regime in that they managed all matters pursuant to Jewish welfare in the city.

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<sup>132</sup> No documentation detailing this organisation's operations between 1933 and 1935 has been located.

These dissolutions led to a number of ramifications and responses from community members. Perhaps the most notable psychological ramification of the dissolutions for those former members of the community interviewed was the beginning of the destruction of their identities as Germans of the Jewish faith and the (re-) emergence of their identities as Jews. This effect of the Nazi policy of separation was most noticeable for young Jews. There existed also an overwhelming sense of social isolation. The most obvious physical ramification was that Jews were slowly deprived of their communal space and services and began relying more on trusted social networks. In addition, the synagogue became the fulcrum of the community and through it the various welfare agencies. The Jews of Magdeburg gravitated to their synagogues for all their needs and, as such, the religious life of the community at the time provides a further insight into the structural framework of the community.

### **The Religious Congregations**

In 1933 the religious community of Magdeburg was not one homogenous body. Liberal Judaism existed side by side with the Orthodoxy of the *Shtibl*. The congregants of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* generally possessed German-Jewish pedigrees and the members of the *Shtiblech* were of Eastern European origin. It cannot be established when the *Shtiblech* were dissolved.<sup>133</sup> However, the only official congregation to survive into the war years until the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* was dissolved on 10 June 1943 was the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* in its modified form. Oral history supports the assumption that the

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<sup>133</sup> No documentation concerning the operations and dissolutions of the *Shtiblech* has been located.

*Shtiblech* were in existence until the pogrom of November 1938. Beyond this period it appears that the remaining Jews of Magdeburg had no option but to merge into one congregation.

The largest congregation in Magdeburg was the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg*. It conformed to the indigenous culture and practices of acculturated German Jews and operated as an *Einheitsgemeinde*.<sup>134</sup> This congregation also possessed the greatest public profile in the city and the administration of the synagogue was responsible for a vast array of communal duties. The pivotal point of this community was Rabbi Dr Georg Wilde. Wilde's profile is featured extensively in both the literature on the community and in the minds of his former congregants.<sup>135</sup> Wilde assumed his position as rabbi on 1 August 1906.<sup>136</sup> He was born in Meseritz in Brandenburg on 9 May 1877 and completed his doctoral dissertation in Breslau in 1901.<sup>137</sup> He married Martha Spitz, who was born in Breslau in 1888 and they remained childless.<sup>138</sup> He published widely on Jewish subjects.<sup>139</sup> One of his most acclaimed works was entitled: *Religiöse Bilder: Predigten von Dr. Georg Wilde*.<sup>140</sup> During World War One he had served with distinguished honour as a field rabbi and returned to his position in Magdeburg

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<sup>134</sup> Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition. The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany* New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

<sup>135</sup> Spanier, op. cit., pp. 31–32; Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241; and Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>136</sup> Personal file on Rabbi Dr Georg and Mrs Martha Wilde, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 50, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>137</sup> Spanier, op. cit., pp. 31–32.

<sup>138</sup> Personal file on Rabbi Dr Georg and Mrs Martha Wilde, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 50, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>139</sup> A detailed list of Wilde's publications and speeches is to be found in Spanier, op. cit.

<sup>140</sup> Georg Wilde, *Religiöse Bilder: Predigten von Dr. Georg Wilde* Berlin: Verlag von M. Poppelauer, 1914.

where he remained until his emigration in 1939. He was a member of the *Allgemeiner Rabbinerverband Deutschlands* and the *Vereinigung der liberalen Rabbiner Deutschlands*.<sup>141</sup> Wilde also served with distinction on numerous boards of several religious, cultural and welfare organisations. His selfless dedication to all of his wider roles in the community is corroborated both by documentation and by the number of acknowledged honorary positions he held.

A valuable insight into Wilde's character and his life in the community can be established from oral history, which additionally provides an important insight into the religious life of the community. A unanimous opinion from all of the interviewees was that the rabbi was very much an intellectual and a very affable, gentle individual. He was very popular and a well-respected public figure in both the Jewish and wider communities as a religious leader, as a citizen of Magdeburg and as a proud German of the Jewish faith.

Wilde also possessed a particularly special place in the community, due to the longevity of his tenure and the generational relationships he nurtured. Sigrid Freeman recalled with great fondness and pride that the rabbi had married her parents, buried her sister, officiated at her husband's *Bar Mitzvah* and given the speech under the *Chuppah* at her wedding.<sup>142</sup> His commanding physical presence, personal dignity and noble demeanour also featured in the memories of interviewees. Both the young Gerhard Levy and Hansgünter Jeruchem also felt, as young children at the time, that the rabbi appeared to them to be like someone out of a biblical story. Gerry Levy recalled:

He was a very fine person, quite liberal; also a very fine-looking person. He had a long, white, flowing beard. I always thought that he looked like G-d!<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>142</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>143</sup> Levy, op. cit., 16 December 1997.

Hans Jensen's vivid recollections are quite similar. He, too, commented with much amusement on the rabbi's 'interesting' beard and that he thought that he looked like 'Moses or one of the prophets.'<sup>144</sup>

Two other sets of memories that are of particular interest are those associated with the rabbi's attitude to his strong German identity and to his own intellectualism, which drew on the Germanic tradition. These impacted on his religiosity and also reflect to a large extent the religiosity of the majority of his congregants. They also provide an insight into the impact he had on his congregation. The majority of the interviewees were teenagers or young adults for the time period under discussion, and all acknowledged that those of their parents' and grandparents' generation held similar, if not the same, views as the rabbi; unlike the majority of the congregation's youth who were in the process of rejecting the German-Jewish identities so valued by the older generation. The majority of the interviewees commented on the essentially German character of the rabbi. Their combined perceptions are well articulated by Hans Jensen, in recalling a conversation he had with the rabbi:

He was another one of those who was more German than the Germans! I'll never forget one statement he made! He said: "I have more in common with a non-Jewish German than with a Yemenite Jew!" It sounds absolutely ghastly today that he could still say such a thing!<sup>145</sup>

Thus, the rabbi and his congregation represented the typical acculturated German-Jewish community. Religious practices were essentially a combination of perceived Germanness and Jewishness. This was interpreted as an important achievement which hailed from the period of the Enlightenment, but even more so from the period after German unification in 1871.

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<sup>144</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid and personal interview with Hans Jensen (recorded), Sydney, 11 July 1999.

Wilde was also widely recognised as a commanding orator, writer and intellectual, not only in Magdeburg, but in the province of Saxony and throughout Germany itself.<sup>146</sup> Interviewees indicated that the rabbi's knowledge about non-Jewish subjects was actually greater than those in Jewish subjects. Other than their experiences with the rabbi in the general community, the majority of the interviewees were taught by the rabbi at the synagogue's *Religionsschule*. Both Hemmi and Sigrid Freeman recalled with great admiration and respect Rabbi Dr Wilde's intellectual capacity. Sigrid Freeman remarked that: '*Er war ein Philosoph!* [He was a philosopher!] He was outstanding!'<sup>147</sup> Hemmi Freeman elaborated on this further:

He was a fantastic speaker; not naturally religious speeches though. In my opinion, Dr Wilde was a very learned man, more in worldly subjects than Jewish. Every one of his sermons was something to sit and listen to. And you could sit for an hour and a half as well! He was colossal!<sup>148</sup>

The rabbi's intellectual vigour did not limit itself to his public positions, both at the synagogue and in the Jewish community as whole. He was also dedicated to meeting his community's every need, informally as well as officially. In retelling the story of a family member, Sigrid Freeman provided a profound insight into this man's commitment:

I had a cousin and she was super, super intelligent and when she was about eight or nine years old or even ten, Rabbi Dr Wilde met her regularly every Sunday morning at the '*Kaiser-Café*', with his paper, just to discuss with her.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Report to the Landesverband der jüdischen Gemeinden in der Russischen Okkupationszone, Berlin from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, 22 January 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>147</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>148</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>149</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998. The fate of this young girl represents in many ways the tragic fate of many German Jews, as expressed further by the interviewee: 'Unfortunately, they went to Palestine in 1933, my uncle, aunt and the three children; and she was so upset at the beginning that she could not study and so on and she

These recollections provide an insight into his character as an individual; into the congregation he served; and the religious and value systems this group of people generally held. Wilde held steadfast in his position and provided generous support of every kind to his fellow Jews as the situation continued to deteriorate. He, like so many of his male congregants after the *Reichskristallnacht*, was incarcerated in Buchenwald Concentration Camp for eleven days, where he attempted to maintain his pastoral role.<sup>150</sup> He continued his religious duties up until his emigration to England in March 1939.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to the rabbi, the synagogue employed a number of staff. From 1933 up until the pogrom, Max (Meier) Teller served the synagogue as cantor and Rudolf Rosenberg as teacher. In addition, Wilde and Teller also performed teaching duties at the synagogue's *Religionsschule*.<sup>152</sup> The synagogue also employed up to three office staff in any given year.<sup>153</sup> In 1933 an organist was employed for the budgetary period and in this same year the sexton of the synagogue, Samuel Nußbaum, retired.<sup>154</sup> In 1933 Max Arensberg was employed as a *Shochet*, a position which became redundant on 21 April 1933 when kosher butchering was prohibited,<sup>155</sup> and upon Nußbaum's retirement he took on the role

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committed suicide, a girl of fourteen or fifteen. They sent her to a school in Jerusalem and she could not interest herself; she couldn't take it somehow.'

<sup>150</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup> Personal file on Rabbi Dr Georg and Mrs Martha Wilde, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 50, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, STAM, op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 33.

of synagogue sexton and was still in this position at the time of the pogrom in November 1938.<sup>156</sup>

A number of the synagogue's activities provide some insight into the religiosity of the community. Sabbath services were held on Friday evenings, Saturday mornings and Saturday evenings. Daily services were also held in the mornings and in the evenings.<sup>157</sup> It appears that this schedule of religious services did not alter before November 1938. The synagogue also published in its newsletter the relevant times for congregants, indicating the commencement of and the end of the Sabbath.<sup>158</sup> It allocated funds each year to operate its mixed choir, to pay for the services of an organist and to conduct religious services exclusively for youth. The synagogue also contributed financially to the maintenance and operation of the *Mikvah* and in order to ensure a *Minyan* for all religious services, paid designated congregants a nominal sum to make up the mandatory quorum. Also of interest, given the synagogue's non-Zionist leanings, was the annual allocation of communal funds to the *Keren Hayesod*<sup>159</sup> and a one-off financial subsidy allocated in 1933 to the *Jüdische Vereinigung 'Achduth'*,<sup>160</sup> one of the *Shtibl* communities in Magdeburg.

From a religious viewpoint, the number of religious services, the importance of a *Minyan* for all these services and the availability of a *Mikvah* all indicate that the synagogue's board wished to provide for congregants who leant more toward

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<sup>156</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>157</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 30. Dezember 1932, Nr. 53, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>158</sup> Mitteilungen der Synagogengemeinde Magdeburg, 1. August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 283.

<sup>159</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, STAM, op. cit.

<sup>160</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, ibid.

Orthodoxy than toward a completely liberal variety of Judaism. In noting the existence and popularity of the mixed choir and the organ, we are provided with evidence of this compromise in religious practice, which is particularly evidenced by the organ. So too, is this lack of rigidity present in the synagogue's position toward Palestine. Although the congregation was not Zionistically inclined, it felt some sense of responsibility to financially support the Zionist cause. This flexibility is perhaps evidenced most strikingly in the synagogue's financial assistance of one of the *Shtiblech*, which gives rise to the notion that relations were not as strained in an official capacity as they were unofficially.

Memories of the synagogue staff were very positive. Repeated compliments about the high quality of the cantor and of the choir were made. Varying attitudes toward religious observance support the view that the synagogue represented a variety of positions, ranging from those members who only attended during religious festivals or for important family life-cycle events to those who attended all services. Representative of the synagogue was the complete range in the degree of observance of *Kashrut* in the home. Interviewees indicated that there were congregants who closed their businesses on the Sabbath and festivals, those who did not and those who had non-Jewish staff handle their affairs. The vast majority of interviewees attended religious services during all the major Jewish festivals. Hemmi and Sigrid Freeman commented on their perception of Judaism at the synagogue:

It was liberal, but not the same as the Liberalism now. Women were seated separately. It was semi-Orthodox. Very much like the Great Synagogue here. In England, Rabbi Dr Wilde was not recognised by the Orthodox rabbinate and was not permitted to officiate at our wedding.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> H. and S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

Not surprisingly, the social element arising from religious events was also of much importance to congregants and the synagogue's importance only increased as the years progressed, due to the disappearance of Jewish public space. Gisela Kent recalled this factor. She recollected her *Bat Mitzvah* in 1935:

In Magdeburg girls had to be aged fifteen. There were about five or six girls together. It was held in the synagogue and a new dress was purchased; and a small party was held afterward. No one came from out of town as my family was very small. Only the family in Magdeburg attended.<sup>162</sup> We didn't have much money for big events; it was a family celebration.<sup>163</sup>

Importantly, all these events were celebrated with vigour, yet in all of the oral history there exists an underlying sadness at the reality of what was happening outside the synagogue and of the somewhat artificial, yet necessary world, that they had been forced to create. Even inside the synagogue the reality could not be escaped, commented Hemmi Freeman:

The time came even when ladies were sitting down below; they had a beautiful gallery. One by one people had already left. So, to make it more homely, the ladies were sitting downstairs in a separate block or something like that.<sup>164</sup>

Oral history concurs that all life-cycle events continued as the synagogue attempted to fulfil the needs of its congregants. For teenagers at that time, the synagogue was of great significance to them, both physically and psychologically, regardless of their attitude to religion. It came to form the basis of their emerging identity as Jews and not as Germans of the Jewish faith.

Other than the confirmation of the physical existence of the two *Shtiblech*, the *Betverein 'Ahawas Reim'* and the *Jüdische Vereinigung 'Ahduth'* and the possibility of the existence of a third *Shtibl*,<sup>165</sup> little more is known about them.

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<sup>162</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>163</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>164</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>165</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

The *Mizrachi* movement also operated a group in Magdeburg and may have possessed its own *Minyan*.<sup>166</sup> The advertised times of the religious services of the *Jüdische Vereinigung 'Ahduth'* indicate that it was an Orthodox congregation providing all of the mandatory religious services for Orthodox Jews over the Sabbath and festivals, in addition to daily morning services.<sup>167</sup> This same congregation also informed the community in its notices of the operating times for men and women for use of the community's *Mikvah*. According to the interviewees, these congregations were not led by rabbis but by laymen.

The majority of the interviewees could not provide details of any aspect of the *Shtiblech*. One interviewee recalled that he had visited two *Shtiblech* and that he remembered them in 1937 and 1938. He recalled attending one *Shtibl* at *Purim* 'because there you could make a noise and they didn't make much of a noise in the *Synagogen-Gemeinde!*'<sup>168</sup> Finally, in a vivid recollection of an incident on a Sabbath involving a young congregant from a *Shtibl*, Inge-Ruth Herrmann provides confirmation of the strict level of Orthodoxy observed by this community, whilst simultaneously highlighting the mutual prejudice of both groups of the Jewish community:

I had friends which were Polish and religious people. My parents had the shop open on Saturday and on the way home from synagogue my mother had asked me to buy some fruit. I was walking with these couple of boys and girls and I bought the fruit and I said to one of the boys: "You know, you should carry that for me!" And he said: "You expect me to carry anything on *Shabbes* [the Sabbath]! How can you carry anything on *Shabbes*!" When my parents came home on Saturday afternoon from the shop, I said to my father: "It's terrible that you got your shop open on Saturday. After all, we are Jewish!" And he listened to it, and then he said: "Sit down my dear child! Now you listen to me. Who told you that?" And I said so-and-so. And he said: "Look, I don't cheat anybody the whole week through. I don't have to go

<sup>166</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 30. Dezember 1932, Nr. 53, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

every *Shabbes*. These people, some of them they cheat, and they have to go on *Shabbes*, so to make sure that G-d forgives them!” I’ll never forget that. He said: “I don’t cheat anybody! I go on *Yontef* [Jewish festivals], but I don’t have to go on *Shabbes* and close my shop!” First he talked very quietly, and the further he got into it, the more upset he got. That gives you an idea of how religious we were!<sup>169</sup>

From this limited evidence it is possible to discern the level of religiosity of the community members who belonged to the *Shtiblech*. The *Shtiblech* were still functioning prior to November 1938 and the level of their Orthodoxy is made clear from the source material. Clearly, however, links existed between the two groups, as indicated by the community’s *Mikvah* and the fact that some members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* did on occasion attend religious services at the *Shtiblech*. The reverse did not occur.

Prior to the pogrom of November 1938, religiosity in its two known forms co-existed. Until this time, however, the two distinct religious variants lived in separate spheres. In a positive view this also confirms the rich diversity which existed in the Jewish community as well as the areas of co-operation, indicating that the lines of division were not as rigid as congregants once thought. Both continued to meet all of the religious duties of their congregants. In the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* the social element of its congregation had always been strong. Yet, it became even stronger as the synagogue became a focal point for congregants to meet as their social ostracism in the city increased. For a large number of community members this also led to a rich, if not forced, (re-)discovery of their Jewish identities. In this respect, it can be argued that one of the strengths of the entire community framework in learning how to function and meet the needs of its members lay in its effective structures and its communal and

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<sup>169</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

religious leadership. The synagogues played effective roles both within their pastoral role and beyond this as a de-facto ‘one-stop-shop.’ They played a vital role in developing strategies of communal defence and had thus moved beyond their traditional religious roles and responsibilities.

### **Strategies of Communal Defence and Survival**

On a communal level, strategies of defence and survival in the face of increasing hostility were achieved in four separate communal arenas: the *Centralverein* (CV),<sup>170</sup> the religious communities, the social welfare organisations and organisations acting independently.

Prior to the pogrom of November 1938, the legal defence of the community and its members was largely represented by the CV, the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens – Landesverband Provinz Sachsen, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg*.<sup>171</sup> Much of this branch’s legal affairs were attended to by the CV’s regional office in Leipzig, the *Landesverband Mitteldeutschland des Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*. Particularly after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, the CV also assisted community members to adapt to new situations. The main task of developing appropriate strategies to

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<sup>170</sup> See Barkai, “*Wehr Dich!*” *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C. V.) 1893–1938*, op. cit.

<sup>171</sup> An extensive literature exists on the roles, activities and position of the CV from 1933 until 1938. See Konrad Kwiet and Helmut Eschwege, *Selbstbehauptung und Widerstand: Deutsche Juden im Kampf um Existenz und Menschenwürde 1933–1945* Hamburg: Christians-Verlag, 1984; Jürgen Matthäus, “Kampf ohne Verbündete. Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens 1933–1938,” *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 1999, pp. 248–277; and Arnold Paucker and Konrad Kwiet, “Jewish Leadership and Jewish Resistance,” in David Bankier, ed., *Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism: German Society and the Persecution of the Jews, 1933–1941* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and the Leo Baeck Institute, Jerusalem in association with Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 371–394.

ensure physical survival in the city fell to both the religious congregations and to the community's social welfare organisations, which combined to provide a varied array of social welfare programs. The final group to act in the practical defence of the community, in addition to attempting to ensure the survival of Jewish life in Magdeburg, was a number of creative and resourceful organisations acting independently as the need arose. The most notable of these were the Zionist organisations, whose primary strategy for survival was preparation for emigration. In addition to this, all communal organisations and institutions developed and implemented their own strategies on an independent basis, as previously discussed in this chapter.

Kurt Sabatzky was the legal representative of the CV for Saxony and was based in Leipzig from 1933 until 1938.<sup>172</sup> After the *Reichskristallnacht* he was imprisoned in Buchenwald Concentration Camp and later emigrated to England in 1939.<sup>173</sup> The body of representatives of the CV's branch in Magdeburg underwent numerous changes for the period,<sup>174</sup> whilst the presidency appears to have remained under Dr Ernst Merzbach.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Prior to his position in Leipzig, he had occupied the same post in East Prussia and was based in Königsberg from 1923 until 1933. For a detailed account of Sabatzky's career in Königsberg during the years of the Weimar Republic see Sabine Thiem, "Kurt Sabatzky: The C. V. Syndikus of the Jewish Community in Königsberg during the Weimar Republic," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XLIV, 1999, pp. 191–204.

<sup>173</sup> In 1932 the Nazis also attempted to assassinate him. See Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBI NY, p. 19. An abridged and edited version of this memoir was also reproduced in Monika Richarz, ed., *Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland, Volume 3, Selbstzeugnisse zur Sozialgeschichte 1918–1945* Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1982, pp. 292–300.

<sup>174</sup> Correspondence from the branch office of the CV in Magdeburg, 2 December 1933 – 13 July 1937, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit.

<sup>175</sup> Guido Heinrich and Günter Schandera, eds., *Magdeburger Biographisches Lexikon 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* Magdeburg: Scriptorum Verlag, 2002, p. 461.

During his tenure in Leipzig, Sabatzky was responsible for the CV's branch in Magdeburg. From the very inception of the Nazi regime, Magdeburg was particularly antisemitic on all fronts. Sabatzky, very early in his memoirs, makes the comment that: 'Magdeburg as a city very quickly became the most unpleasant of places for Jews in my region.'<sup>176</sup> Jewish individuals, organisations and institutions sought both counsel and representation from the CV.

The CV dealt with a number of key areas. At the national level it sought to provide effective dissemination of important information between its central office in Berlin and its regional and branch offices. The second area involved the Magdeburg branch registering and conveying to its regional office all antisemitic incidents. It played a leading role in acting on behalf of the community and of individuals when dealing with the local authorities regarding antisemitic activities. The CV also played a role in the defence of community members in assisting with legal counsel for those members who had been charged for criminal offences; most of which had been invented. Examples of these include the Fliess<sup>177</sup> and Schmulewitz trials in 1936.<sup>178</sup> The final area of the CV's brief was the area of general communication with the local authorities when the authorities required information or action on an issue pertaining to the Jewish community. This role arguably represented both the defence of community interests in addition to ensuring its survival.

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<sup>176</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>177</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 24 August 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 355.

<sup>178</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 22 May 1936, *ibid.*, p. 347.

Regular meetings of the Magdeburg branch were held at the *B'nai B'rith* Lodge and attracted large numbers.<sup>179</sup> The meetings were often attended by representatives from the CV's regional office in Leipzig. Members were informed of the situation for Jews nationally, followed by regional and branch reports. Included in these local reports were details on progress with the relevant authorities on antisemitic incidents already registered and a news briefing on issues currently affecting Jews locally, including antisemitic incidents, criminal prosecutions<sup>180</sup> and 'aryanisations' of local Jewish businesses.<sup>181</sup> In order to maintain constant vigilance and effective management in the defence of the communities, regional offices forwarded regular and detailed reports of all activities to the CV's head office in Berlin, particularly after they had visited communities in their jurisdiction.<sup>182</sup>

The Magdeburg branch of the CV met with limited success and always pursued each matter through the appropriate legal and governmental channels. Ironically, in the majority of the dealings between the CV and both governmental and Gestapo officials in Magdeburg, the atmosphere was very businesslike. Sabatzky, on one occasion, remarked after one particular meeting with the chief of the Gestapo in Magdeburg, Dr Vitzdamm, and Police Inspector Königshaus: 'Both officers behaved in a very polite way.'<sup>183</sup> Procedurally, once an incident or issue

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<sup>179</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 2 December 1933, Collection 0.51.OSO, File 243, YVA, pp. 3–4.

<sup>180</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 24 August 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMMA, op. cit., p. 334.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., pp. 398–399.

<sup>183</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 7 August 1935, ibid., p. 397.

was made known to the CV, then it acted on it immediately. If more senior advice was required, the Leipzig and/or Berlin offices were consulted.

Antisemitic incidents which were registered and acted upon include the following: complaints made that at local gatherings of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) and SA (*Sturmabteilung*) in December 1933 that lists of Jewish doctors were being read out with a view to incitement;<sup>184</sup> that masses of antisemitic signage appeared throughout the city including behind windows,<sup>185</sup> in shops and in restaurants; the incidence of the publication and distribution of boycott lists and of tens of thousands of copies of a directory, with a caricatured Jew pictured on its cover, entitled *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!* [*Magdeburg's Jews Introduce Themselves!*] detailing the names, addresses and professions of all Jews in the city;<sup>186</sup> complaints concerning the public singing of defamatory, antisemitic songs; notification concerning the introduction of antisemitic signage to be displayed on trams from 31 August 1935;<sup>187</sup> and notification that Jews would be forbidden from visiting the city's archive, libraries, and bookshops and requested not to use the city's public baths from 8 September 1935.<sup>188</sup>

The majority of complaints lodged by the CV to the authorities took time to resolve, seldom with success. Much of the limited success was confined to the

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<sup>184</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 2 December 1933, Collection 0.51.OSO, File 243, YVA, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

<sup>185</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig the CV and the Magdeburg branch of the CV, discussing antisemitic signage, 30 January 1934 and 2 July 1934, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 430–431.

<sup>186</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the Gestapa in Magdeburg, complaining about boycott lists and the publication *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 13 February 1935, *ibid.*, pp. 428–429.

<sup>187</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, concerning the introduction of antisemitic signage on Magdeburg trams, 31 August 1935, *ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>188</sup> Report from the Magdeburg City Press Office, 8 September 1935, *ibid.*, p. 380.

temporary removal of antisemitic signage and a pause in the public singing of defamatory songs. In the early years of the Nazi regime *Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter* Krause in Magdeburg, together with the mayor, were responsible for ensuring that all shops, pharmacies and restaurants displayed metal antisemitic signs. Simultaneously, the mayor also sanctioned the same signs for trams and Magdeburg was the first and only city in Germany to do so. These measures were sanctioned by *Gauleiter* Loeper, a virulent antisemite based in Dessau.<sup>189</sup>

This small selection of complaints to which the CV attended demonstrates the escalation in the level of seriousness of antisemitic activity as the years progressed. As the situation deteriorated after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, the CV developed strategies for physical survival. One example of this surrounded the activity of shopping. When the issue of the dangerous nature of shopping in Magdeburg began to recur constantly, the CV commenced instructing community members to only shop at certain Jewish and non-Jewish shops at particular times on particular days.<sup>190</sup>

The final area of the CV's activities concerned general communication with the local authorities when the authorities required information or action on an issue pertaining to the Jewish community. This provides evidence indicating the level of its importance in its representation of the Jewish community to the local authorities. Regular counsel was sought from the CV's head office in Berlin, particularly with regard to serious matters. An example of this occurred when the Magdeburg Gestapa requested a comprehensive list of all members of the Jewish

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<sup>189</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., pp. 25–26.

<sup>190</sup> Correspondence to the regional office of the CV in Königsberg, 28 August 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 101, File 721-1-2335, USHMMA, p. 79.

community in Magdeburg from the local branch of the CV in April 1935. Dr Merzbach complied with the request, but sought advice from the Berlin office.<sup>191</sup>

The local CV was also responsible for conveying essential information from Nazi authorities to community members. An example of this was in May 1936 when community members were informed that henceforth Jews in Magdeburg would only be issued with documentation permitting them to travel within Germany, but that in exceptional circumstances that they could be issued with passports allowing them to travel abroad within a limited time.<sup>192</sup> Thus, in both of these instances the dual role of the CV can be assessed. Whilst defending and attempting to ensure the survival of the community, it also had to act on the direction of the authorities and comply with all requests.

When matters concerning the city's administration and the Jewish community arose, the CV was also involved in resolving issues. An example of this occurred in January 1936 when a disagreement developed between the city council, the city's crematorium and the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. The matter concerned the cremation of a Jewish dissident, who was not a member of the Jewish community. The crematorium and the city council requested the ashes of the deceased be buried in the Jewish cemetery. The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* objected, pointing to the Jewish ban on cremation and the fact that the deceased had cut all ties with Judaism. The matter was resolved when the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* agreed to the

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<sup>191</sup> Correspondence between the Magdeburg branch of the CV and the head office of the CV in Berlin, 9 April 1935 – 15 April 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 424–426.

<sup>192</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 22 May 1936, *ibid.*, p. 341.

request and the remains were interred.<sup>193</sup> These matters indicate that the administrative role of the local branch of the CV was very diverse. This particular incident also highlights how precarious and difficult its tasks could be. The CV sought to defend Jewish interests, but also had to comply with the demands of the Nazi authorities.

The task of developing strategies to ensure physical survival fell largely to both the religious congregations and the community's social welfare organisations. Both groups worked closely together in providing a variety of welfare programs as well as providing practical and material support. Both the roles and the priorities of these groups would change as the situation for Jews in the city deteriorated.

The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* in its budgets<sup>194</sup> for the years from and including 1933–1937 allocated on average approximately 10% of its funds to social welfare. This figure supported welfare in its own congregation, in addition to its financial contribution to the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*. It also provided practical assistance in its newsletters, advertising requests for accommodation, clothing and furnishings. In August 1935 the advertisements for the latter were marked 'urgent,' indicating the level of impoverishment of some community members.<sup>195</sup> Former members of the community also recall Rabbi Dr Wilde in his sermons encouraging congregants to

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<sup>193</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, concerning the Magdeburg branch of the CV, 18 January 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 354.

<sup>194</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, STAM, op. cit.

<sup>195</sup> Mitteilungen der Synagogengemeinde Magdeburg, 1. August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 283.

give generously to the *Jüdische Winterhilfe*.<sup>196</sup> It cannot be established what relief the *Shtiblech* were able to offer other than that they definitely must have had links with the *Verband ostjüdischer Organisationen Magdeburgs*.<sup>197</sup>

Given the small size of the community, the majority of the social welfare programs operated directly out of the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege*,<sup>198</sup> under the presidency of Rabbi Dr Wilde. To a limited degree it also provided temporary financial relief. However, once the *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg* was founded on 28 March 1934 to meet the growing financial needs of members, this role declined.<sup>199</sup>

For the entire period under discussion, the areas of emigration, immigration, financial assistance to needy members and accommodation feature as ongoing matters. However, for particular periods, certain priorities did emerge. For the period from and including 1933 until the middle of 1937 the emphasis was clearly placed on employment and retraining. The employment market was constantly assessed and reported on. Advertisements were placed in the community for positions vacant. Employment opportunities as far away as Holland and Lithuania<sup>200</sup> were advertised in addition to positions where the applicant could 'not possess a pronounced Jewish appearance.'<sup>201</sup> Young Jews were also sent to

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<sup>196</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>197</sup> *Jüdisches Wochenblatt für Magdeburg und Umgegend*, 16. Dezember 1932, Nr. 51, 7. Jahrgang, ASGM, op. cit., p. 328. This organisation was listed in the public notices of this newsletter. No other archival material detailing this organisation has been located.

<sup>198</sup> This organisation was a subsidiary of the national organisation the Zentralwohlfahrtstelle der deutschen Juden.

<sup>199</sup> *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg*, Collection JM, File 11266.6, YVA, op. cit., pp. 1–4.

<sup>200</sup> Correspondence from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg, 6 March 1934, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>201</sup> Betr. Buchhalterinnenstelle, 26. März 1935, *ibid.*, p. 142.

*Hachsharah* camps. In March 1934 approximately forty young people were involved in agricultural courses on farms outside the city.<sup>202</sup> By the middle of 1935 employment opportunities became very focused on school leavers and youth.<sup>203</sup> In addition, considerable energies were directed to the spiritual and cultural life of the community.<sup>204</sup>

From the middle of 1937 onwards, the emigration of children and youth to foreign countries had become an additional priority. Announcements and advertisements were placed in the community requesting interested parties to complete the application forms and prepare themselves for the procedures to follow. The recorded destinations were the United States of America (USA) and England; this also included the entire British Empire. Of note were some requests from Australia and New Zealand that only '*Mischlinge*' be considered.<sup>205</sup>

Clearly, both the religious congregations and the welfare agencies sought, particularly in the initial years of the Nazi regime, to equip members of the community with long-term strategies that would assist them in adjusting to their changed circumstances, and not just with physical needs and financial assistance. This was primarily undertaken in the areas of employment and retraining. However, once the full ramifications of the Nuremberg Race Laws were felt, these

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<sup>202</sup> Protokoll der Hauptversammlung des Provinzialverbandes für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg, 11. März 1934, ALJGSA, p. 2.

<sup>203</sup> Correspondence from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg, 6 March 1934, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., pp. 102–118.

<sup>204</sup> Questionnaire on the priorities of the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt and the Synagogen-Gemeinden-Verband der Provinz Sachsen, 5 May 1935, ALJGSA.

<sup>205</sup> Correspondence from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg, 26 July 1937 – 6 May 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., pp. 270–309. This subject is further explored in greater detail in Chapter Five.

strategies were no longer deemed long-term solutions. This becomes clear with the high priority given to sending children and youth out of Germany, particularly from 1937. The Zionist organisations continued to focus on emigration to Palestine.

The final group to act in the practical defence of the community and to attempt to ensure the survival of Jewish life was a number of organisations which attempted to find solutions to their own problems. A number of communal organisations that achieved this have previously been overviewed in this chapter. Further to this, individuals who acted in this same manner will be explored in the ensuing chapters, which incorporate their personal stories.

One such example of this, detailing both the efforts of Jewish organisations and an individual can be found in the following two related incidents. The first involved *Hechaluz*, the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, the Magdeburg-Anhalt branch of the *Nationalsozialistische Handwerks-, und Gewerbe-Organisation* (NS-HAGO) of the Nazi Party and the Magdeburg City Mission of the Lutheran Church. Prior to 1933 both *Hechaluz* and the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* had hired the Grotian Steinweg Hall in the Lutheran Church's City Mission for functions. In March 1935 a war of words and paper ensued between the Lutheran Church's Bishop Peter and the *Kreisamtsleiter* of the NS-HAGO in Magdeburg-Anhalt. On 8 March 1935, the Nazi Party learned that Jewish functions were still taking place at that hall. A letter was sent to Bishop Peter, requesting that Jews be forbidden from using the hall. The director of the City Mission, Pastor W. Lüdecke, together with the bishop, replied that the local Gestapo and the city authorities had granted permission for such events under certain provisions back in early 1933. Despite the pressure and abusive tone and content of the correspondence from the NS-

HAGO's *Kreisamtsleiter*, neither the Jewish community nor the Lutheran Church would bow to pressure. By the end of March the matter had still not been resolved.<sup>206</sup> The Jewish parties were determined to defend their rights, even though quite clearly this was a dangerous action. The very fact that the Jewish community was still using non-Jewish premises is also evidence of the community's determination not to isolate itself unnecessarily.

The second incident ensued as a result of that previously discussed. It involved Walter Heinemann of the *Palästina-Amt Berlin, Zweigstelle Magdeburg* and Pastor W. Lüdecke. On hearing of the events in March over the use of the hall, Heinemann possibly felt that the pastor may have been sympathetic to the Jewish cause. As a result, on 21 March 1935 Heinemann wrote a very cordial, detailed letter introducing himself and the role that Zionism had to play for German Jewry and its place in Nazi ideology.<sup>207</sup> This second incident further demonstrates the initiative and the creative resilience of individuals acting in both their personal and professional capacity, as the community attempted to defend itself and secure its survival.

In assessing the organisations that served to both defend the community and provide it with strategies for survival, the conclusions and observations that have been drawn for the previously discussed structures in the Jewish community appear equally as true here. The CV played a pivotal role in legally representing and defending the community in an effort to secure Jewish existence. Its roles and

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<sup>206</sup> Correspondence concerning the use of the Grotian Steinweg Hall in the Lutheran Church's City Mission in Magdeburg, 8 March 1935 – 29 March 1935, Bestand Rep. A, Spec. K, Signatur Nr. 2429, AKPS, op. cit.

<sup>207</sup> Correspondence from Walter Heinemann to Pastor W. Lüdecke, 21 March 1935, *ibid.*

responsibilities continually increased in burden, particularly after the Nuremberg Laws. In observing the activities of the organisations involved in welfare in the city, what becomes clear is the transition from attempting to remodel life in Germany under the new conditions to the realisation that this was not possible. This is made clear in the strategies of all organisations, with the exception of the Zionist organisations. The main focus up until the middle of 1937 remained adapting to the new 'pre-emancipation' conditions of discrimination and defamation. This is most obvious in the area of employment and retraining. This also found expression in the cultural and educational domains. The reality and the ramifications of the Nuremberg Laws appear to have caught up with the community from the middle of 1937, when the emigration of children and youth became a priority. This marked the period when Jews began to lose hope and reassessed their situation. The destruction of the very foundations of Jewish existence in Magdeburg surrounded them. For a great number of them, one of the key issues that had brought them to this realisation was the perceived lack of a sustainable financial future, as economic strangulation had reduced them to impoverishment by this stage.

## Chapter Two: The Destruction of Jewish Livelihoods, 1933–1938

### From Boycott to Expropriation

For the period from 1933 until the pogrom in November 1938, the Jews of Magdeburg experienced the same economic strangulation and social isolation as their co-religionists did elsewhere in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The destruction of the economic life of its Jewish community was attended to zealously by both the Nazi Party and the local authorities with the assistance of the city's citizenry.

The experiences of individuals varied for a number of reasons. Business people and those self-employed often did not feel the effects as immediately as those who were salaried or civil servants or those professionals whose livelihoods depended on governmental certification. Self-employed individuals operating businesses not requiring professional certification could still exert some influence over their business lives, even as the situation grew progressively worse with constant defamations, boycotts and the eventual threat of looming 'aryanisation.' This was not the case for salaried individuals and most professionals, the majority of whom were forced to retrain or were reduced to impoverishment in the early years of the regime after having been dismissed or forced into retirement. In

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<sup>1</sup> In the most thorough and recent study of the processes and practices of the economic exclusion of the Jews in Germany, Frank Bajohr has used the Jewish community of Hamburg as a case study. In 1933 Hamburg's Jewish community was the fourth-largest in Germany, with a population of 16,885 or 1.5% of the city's population and was also one of the nation's most affluent. Whilst it neither compares numerically, nor socio-economically to Magdeburg, Bajohr's study provides a parallel to the application of the policies of 'aryanisation.' See Frank Bajohr, *'Aryanization' in Hamburg: The Economic Exclusion of Jews and the Confiscation of Their Property in Nazi Germany, 1933–1945* New York: Berghahn Books, 2002.

Magdeburg prominent Jews in the community were also pursued and ruined through show trials and media publicity.<sup>2</sup>

After the initial waves of boycotts in 1933, the majority of the city's Jewish population attempted to adjust to their changed circumstances. From 1934 until 1937 the majority of the population had adapted, however grave their financial circumstances had become. This adaptation was assisted by a number of factors, including the hope that the regime was a temporary aberration and exemptions from some antisemitic laws. Nevertheless, the situation worsened noticeably after the Nuremberg Laws. Approximately one third of Magdeburg's Jews either relocated or emigrated during the period from 1933 until the middle of 1937.

By the spring of 1938 all preparations for the final exclusion of the Jews from the economy had been completed.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, the Jews of Magdeburg continued as before, even though economic disenfranchisement had gathered much legislative momentum. It was not until the pogrom of the *Reichskristallnacht* that the illusion German Jewry had held was completely shattered.

Magdeburg was an industrialised, working-class city. Support for socialism and communism was strong prior to 1933.<sup>4</sup> Gerry Levy recalled with some irony that after the Nazis assumed power, an expression concerning the change in public support circulated throughout the city: '*Innen rot, außen braun – Wie ein Steak!*' ['Red on the inside, brown on the outside – just like a steak!']<sup>5</sup> The political metamorphosis expressed in this phrase provides an insight into the population's adoption of official antisemitism, as the overwhelming majority of interviewees

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<sup>2</sup> This subject, together with examples, will be discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>3</sup> Avraham Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of German Jews, 1933–1943* Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989, pp. 116–117.

<sup>4</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence from Gerry Levy AM to the author, 10 January 2002.

confirmed that prior to 1933, their experiences of antisemitic behaviour had been minimal.

The Jews possessed a high profile in the economic affairs of Magdeburg. Many had actively contributed to the city's administrative and commercial life. Many business people were involved in trade and industry, owned and/or operated shops, with a number also owning and operating department stores, banks and factories. In 1933, the city counted 422 Jewish business people and traders, the majority of whom operated establishments in the city centre.<sup>6</sup> Jewish financial institutions and banks such as '*Nußbaum und Rotschild*', '*Meyer und Blumenthal*', '*Rubens*' and '*Salomon*' were prominent features of the city's commercial landscape. Jewish civil servants were also well represented. The city possessed three Jewish pharmacists, at least fifty medical practitioners and twenty-nine solicitors.<sup>7</sup>

When the Nazis came to power there was much uncertainty in the Jewish community. Gisela Kent recalled that at election time in 1932 the general feeling in the community was that Hitler did not have a political future. However, once Hitler became *Reich* Chancellor, uneasiness ensued:

And at first nobody knew what was going to happen, and then we heard on the radio almost straight away that all the 'Levys,' the 'Davids' and the 'Rosenbergs' were afraid of what was going to happen to them. This was done by ordinary radio announcers. This was almost from the beginning; in Magdeburg.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 188. These businesses included: 'Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch' located on the Breiter Weg; 'Lange und Münzer' on the Alter Markt; 'Kaufhaus Organek' in Halberstädter Straße; 'Kaufhaus Karfiol' in Jakobstraße; 'Kaufhaus Karliner' in Große Diesdorfer Straße; 'Kaufhaus Litmanowitz' in Lübecker Straße; 'Kaufhaus Merkur' on the Breiter Weg; 'Kaufhaus Diskret' in Alte Ulrichstraße; 'Lederwarengeschäft Freiberg' on the Breiter Weg; and 'Haushaltwarengeschäft Seelenfreund' on the Ratswaageplatz.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Personal interview with Gisela Kent (recorded), Sydney, 16 January 1998.

The references to these three surnames were meant to target the Jewish community. Jews had good reason to feel uneasy, as both the newly appointed Nazi officials for the local and regional administration, together with the city's mayor, were virulent antisemites. Kurt Sabatzky, head of the *Centralverein* (CV) in Leipzig, described Rudolf Krause, the Nazi Party's *Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter* for Magdeburg as 'an especially unpleasant devourer of Jews.'<sup>9</sup>

When the boycott of 1 April 1933 took place, Jewish shops in Magdeburg were forced to close. Customers and passers-by were photographed and molested by the *Sturmabteilung* (SA). Above all, much curiosity was displayed on the part of the city's citizenry. As in other parts of Germany, the boycott was not as successful as the most radical elements of the Nazi Party had anticipated. The majority of interviewees recalled the boycott, a number experiencing it themselves. Otto and Regina Herrmann, who lived in Wolmirstedt bei Magdeburg, owned and operated three separate businesses: a manchester shop in Wolmirstedt, which included men's and ladies' wear, a woollen goods shop in Magdeburg and an apron factory in Magdeburg, which Otto Herrmann held in partnership with a non-Jew, Kurt Jäger. Jewish shop owners reacted with fear and avoided contact with non-Jews during the boycott. However, in a small town such as Wolmirstedt, where everyone knew one another and where the Herrmann family was well known and respected, their shop was not forced to close, even

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<sup>9</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Magdeburg selbst wurde sehr bald der unangenehmste Platz für die Juden in meinem Bezirk. Hier saß der Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter Krause, der neben dem Gauleiter Loeper in Dessau, ein ganz besonders unangenehmer Judenfresser war.'

though a local member of the SA stood at the entrance to the shop with antisemitic signage. The Herrmanns' daughter recalled the day very well:

We had a young fellow standing outside our place and I had known him for donkey's years. I said to him: "What the hell are you doing here?" He said: "Look Inge, I got told I have to stand here. I'm sorry. I know you, I know your parents. I don't want to, but I have to." That day we had a woman come into the shop and she said to my mother: "Mrs Herrmann would you please make a parcel this size, so that people think I buy a lot and she walked out with this big parcel with one reel of cotton in it!"<sup>10</sup>

For the Herrmanns this display of support was relatively short-lived and, as one of only three Jewish families in Wolmirstedt,<sup>11</sup> their financial ruin occurred very early. They were forced to move to Magdeburg on 1 October 1935 after their business had been 'aryanised.'<sup>12</sup> Prior to the 'aryanisation,' the business in Wolmirstedt carried on as normally as could be expected, not unlike the majority of Jewish-owned businesses in Magdeburg.

Sigrid Freeman also recalled the antisemitic propaganda and particularly the antisemitic signage leading up to and including the actual boycott of 1 April 1933.<sup>13</sup> Hemmi Freeman commented on what he perceived as a transition period for both Jews and non-Jews:

My parents still had the business in 1933. The people still came in and they were very friendly. They knew they were going into a Jewish shop until gradually they were getting scared to go into a Jewish shop. I would say that people realised that the Nazis have come to stay.<sup>14</sup>

This feeling of the Nazis 'coming to stay' is further confirmed by the fact that Freeman's parents, neither of whom were Zionists, agreed to allow his three older

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<sup>10</sup> Poppert, *op. cit.*, 9 January 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Personal interview with Rosemarie Austinat (recorded), Wolmirstedt, 29 January 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Personal file on the Herrmann family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 20, ASGM.

<sup>13</sup> S. Freeman, *op. cit.*, 13 May 1998.

<sup>14</sup> H. Freeman, *op. cit.*, 13 May 1998.

siblings to emigrate to Palestine as '*Kapitalisten*'<sup>15</sup> in 1933. Even at this early stage of the regime, some Jews were already making fiscal preparations in the event that they would have to leave Germany. In this case, Hemmi Freeman's siblings wished to leave Germany. However, the financial concern was equally as important for his parents:

My parents felt that there was no future, although they didn't leave the country at that stage. But they felt there was no future in business. We could see less customers coming into the shop. They were afraid to be recognised or something like this. That was in 1933 or early 1934. At that time anyone who went to Palestine had to have £1,000. So they sent off my two brothers and my sister with £1,000 each. That was one way of getting some money out of the country. My parents were not happy about them leaving, obviously, but felt it was eventually the solution. Although they [that is, the parents] didn't go themselves, they visited them twice. They went to Palestine in 1935 or 1936 and came back and were disappointed from their point of view [with the notion of emigrating there themselves].<sup>16</sup>

The overwhelming sentiment of interviewees concerning the situation in 1933 was one of initial fear and uncertainty owing to the change of power, coupled with the steady antisemitic rhetoric, signage and boycotts that made both business and life in general very difficult and demoralising. As the Freeman story illustrated, a minority commenced moving capital out of Germany, should the situation escalate further. The situation for Jews was problematic on two fronts. It meant that conducting business became increasingly difficult. In addition, everyday life also became more problematic, as Jews found it steadily more difficult to shop in non-Jewish establishments.

From 1934 the economic picture continued to deteriorate at a steady pace.

Jewish business owners attempted to survive financially and to cope with the fact

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<sup>15</sup> According to the regulations of the British Mandatory government for Palestine, there were annual immigration quotas for Jews without means; so-called capitalists, who had the sum of at least £1,000 Palestine (approximately RM 15,000 at the time) in their possession, were issued a 'Capitalist Immigration Certificate'. This certificate enabled them to immigrate without any restrictions.

<sup>16</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

that the number of shops willing to serve Jewish clientele had shrunk. This situation was due in no small part to the local press and to the barrage of antisemitic signage. In particular, *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*<sup>17</sup> dedicated itself to the ongoing defamation of the Jews. Antisemitic signage featured across the city prolifically in a variety of forms. Signage was either designed to promote the boycott of Jewish businesses or to discourage Jews from shopping at non-Jewish venues. Signs ranged from small metal plates affixed to doors or windows, to full-size posters emblazoned on shop fronts or even to clear transparencies displayed on glass display windows.<sup>18</sup> Typical signs bore such captions as:

‘Germans! Take thought! Shop no more in Jewish shops!’<sup>19</sup>  
 ‘Jews are not welcome here!’<sup>20</sup>  
 ‘Jews will not be served here!’<sup>21</sup>  
 ‘Whoever buys from a Jew is a traitor of the people!’<sup>22</sup>

Further to this, the publication and distribution of tens of thousands of copies of the booklet *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!* in February 1935<sup>23</sup> led to an

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<sup>17</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>18</sup> See Jürgen Matthäus, “Antisemitic Symbolism in early Nazi Germany, 1933–1935,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XLV, 2000, pp. 183–204.

<sup>19</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig concerning antisemitic signage in Magdeburg, 30 January 1934, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 431. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Deutscher besinne Dich! Kaufe nicht mehr in jüdischen Geschäften!’

<sup>20</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, concerning the introduction of antisemitic signage on Magdeburg trams, 31 August 1935, *ibid.*, p. 392. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Hier sind Juden unerwünscht!’

<sup>21</sup> Correspondence to the regional office of the CV in Königsberg concerning antisemitic signage in Magdeburg, 28 August 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 101, File 721-1-2335, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 79. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Juden werden hier nicht bedient!’

<sup>22</sup> Correspondence from regional office of the CV in Leipzig, concerning antisemitic signage in Magdeburg, 4 January 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 361. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Wer beim Juden kauft, ist ein Volksverräter!’

<sup>23</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the Gestapa in Magdeburg, complaining about boycott lists and the publication *Magdeburgs Juden*

increase in boycotts and antisemitic activity.<sup>24</sup> This pocket-sized A to Z directory, complete with inserted updates, provided Magdeburg citizenry with the names, addresses and types of businesses and professions of every Jew; including non-Jews with Jewish spouses.

Gisela Kent commented on the significance of the signage and how Jews reacted to it:

The signs appeared almost immediately. Some people put them at the top of the door; some people put them at the bottom of the door! And it was said to us: “Don’t worry about it; we have to put them on.” So, we still shopped there; not all shops. Some shops had: “*Juden sind hier unerwünscht!*” [“Jews are not welcome here!”], and we still went in, but if it had: “*Juden ist der Zutritt verboten!*” [“Entrance is forbidden to Jews!”], we did not go in. So, we just made that distinction, but you had to go into those shops because they all mattered. It didn’t matter if it was a laundry or a bakery, they all had these signs up. So, unless you wanted to starve, you had to go in! They could see that we were Jewish and they allowed us to go in. Inside the shops they ignored us. I am talking about the early years though.<sup>25</sup>

Hemmi Freeman’s recollections of shopping were similar and his memories also confirm the hostility to Jews expressed by some shopkeepers.<sup>26</sup> Interviewees recalled their parents sending them as children to purchase groceries, as this was less conspicuous, and of the common occurrence of being ‘in the city when there was an *‘Aktion’* [premeditated attack on Jewish premises], when shops would be smeared with the word “Jews!”<sup>27</sup> By the time the Nuremberg Laws were introduced in September 1935 the financial situation for Jewish businesses had deteriorated seriously, as had the situation for Jews attempting to purchase their

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*stellen sich vor!*, 13 February 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 428–429.

<sup>24</sup> Correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>25</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>26</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>27</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

day-to-day goods and services. The deterioration in the ongoing viability of Jewish businesses after September 1935 relates directly to their legal disenfranchisement, and this position is confirmed by all of the interviewees. In this period through to 1938, in addition to the effects of ongoing boycotts and defamatory media campaigns, Jews were particularly vulnerable due to their lack of legal status. Both private citizens and governmental authorities used this situation to their own advantage. These actions ranged from individual citizens swindling Jews or threatening them with legal action over invented crimes, to governmental authorities acting as agitators and/or ordering their staff to boycott Jewish shops and services provided by Jewish professionals.

This feeling of absolute vulnerability is exemplified in the following recollection detailing events after the ‘aryanisation’ of the Herrmann family’s business in Wolmirstedt, when they were forced to move to Magdeburg in October 1935:

They offered my father next to nothing, but we had to go. The day we moved, the arrangement had been made for the furniture to go to Magdeburg. Anyhow, the arrangement had been made for how much it would be to move and when we got to Magdeburg, outside the place the fellow said: “You either pay double or I don’t unload the furniture!” So what could my father do? He had to pay double and he had a heart attack afterwards!<sup>28</sup>

The family’s situation was further exacerbated when Herrmann lost his share of his business partnership with a non-Jew in an apron factory, as his daughter related:

My father had a factory in Magdeburg. That was separate. There he had a partner, who eventually said to him: “You bloody Jew! Get out!” It was called ‘*Herrmann und Jäger GmbH*’ [‘Herrmann and Jäger Pty. Ltd.’]. And he just kicked him out and he didn’t get a penny!<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

The exact details of these events are not documented, but the business partnership was dissolved and 'aryanised' in February 1936. Otto Herrmann did not receive any compensation for his share of the business.<sup>30</sup>

Even more potentially dangerous, but no less financially crippling, was the possibility of non-Jews accusing Jews of invented crimes to achieve financial gain or simply to exert control and indulge in antisemitism. An incident of this type occurred at Jakob Wurmser's shoe repair business '*Elsaß*' in 1937, as his daughter recalled:

He was in the shop one day and a woman came in, saying that she bought a new pair of shoes and that they were too tight for her and could he widen them. He tried the shoe on her foot and one of the workers blackmailed him. He was in the [Nazi] Party, so was his father and father-in-law; and they accused him of '*Rassenschande*' ['Race Defilement']. He later on brought in another Party guy, saying: "You sell him the business!" What could my father do, he sold it. All he wanted then was to go! They could say anything! You were completely in their power. I know a lot of people were arrested for a lot of things which never really happened!<sup>31</sup>

On a much smaller scale, but also indicative of this vulnerability and the levels to which Jewish businesses were pursued were two recorded incidents that occurred at the stationery shop of 'L. Sperling & Co.'. This company was a household name in Magdeburg, operating a large stationery shop, in addition to its publishing house and book bindery. The first incident involved a complaint made on 2 February 1934 that a female apprentice was being made to undertake unpaid overtime. In order to verify and pursue this matter, an SA officer was instructed to stand watch outside the premises to monitor when the complainant finished work

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<sup>30</sup> Correspondence from the State Government of Saxony-Anhalt to the United Restitution Organisation, Frankfurt am Main, 8 October 2002, Private Archive of I. Poppert.

<sup>31</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

each day and report his findings.<sup>32</sup> The second incident commenced with a complaint made on 21 July 1938, concerning a variety of alleged breaches of both health and building regulations at the company's premises at *Otto-von-Guericke-Straße* 16. The chief concern was that the 'Jewish company' employed approximately forty-nine '*Volksgenossen*,' and the constant insinuation in the correspondence was that as a Jewish enterprise its standards of hygiene were far lower than those to which the '*Volksgenossen*' were accustomed, and consequently intolerable. The premises were subsequently inspected and the company was issued with an order on 5 September 1938 to comply with five ordinances.<sup>33</sup> From the antisemitic tone of the correspondence, the motives were to besmirch and cause as much damage to the company as possible. It also indicates the official disapproval of non-Jews working for a company owned by Jews on Nazi racial grounds.

Whilst these constant attacks on an individual or an organisational level undermined Jewish economic existence, of even greater impact in destroying Jewish livelihoods were governmental directives to boycott all things Jewish. Such directives were not optional, unlike the freedom of choice exerted by numerous individuals when it came to relationships with Jewish businesses and/or professionals.

On 6 May 1935, it came to the attention of the local police headquarters that non-Jewish solicitors, some of whom were Nazi Party members, were acting as

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<sup>32</sup> Correspondence concerning complaints over working conditions at L. Sperling & Co., 2 February 1934 – 19 March 1934, Bestand Rep. C 34, Signatur Nr. 591, LHASA MD, pp. 107–109. This complaint was instigated by the Verband der weiblichen Angestellten, Magdeburg.

<sup>33</sup> Correspondence concerning breaches of health and building ordinances at L. Sperling & Co., 21 July 1938 – 14 September 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 110–115. This complaint was initiated by Die deutsche Arbeitsfront, Gauverwaltung Magdeburg-Anhalt.

counsel for Jewish clients and defending Jewish interests.<sup>34</sup> The incident infuriated the local hierarchy and it dispatched a memorandum reminding its members that all ‘personal contact’<sup>35</sup> with Jews was forbidden. It also indicated that the police would endeavour to obtain a list of those solicitors involved, in order to take disciplinary action.<sup>36</sup> Whilst this example indicates that a number of individuals were still exerting personal choice in their contacts with Jews, it clearly demonstrates the force and potential effect of a Nazi Party directive. An even clearer example of this occurred on 4 October 1935, when all civil servants in the *Gau* Magdeburg-Anhalt were ordered not to shop in ‘non-Aryan’ establishments.<sup>37</sup>

Even without a Nazi Party directive to boycott, it was enough for it to simply create agitation in the public eye and allow events to follow their natural course. An example of this occurred on 28 November 1935, when a complaint was made concerning a Jewish monopoly in the livestock trade in the *Gau* and of the alleged inflated prices leading to higher retail prices for meat. The complainant claimed that this situation would lead to ‘unrest and discontent amongst the local population’<sup>38</sup> and an inquiry was ordered. The text and the tone of the complaint indicated its purposes. The desire to remove Jews from the livestock trade was clearly articulated, as was the invitation to incite public anger for the ‘alleged inflated prices.’ The level of concerted force involved in driving Jews out of

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<sup>34</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 134/35; Betr.: Vertretung jüdischer Interessen durch arische Rechtsanwälte, 6. Mai 1935, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, p. 88.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Betrifft: Einwirkung auf die Beamtenschaft beim Besuch nichtarischer Geschäfte, 4. Oktober 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 285–286.

<sup>38</sup> Betrifft: Juden in Viehhandel, 28. November 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 043, ASGM, p. 95.

business in Magdeburg is further confirmed in correspondence from the office of the president of the province of Saxony and the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for Trade and Commerce to all government offices in the province of Saxony on 22 and 24 April 1936.<sup>39</sup> Instructions were given that all Jewish commercial representatives and agents were to be replaced by ‘representatives of German lineage.’<sup>40</sup>

In a further attempt to target Jewish businesses as ‘hostile to the state’ and to consolidate Nazi racial doctrines, businesses were forbidden from selling or manufacturing flags with swastikas or any other national symbols of the state. In a bizarre exercise, however, toys with national symbols were exempt and Jewish businesses were permitted to both manufacture and sell them.<sup>41</sup> The intention of this order was to eliminate Jews from the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’ and to further the extent of boycotts. The usage of antisemitic signage and the campaign of boycotts were so effective that in November 1935 the provincial government requested, on behalf of the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for Trade and Commerce, that all non-authorized activity against Jewish shops in the city cease and effectively banned unsanctioned activity.<sup>42</sup> This trend, nevertheless, continued and further bans were issued.<sup>43</sup> These actions illustrate the intensity and popularity of the ongoing boycott of Jewish businesses in Magdeburg.

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<sup>39</sup> Correspondence from Der Oberpräsident der Provinz Sachsen, Der Reichs- und Preußische Wirtschaftsminister, An die Herren Regierungspräsidenten der Provinz, 22, 24 April 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Betrifft: Handel mit Hakenkreuzflaggen und sonstigen nationalen Symbolen durch jüdischen Firmen, 15. März 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Betrifft: Einzelmaßnahmen gegen Juden, 9. November 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>43</sup> Betrifft: Einzelaktionen gegen Juden, 30. März 1936, JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 149.

Given the intensity of this campaign, Jewish businesses maintained their existence for varying periods of time. However, with the campaign's escalation after October 1935 through to the pogrom of November 1938, a large number of businesses were sold at less than market prices or 'aryanised.' Where possible, Jewish business people maintained their businesses in their original premises, some eventually with only minimal stock and little custom. Samuel Freiberg, his siblings Joachim and Lilli Freiberg, Julius Schetzer and Heinrich and Bertha Silbermann provide examples of this pattern. Samuel Freiberg operated a paint, wallpaper and floor coverings shop at *Halberstädter Straße* 52a,<sup>44</sup> Joachim (Jochen) and Lilli Freiberg operated a leathershop at *Breiter Weg* 73–74,<sup>45</sup> Julius Schetzer operated a textiles shop at *Jakobstraße* 8<sup>46</sup> and the Silbermanns operated a music and musical instrument shop at *Breiter Weg* 10.<sup>47</sup> These businesses were eventually 'aryanised,' the first being the business of Julius Schetzer in 1937.<sup>48</sup> In an attempt to salvage their finances, a number of other business people sold their businesses and/or premises and moved to smaller and cheaper locations. Friedrich Jankelowitz, who operated a leathershop business<sup>49</sup> located at *Gärtnerstraße* 1b, is an example of this. His daughter recalled that her maternal grandfather had started the business, which her father later joined. He eventually had to give up his old shop, as his daughter recalled:

It was pretty bad because he couldn't get credit. And the people didn't have to pay for it, if they didn't want to. You know, if it was a Jew, if they didn't pay for it, then they didn't pay for it! This made him very upset. I remember he

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<sup>44</sup> *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Personal file on the Schetzer family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 15, ASGM.

<sup>47</sup> Anlage 1 zu *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, Collection 0.8, File 276, YVA.

<sup>48</sup> Personal file on the Schetzer family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 15, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM, op. cit.

gave up the old shop and rented a cellar somewhere and worked from there.<sup>50</sup>

A number also sold businesses and simply lived off capital. This option was especially common amongst those close to retirement or those already retired. Hemmi Freeman recalled his parents' clothing business located at *Breiter Weg* 87<sup>51</sup> was sold voluntarily in the early years. They chose this option because of the increasingly bleak economic future for Jewish businesses.<sup>52</sup>

Parallel to this economic strangulation of Jewish businesses in the city ran the extremely limited employment opportunities for Jewish school-leavers and those seeking employment, as only Jewish establishments would employ them. Given the level of impoverishment of the majority of Jewish businesses, they could provide little work and minimal training, as both Gisela Kent and Hemmi Freeman discovered when they finished school in 1935. The young Gisela Jankelowitz was employed by three different Jewish establishments until her emigration on 21 August 1938.<sup>53</sup> She recalled that whilst she was paid and performed all of her assigned duties, in reality she learned little, as her employers had almost no business to speak of.

Initially she was employed as a secretary by a commission agent (01.09.1935 – 15.07.1937), followed by a bank (21.07.1937 – 31.03.1938) and then finally by an auto-electrical spare parts business (01.04.1938 – 31.07.1938).<sup>54</sup> Her first position became redundant when her employer could no longer pay her wages, due to his lack of business. She resigned from her second position in order to take

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<sup>50</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>51</sup> *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>53</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>54</sup> Three personal references from former employers in Magdeburg, 15 July 1937, 31 March 1938 and 1 August 1938, Private Archive of Gisela Kent.

on the third position, which offered her better remuneration. This was of great importance to her as she already knew that she was emigrating to Australia.<sup>55</sup> In all of her positions she commented on the lack of business being generated and that her Jewish colleagues hardly discussed their overall depressing situation.<sup>56</sup> In assessing her comments about her two final positions, it is clear that as both businesses were still functioning in 1938, that their custom must have been at a suitable level. Both businesses employed a number of staff and, given the nature of their businesses, even if they were only operational within the Jewish community itself, it may have been enough to sustain them financially.

Hemmi Freeman's experiences were not that dissimilar to Gisela Kent's. However, he also provides additional valuable insights into the economic situation for Jews. When he left school in September 1935, he was sent to a Jewish private school in Coburg for approximately two years. When he returned to Magdeburg he worked for close to twelve months, prior to his emigration to England before the pogrom of November 1938. His first position was with a leathersgoods manufacturer and retailer, owned and operated by Siegmund Rohlick at *Freiligrathstraße 72*<sup>57</sup> until the Rohlicks left for the United States of America (USA). His testimony sheds light on another important aspect which featured in the displacement of Jewish businesses:

What happened – a Magdeburg [non-Jewish] German [living in the USA] had family in Magdeburg, and had a business in photographic something-or-other somewhere in America; and they swapped businesses. He was a *Volksdeutscher* [Ethnic German]. He came back from the USA and took over this *Lederwaren* [leathersgoods] business and Rohlick took over the photographic business. I worked for him for six months. I was *Mädchen für alles* [a 'Jack of all trades']. He got me at six o'clock every morning to

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<sup>55</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM, op. cit.

cycle up there and get the key and open up and let all the workers in. I was with the key, I was in the office, I was in the store, I was in the workshop!<sup>58</sup>

The quotation confirms the notion that not all Jewish businesses suffered equally. Rohlick's business appears to have been operating more profitably than those establishments where Gisela Kent was employed. The nature and size of each business had a direct impact on its survival, and quite possibly links with non-Jewish businesses contributed to this continued viability. This is evidenced in the arrangement between Rohlick and the German expatriate in the USA. This incident could also have been the exception in Magdeburg, as all key commercial enterprises in Jewish hands in 1933 were coveted and 'aryanised' eventually.

Hemmi Freeman's second and final position was at the paint and wallpaper shop of Samuel Freiberg. He commented that the position at Rohlick's 'was to get me off the streets'<sup>59</sup> and that his position with Freiberg was much the same. He commented on his position there:

I was a *Volontär* – somebody who was working for free just to learn the trade or to learn the business – no pay, no contract, no nothing. I didn't work there for long; it was only about six months. The business he still had until 1938. Customers came in fairly regularly. I think he had a very good business. People who came to buy at his place were old customers.<sup>60</sup>

Not dissimilar to the situation at Rohlick's, Freiberg's business appeared to be still running profitably for him in 1938. What is also clear from the quotation is that Jewish youth had few options when it came to employment and career choices, which had effectively become a casualty of the ongoing economic strangulation.

Whilst some businesses may have maintained viability, they all definitely suffered. When the pogrom occurred in November 1938, 60% of all Jewish businesses in existence in 1933 in Magdeburg had been sold or 'aryanised' and a

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<sup>58</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>59</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

growing number of community members were experiencing real impoverishment. Gisela Kent spoke very sadly of the situation to which her once nationalistic, yet now confused, father was reduced. When discussing how a great number of the families of World War One veterans were buffered from a number of antisemitic measures due to exemptions because of their war service, she remarked:

He got nothing. He was wounded in the war and decorated; and they asked him if he wouldn't mind not getting a pension because there were so many poor deserving Germans; but if ever he needed it, all he had to do was to apply for it. So, anyway he did apply for it when his business went bad, and they took him into a field hospital, and kept him there for three days, and said that they could not say that his injuries were war injuries. He had had a bullet enter his stomach and come out the other side. He also had had a broken jaw and as a result he had false teeth, which was unusual for Germans. His second decoration was in fact for being wounded. Later on when I heard about it, I thought he was lucky to get out of there alive, because they could have just killed him.<sup>61</sup>

In order to provide for his wife and two children, Friedrich Jankelowitz belatedly applied for his entitled war pension, even though it proved in vain. Jankelowitz survived Buchenwald Concentration Camp after being arrested on 10 November 1938, only to die in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp on 12 October 1942.<sup>62</sup> His wife Alice and son Günther were deported to the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942 and did not survive.<sup>63</sup> His daughter Gisela arrived unaccompanied in Perth, Australia aboard the *Oronsay* on 22 September 1938.<sup>64</sup> She was eighteen years old.

The experience of antisemitism for salaried individuals, for professionals requiring governmental certification and for civil servants was no less precarious. Individuals in private practice were affected by boycotts, and prominent

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<sup>61</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM.

<sup>64</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

professionals were targeted by the judiciary and the media. However, the majority were not subjected to the same level of public displays of antisemitism.

In the early years of the regime professionals experienced dismissals, forced early retirements and expulsion from professional associations. In Magdeburg, as elsewhere in Germany, this reduced a large number of members from the professional sector of the Jewish community to impoverishment very early. In this particular sector, exemptions from antisemitic laws also played an important role, as this permitted a number of professionals to continue in their trained fields until 1938. Those forced from their positions in the early years received assistance and retraining through the various effective social welfare initiatives of the Jewish community. Employment was essential to maintaining livelihoods, supporting families and retaining personal dignity.

Legislation also served as an avenue of attack. One week after the boycott of 1 April 1933, the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* was enacted. It ordered the immediate forced retirement of all 'non-Aryan' government employees. Some 5,000 Jewish civil servants in the whole of Germany were directly affected by this law.<sup>65</sup> After President von Hindenburg appealed to Hitler, the latter agreed to exempt combat soldiers, relatives of those killed in action, and some senior government workers. As a result, the number affected was reduced by half. However, this law was more consequential for self-employed professionals, especially solicitors and physicians, as their freedom to practise their profession was circumscribed by the same so-called 'Aryan' paragraphs. This national legislation was compounded by a slew of local laws and regulations instituted by new provincial governments and

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<sup>65</sup> Avraham Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938," in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 201.

municipalities as well as by professional associations that wanted to further their own interests.<sup>66</sup>

In Magdeburg the vast majority of members of the Jewish community were involved in businesses or in the professions. Nevertheless, a significant number were salaried staff in a variety of white-collar positions. Of the documented cases, few of these individuals were employed in their former positions beyond 1936. In May 1933<sup>67</sup> the administration of the Magdeburg Institute for Guards and Warders notified the chief of police in Magdeburg that the institute's director was Jewish. It cannot be established what ensued after the notification was made. However, by virtue of the fact that a memorandum was despatched so early and with the sole intent of notifying the police, it would be unlikely that the Jewish director of the institute was not dismissed. In 1936 the employment contract of Friedrich Röhricht, who had been appointed to Magdeburg in 1925 as the area director for the Central and Phoenix Insurance Companies, was cancelled.<sup>68</sup> Like the majority of Jews who found themselves in this situation, his options were extremely limited. One could either retrain and gain employment in another chosen field or seek alternative employment in the same profession, but with a Jewish employer. In Röhricht's case in Magdeburg, it is not known whether he sought retraining. However, he did remain unemployed, unable to support his wife Betty and

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<sup>66</sup> Avraham Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938," in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>67</sup> Hinweis der jüdischen Abstammung des Direktors des Magdeburger Wach- und Schließinstituts, 11. Mai 1933, Bestand Kreisbehörden Blankenburg, Signatur Nr. 2412, Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Abteilung Dessau, Dessau (LHASA D), p. 119.

<sup>68</sup> Personal interview with Ursula Reed (recorded), Sydney, 4 August 1999.

children Werner and Jutta. Due to these circumstances the family moved to Aachen pending emigration to Australia in July 1937.<sup>69</sup>

George Mannings recalled that his father, Heinrich Manneberg, a sales representative for office furniture and equipment,<sup>70</sup> was dismissed not long after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws. He remained unemployed and was still struggling to survive financially when his only child, Günter, emigrated to England after the November pogrom, toward the end of 1938.<sup>71</sup> Even with retraining, the number of positions in Jewish companies either in Magdeburg or in neighbouring towns and villages was limited, thus forcing individuals from this sector of the workforce into unemployment. Technically, the only individuals who were provided with some temporary reprieve until 1938 were those war veterans and/or their families and some senior civil servants who were exempted. However, such exemptions failed to assist both Röhricht and Manneberg, both of whom were decorated war veterans.

Exemptions were far more advantageous to those who were self-employed or professionals. Gerry Levy's father and paternal uncle, Ernst and Herbert Levy respectively, were both self-employed grain merchants. As decorated war veterans the exemptions allowed them to continue their businesses, which required them to travel. Gerry Levy recalled accompanying his father to both Halle an der Saale and to Leipzig and that the family knew of other Jewish businessmen, who, not possessing the same exemptions, were prohibited from doing this. He also felt that owing to these 'privileges,' his family was shielded from the grim reality of the

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<sup>69</sup> Reed, *op. cit.*, 4 August 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Personal file on the Manneberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 31, ASGM.

<sup>71</sup> Mannings, *op. cit.*, 17 August 1999.

full extent of the economic strangulation taking place.<sup>72</sup> This situation involving exemptions also contributed to the illusion of a period of respite between 1934 and the end of 1937.<sup>73</sup> In Magdeburg, as elsewhere, the number of Jewish war veterans was substantial, giving rise to a significantly large number of veterans and their families in receipt of such exemptions. However, this reprieve ended on 30 September 1938, when all Jews lost their right to travel domestically to conduct any business or represent any companies and this was enforced in Magdeburg upon its receipt on 30 August 1938.<sup>74</sup>

In Magdeburg the exemptions were felt particularly by those involved in the professions, whose numbers were numerous. Whilst the exemptions did provide a respite, professionals understood it was only a temporary measure, particularly given the force with which both governmental bodies and professional associations sought to end the presence of Jews. In Magdeburg those Jews providing professional services in the fields of law, medicine, education and the civil service were affected almost immediately. Furthermore, non-Jewish civil servants with Jewish spouses and '*Mischlinge*' were also affected as the governmental bureaucracies of the province of Saxony and the city of Magdeburg set about recording the pedigrees of their employees to ensure the racial purity of its agencies.

Jewish professionals in the fields of law and medicine were particularly targeted. There is little doubt that this was due to their large representation in the city. In fact, in the early years of the regime, prominent solicitors and physicians were dragged through the streets by shrieking SA officers in full view of the

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<sup>72</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>73</sup> Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938," in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>74</sup> Betr.: Abgabe von Vertretungen durch Juden, 25. August 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, p. 19.

public. In addition to this abuse, they were also forced to wear signs around their necks which read: ‘The Jews are our misfortune!’<sup>75</sup> The city’s reputation in dispensing antisemitism through the legal system quickly became notorious throughout the country.<sup>76</sup> The CV dubbed the application of justice to the Jews of Magdeburg as one of the most unjust and slanderous in the country.<sup>77</sup> Kurt Sabatzky graphically described what he perceived as one of the root causes of this application of the law to Jews in Magdeburg:

The *Landgerichtsdirektor* [Head of the District Court], Judge Pippig, proved himself to be an especially bloodthirsty judge. Both he and the *Führer* [leader] of the *Nationalsozialistischer Juristenbund* [National Socialist Legal Union], the solicitor Dr Kulmey, led an absolute reign of terror from the Magdeburg Palace of Justice.<sup>78</sup>

The *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen, Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt* was very influential in the early years of the regime in removing Jews from the legal profession. As early as 4 April 1933, a detailed list containing the names and addresses of all qualified Jewish members of the legal fraternity in Magdeburg was despatched from this professional association to the Regional Bank of Central Germany.<sup>79</sup> The list contained twenty-seven names and was to assist in the

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<sup>75</sup> Correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 211. The original German text of the signs reads: ‘Die Juden sind unser Unglück!’

<sup>76</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Als besonders blutiger Richter erwies sich dabei der Landgerichtsdirektor Pippig. Dieser und der Führer des Nationalsozialistischen Juristenbundes, Rechtsanwalt Dr. Kulmey, führten im Magdeburger Justizpalast eine wahre Schreckensherrschaft.’

<sup>79</sup> Correspondence from the Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen, Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt to the Generaldirektor der Mitteldeutschen Landesbank, 4 April 1933, Bestand Rep. I 93, Signatur Nr. 33, LHASA MD, pp. 1–2.

removal of Jews from public office in accordance with a directive from the Prussian Ministry of Justice<sup>80</sup> and the application of the *Berufsbeamtengesetz*.

Exemptions for a number of solicitors barring them from practice in the civil service did follow, although the exact number cannot be established. On 5 May 1933, Dr Rudolf Brandus, Dr Martin Cohn, Dr Erich Hannach, Dr Katz, Dr Lewin and Dr G. Loewenthal lost their rights to practise, as did Willi Lange on 6 May 1933.<sup>81</sup> Of the original twenty-seven Jewish members of the legal fraternity listed in April 1933, only thirteen of this group were still listed in 1934.<sup>82</sup> Of this number, only five were still registered with the district court in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935,<sup>83</sup> with the same names still appearing in June 1938.<sup>84</sup> The individuals named were Max Abraham, Julius Jarosch, Dr Ernst Merzbach, Bruno Neuhaus and Dr Julius Riese. Other legal professionals may have maintained private practices, but no evidence of this has been located.

With the *Fünfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* on 27 September 1938, all Jewish members of the legal profession lost their right to practise. The above-listed individuals, excluding Bruno Neuhaus, were duly notified on 24 October

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<sup>80</sup> Correspondence from the Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen, Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt to the Generaldirektor der Mitteldeutschen Landesbank, 4 April 1933, Bestand Rep. I 93, Signatur Nr. 33, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

<sup>81</sup> Betr.: Vertretungsverbote der Rechtsanwälte, 9. Mai 1933, Bestand Jur.-012, ASGM, p. 17.

<sup>82</sup> *Verzeichnis nichtarischer Rechtsanwälte Deutschlands* Berlin: Buchdruckerei R. Scherk, 1934, *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Verzeichnis derjenigen Rechtsanwälte des Oberlandesgerichtsbezirkes Naumburg, die Juden im Sinne des § 5 Abs. 1 der ersten Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 14. November 1935 sind, oder nach Abs. 2 dieser Vorschrift als Juden gelten, *ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>84</sup> Verzeichnis der Juden in der Rechtsanwaltschaft des Landgerichtsbezirks Magdeburg, 2. Juli 1938, *ibid.*, p. 25.

1938 that after 30 November 1938 they could no longer practise law.<sup>85</sup> Bruno Neuhaus's racial status was still under scrutiny at this time, and on 26 October 1938 it had still not been determined if he had been classified racially as a Jew.<sup>86</sup>

Even if Jews in the legal professional possessed exemptions, their continued livelihoods were all too often destroyed. This was due to the diligence of the district and regional governmental authorities, combined with the efforts of the *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen in Gau Magdeburg-Anhalt*. By the time the Nuremberg Laws were enacted, the vast majority of private practitioners of law had disappeared professionally. The few who remained in practice had an exclusively Jewish clientele. For this reason it can be assumed that a large number of solicitors in private practice simply went out of business in the early years of the Nazi regime, owing to the lack of demand and loss of non-Jewish custom. Between 1935 and the enactment of the *Fünfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* on 27 September 1938 the numbers of solicitors remained constant until those few remaining in practice were disbarred in September 1938.

In 1933 Magdeburg possessed approximately fifty Jewish physicians,<sup>87</sup> ranging from general practitioners to dentists to medical specialists. Medical practitioners were also seriously affected when the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* was enacted in 1933. A number probably would have been entitled to exemptions due to war service. However, should they have been fortunate enough to possess these, they would have encountered further difficulties at the district level in Magdeburg.

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<sup>85</sup> Correspondence from Der Oberlandesgerichtspräsident, Naumburg (Saale) concerning the *Fünfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* of 27 September 1938, 24 October 1938, Bestand Jur.-012, ASGM, op. cit., pp.154–161.

<sup>86</sup> Correspondence from Der Präsident der Rechtsanwaltskammer Naumburg a. d. S. to the Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten zu Naumburg (Saale) concerning the *Fünfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* of 27 September 1938, 26 October 1938, *ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>87</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 188.

On 1 July 1933, the Magdeburg city councillor Dr Drewes ordered that twelve Jewish doctors and two dentists be excluded from the city's health insurance scheme.<sup>88</sup> This effectively removed them from public practice. This act of exclusion was not the only act of its kind that occurred in Magdeburg. This exclusion of Jewish physicians was enforced with diligence. On 9 May 1933, Jewish physicians who were war veterans were awarded a temporary reprieve when they received exemptions from exclusion from health insurance schemes; thus allowing them to continue to practise. However, this victory was short-lived.<sup>89</sup> In order to circumvent any exemptions, the Magdeburg Insurance Association for Physicians refused all Jewish practitioners access to both public and private clinics in the city from September 1933. This effectively ended the activities of Jewish medical practitioners in all clinics in Magdeburg. It also adversely affected private medical practices.<sup>90</sup> The war veteran, Dr Spanier, and the female physician, Dr Greiffenberg, who reported the events, expressed the urgent concern as to how Jewish physicians in the city would survive and raised the issue of the damage this action would do to administering public health in the city.<sup>91</sup>

On 25 January 1934, all civil servants for the city of Magdeburg were provided with a list of ten Jewish physicians and one Jewish dentist. They were further instructed not to use their professional services, as the named physicians

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<sup>88</sup> Krankenkasse. Listen und Namen jüdische Ärzte, die von der Krankenkassenbehandlung ausgeschlossen wurden, 1. Juli 1933, Bestand Ärzte-001, ASGM, p. 184.

<sup>89</sup> Verordnung über die Zulassung der Kriegsteilnehmer zur ärztlichen Tätigkeit bei den Krankenkassen, 9. Mai 1933, *ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>90</sup> Memorandum from Dr Fränkel concerning reports in Magdeburg by Dr Spanier and Dr Greiffenberg, 9 September 1933, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 191, File 721-1-2001, USHMMA, p. 167.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

were ‘non-Aryan and enemies of the state’<sup>92</sup> and as such were excluded from the city’s health insurance scheme.<sup>93</sup>

Further evidence of the city’s determination to completely exclude Jewish physicians is provided by an incident in December 1934 at the city’s abattoir, which came under the administrative jurisdiction of the Magdeburg City Council. On 11 December 1934, Dr Kurt Cohn, president of the *Landesverband Mitteldeutschland des C. V.*, sent a letter of complaint to the administration of the city abattoir.<sup>94</sup> He wrote that the Butchers’ Guild of Magdeburg had posted a list containing the names of Jewish physicians in Magdeburg in the change-room of the city’s abattoir. This list included those physicians who were still approved by the city’s health insurance scheme. Affixed to the list was the caption: ‘*Volksgenossen, avoid these doctors!*’<sup>95</sup> Cohn complained that this furthered the boycott of Jewish physicians and as such was an illegal act, as the abattoir remained the property of the city and not the Butchers’ Guild. The matter was referred to the office of the mayor, Dr Markmann, who passed it on to Councillor Nauke. Nauke felt that this was not a matter for the city council and the matter was referred to the *Abteilungsleiter* Burkhardt of the Magdeburg branch of the Nazi Party’s *Nationalsozialistische Handwerks-, und Gewerbe-Organisation* (NS-HAGO) and to *Obermeister* Dänhardt of the Butchers’ Guild.

The matter never returned to the jurisdiction of the mayor’s office and after considerable correspondence between all the associated parties, Cohn received a

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<sup>92</sup> Memorandum to all civil servants of the city of Magdeburg, 25 January 1934, Bestand Rep. 10, Signatur Nr. 2496 Sb 36, STAM, p. 207.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Correspondence from Dr Kurt Cohn to the Magdeburg City Abattoir, 11 December 1934, Bestand Rep. 10, Signatur Nr. 2495 Qa 21, STAM, p. 21.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Volksgenossen, meidet diese Ärzte!’

reply from Burkhardt dated 19 January 1935.<sup>96</sup> The letter endorsed the action of the Butchers' Guild, expressing the view that the list was a good idea as it would ensure that all 'Volksgenossen' would not make the error of receiving medical services from 'non-Aryan' physicians.<sup>97</sup> Burkhardt's position was fully endorsed by the *Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter*, Rudolf Krause.<sup>98</sup> Cohn replied, stating that in his view this was not a reply from the city council and that he would instruct the Jewish physicians in question to pursue the matter legally. The Magdeburg branch of the Nazi Party forwarded all the associated correspondence to the city's mayor. No further action on the part of the mayor's office was recorded.<sup>99</sup> Thus, it can be clearly established that, as early as late 1934 the main authorities in the city had co-operated to ensure the exclusion of Jewish physicians. Prior to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, forty physicians were still residing in Magdeburg. It is not known how many of them were still in private practice.<sup>100</sup>

In the wake of the Nuremberg Laws, the exclusion of the remaining Jewish physicians was expedited when the city's authorities refused to accept the medical certifications issued by Jewish physicians to confirm physical unfitness of patients for work.<sup>101</sup> This effectively prevented the majority of the remaining non-Jewish patients from being treated by a Jewish physician. The memorandum detailing this indicated that all Jews were 'born liars' and, as such, their certifications could not

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<sup>96</sup> Betr.: Verwaltung des Städtischen Schlachthofes, 19. Januar 1934, Bestand Rep. 10, Signatur Nr. 2495 Qa 21, STAM, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 21–36.

<sup>99</sup> Correspondence from the Magdeburg branch of the Nazi Party to the Mayor of the City of Magdeburg, Abattoir and Livestock Department, 11 February 1935, *ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>100</sup> Namen und Fachdisziplinen jüdischer Magdeburger Ärzte 1935, Bestand Ärzte-001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 55–56.

<sup>101</sup> Correspondence concerning medical certification for unfitness issued by Jewish and 'non-Aryan' professionals, 19 August 1935 – 13 November 1935, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 34, LHASA MD, pp. 380–388.

be trusted.<sup>102</sup> From September 1935 until the introduction of the *Vierte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* on 25 July 1938, the remaining Jewish physicians would have treated Jewish patients only. Hans Jensen recalled that until this decree his father, Dr Max Jeruchem, ‘still had enough patients to keep him going.’<sup>103</sup> He also recalled that their family of four was having its midday meal when the radio announcement was made on 25 July 1938 that all Jewish physicians had lost their right to practise. He recalled his father’s devastation and how shaken the family was.<sup>104</sup> Not long after the edict the family left Schönebeck; the doctor, his wife and daughter relocated to Berlin and began making frantic preparations for departure and were re-united with Hansgünter only after the pogrom of November 1938. Hansgünter was already in Hamburg studying medicine at university. As the son of a war veteran he was permitted to do so. Such was the impact of the edict on Dr Jeruchem’s practice that he simply abandoned it without securing a sale.<sup>105</sup>

The *Vierte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* on 25 July 1938 dissolved the remaining medical practices of Jewish physicians. The city’s Health Department had always recorded the monthly changes in personnel of licensed physicians, dentists and pharmacists for each district in the Magdeburg region. For the month of September 1938 twenty-four Jewish medical professionals were listed as having had their licences revoked; in the ‘Remarks’ column each entry read: ‘Jew.

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<sup>102</sup> Correspondence concerning medical certification for unfitness issued by Jewish and ‘non-Aryan’ professionals, 19 August 1935 – 13 November 1935, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 34, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 381.

<sup>103</sup> Personal interview with Hans Jensen (recorded), Sydney, 11 July 1999.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

Approval as physician revoked.<sup>106</sup> Dr Jeruchem's licence was revoked in October 1938.<sup>107</sup> Beyond the period after the November pogrom, a number of Jewish physicians were reregistered to treat Jewish patients only,<sup>108</sup> by which time less than half the Jewish physicians registered in 1933 were still in practice.

The *Berufsbeamten-gesetz* appears not to have affected civil servants immediately; including those professionals involved in education. It cannot be established how many individuals were affected in the period between 1933 and September 1935. Of those Jews employed in the civil service, a number would have received exemptions from antisemitic laws, as occurred in all other areas of employment. It was also not possible to determine how many members from the Jewish community were in fact civil servants in education and in the city's and province's governmental bureaucracy.

The first evidence of any significant change after 1933 was with the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws on 15 September 1935. The preliminary stage of the dismissals and forced retirements of civil servants came from a memorandum dated 30 September 1935 from the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for the Interior.<sup>109</sup> This was received by the provincial government of Saxony in Magdeburg on 1 October 1935. It detailed that in accordance with the application

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<sup>106</sup> Nachweisung der Veränderungen unter den Ärzten, Zahnärzten und Apothekern des Kreises Magdeburg für den Monat September 1938, 10. Oktober 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 16, Band 5, LHASA MD, pp. 60–62. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Jude. Bestallung als Arzt verloren.'

<sup>107</sup> Nachweisung der Veränderungen unter den Ärzten, Zahnärzten und Apothekern des Kreises Calbe, 1. November 1938, *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>108</sup> Nachweisung der Veränderungen unter den Ärzten, Zahnärzten und Apothekern des Kreises Magdeburg für den Monat November 1938, 2. Dezember 1938; Nachweisung der Veränderungen unter den Ärzten, Zahnärzten und Apothekern des Kreises Magdeburg für den Monat März 1939, 1. April 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 34, LHASA MD, *op. cit.*, pp. 81, 154.

<sup>109</sup> Memorandum from the Reich and Prussian Minister for the Interior, 30 September 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

of the *Reichsbürgergesetz* of 15 September 1935 that all civil servants who were Jewish or possessed three or four grandparents who were classified racially as ‘full Jews’ were to be suspended immediately.<sup>110</sup> On 8 October 1935, the provincial government despatched a memorandum to every governmental body under its jurisdiction requesting that an attached five-page questionnaire be duly completed by all employees in duplicate and returned to their employer by 25 October 1935. The title of the questionnaire read: ‘Questionnaire for the Certification of Aryan Lineage.’<sup>111</sup> In addition, civil servants had until 25 November 1935 to supply their own birth certificates, the birth certificates of their parents and grandparents and the marriage certificates of their parents and grandparents.<sup>112</sup> Clearly, the impact on Jewish civil servants was immediate.

The ramifications of this memorandum occurred with remarkable speed, indicating the level of efficiency in racial politics in the province and in Magdeburg. On 16 October, the Department of Secondary School Education for the province of Saxony, based in Magdeburg, recommended four suspensions of teachers with Jewish lineage. This included the *Studienrat* Hans Rothenberg, who was employed at the ‘Lessing School’ in Magdeburg. His immediate suspension was recommended as he was racially a ‘full Jew.’<sup>113</sup> He was duly suspended from his teaching position on 20 October 1935.<sup>114</sup> On 4 November 1935, the *Oberschullehrerin* Maria Gottschalk, who was employed at a private grammar school in Magdeburg, the ‘Elisabeth Rosenthal School’, was dismissed on the

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<sup>110</sup> Memorandum from the Reich and Prussian Minister for the Interior, 30 September 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>111</sup> Fragebogen zum Nachweis der arischen Abstammung, *ibid.*, pp. 20–22.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Correspondence from Der Oberpräsident der Provinz Sachsen, Abt. für höheres Schulwesen, An den Herrn Oberpräsidenten – Abteilung 1 – in Magdeburg, 16 October 1935, *ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>114</sup> Betrifft: Durchführung der arischen Abstammung, 20. Oktober 1935, *ibid.*, p. 39.

same grounds.<sup>115</sup> On 16 October 1935, all financial institutions and the city's fire brigades were instructed to suspend Jewish employees.<sup>116</sup>

Suspended Jewish civil servants were forcibly retired on 31 December 1935 when a further amendment of the *Reichsbürgergesetz* was enacted on 9 December 1935.<sup>117</sup> Jewish civil servants who were war veterans or Jewish civil servants whose brothers and/or fathers had fallen in battle lost their exemptions and were subjected to the same measures.<sup>118</sup> Pension records for those forcibly retired in Magdeburg indicate that eight Jewish members of the teaching profession in public schools had been relieved of their duties and retired by 14 October 1936. These included two male principals, one female principal and five male teachers.<sup>119</sup> As a general rule non-Jewish civil servants who were married to Jewesses were forcibly retired on 8 April 1937.<sup>120</sup>

The pursuit of 'racial purity' in the civil service in Magdeburg was a major priority. An interesting indication of this was provided in the case of a high level governmental male bureaucrat by the surname of Trier. Trier was the head of the provincial government's planning department and building control office of the *Elbstrombauverwaltung* in Magdeburg.<sup>121</sup> It cannot be confirmed whether or not he was a member of the Jewish community as his name does not appear in any documentation linking him to anything Jewish in Magdeburg. Repeatedly, this

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<sup>115</sup> Betrifft: Durchführung der arischen Abstammung, 4. November 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>116</sup> Betrifft: Beurlaubung jüd. Beamter, 16. Oktober 1935, Bestand Rep. I 93, Signatur Nr. 33, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>117</sup> Übertritt der jüdischen Beamten in den Ruhestand, 9. Dezember 1935, *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58–60.

<sup>119</sup> Versorgungsbezüge für jüdische ehemalige Beamte und Lehrer auf Grund des § 16 BerufsBG, 14. Oktober 1936, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 72, Band 2, LHASA MD, pp. 67–69.

<sup>120</sup> Correspondence from the Reich and Prussian Minister for the Interior, 8 November 1937, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., pp. 139–142.

<sup>121</sup> Übertritt der jüdischen Beamten in den Ruhestand, 25. Januar 1936, *ibid.*, p. 36.

senior civil servant failed to submit the mandatory questionnaire on his racial lineage, together with the supporting attachments. As a result of this refusal, Trier was dismissed from his position in January 1936.<sup>122</sup> The reasons for his failure to comply are not known. However, it is most likely that he was an unaffiliated Jew or possessed enough Jewish lineage for him to be concerned about submitting the completed questionnaire. Details of his eventual fate are not known.

The measures affecting Jewish civil servants in Magdeburg fall into two periods. Undoubtedly, Jewish employees would have been adversely affected in 1933 by the introduction of the *Berufsbeamtengesetz*. However, not dissimilar to other areas of the workforce, a potentially large number would have received exemptions. This temporary reprieve came to an abrupt end after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935. The removal of Jews from the civil service was carried out expeditiously in Magdeburg. The ramifications for this sector of the workforce were far more immediate than for the majority of the other groups previously discussed, with the possible exception of salaried white-collar employees. This sector was forced relatively early in the regime to seek alternative employment in Jewish establishments and/or to retrain or face total impoverishment.

On 28 April 1938, Jews were ordered to report all assets and property. This decree included agricultural properties, urban real estate, active business capital and disposable assets such as bank notes, securities and proceeds from the sale of businesses already liquidated.<sup>123</sup> The value of reported Jewish assets and property for the entire *Reich*, including Austria, tabled in a report dated 28 November 1938,

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<sup>122</sup> Übertritt der jüdischen Beamten in den Ruhestand, 25. Januar 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>123</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 113.

was approximately RM 8.531 billion gross, RM 7.123 billion net after deduction of debts and other obligations.<sup>124</sup> The relevant forms to be completed were despatched with directions to all relevant governmental administrative bodies in Magdeburg for the province of Saxony on 8 June 1938.<sup>125</sup> Completing this process was undertaken so thoroughly in Magdeburg that even the value and contents of safety deposit boxes of Jewish clients were meticulously registered by the *Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Filiale Magdeburg* and despatched to the Customs Investigation Office of the provincial government in July and August 1938.<sup>126</sup>

On 5 October 1938, the registrations of all property owned by Jews in the province was finalised. The city of Magdeburg recorded that there were 350 registrants. Of this figure, 261 were German-born Jews, nineteen were non-Jewish spouses, forty were foreign-born Jews and thirty were classified as stateless Jews. The total net value of the reported Jewish assets and property was RM 14,993,915.69; this figure also included the amount of RM 154,549.79, which represented registered foreign assets of German-born Jews.<sup>127</sup> This figure must be viewed cautiously, as by this time over 60% of Jewish-owned businesses in Magdeburg had been sold or ‘aryanised’ at prices far below market value, including the most successful and lucrative enterprises such as ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*’. From a memorandum emanating from the office of the

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<sup>124</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>125</sup> Betrifft: Amtliches Muster für die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden auf Grund der Verordnung vom 26. April 1938, RGB1.I.S.414, 8. Juni 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 11–13.

<sup>126</sup> Correspondence between the Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Filiale Magdeburg and the Zollfahndungstelle, Magdeburg, 22 July 1938 – 6 September 1938, Bestand Rep. I 94, Signatur Nr. 18, LHASA MD, pp. 2–31.

<sup>127</sup> Betrifft: Auswertung der Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden und jüdisch Versippten auf Grund der Verordnung vom 26. April 1938, RGB1.I.S.414, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 48–51.

*Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern* dated 29 September 1938 and despatched nationally, it was made clear that Jewish assets would be confiscated.<sup>128</sup> Preparations for the final exclusion of Jews from the German economy and society were proceeding at a rapid pace. Legislation designed to financially cripple German Jewry was expedited in 1938,<sup>129</sup> culminating in this registration of Jewish assets.

A number of conclusions and observations can be made on the process of economic strangulation of the Jewish community. The experiences of individuals were dependent on which sector of the commercial landscape they occupied. As with all Jewish business owners in Germany, 1933 was a tumultuous year of ongoing boycotts and fear in Magdeburg. However, in spite of an effective and ongoing campaign of defamation and boycott, the majority of Jewish businesses adjusted to the new and difficult conditions. With the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, the ferocity of the public defamations were expedited, as Jews possessed no civil rights and became open targets. In the wake of these laws the process of ‘aryanisation,’ particularly of lucrative and highly coveted businesses, commenced. This period also marked the real end of any non-Jewish patronage of Jewish businesses. By 1938, of the 40% of the original businesses in existence in 1933, only a small minority were functioning with any serious business turnover. However, of all the sectors in the commercial landscape, they possessed slightly

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<sup>128</sup> Betrifft: Verwaltung von Vermögen, das zum Zwecke der Einziehung beschlagnahmt wird, 29. September 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 118–120.

<sup>129</sup> See Hans Safrian, “Expediting Expropriation and Expulsion: The Impact of the ‘Vienna Model’ on Anti-Jewish Policies in Nazi Germany, 1938,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 14, number 3, 2000, pp. 390–414 and Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und Nationaler Sozialismus* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2005.

more autonomy over their financial future. The only other group that could be included in this category were self-employed merchants and business people. Despite the circumstances, all of these individuals still possessed some control over their financial futures. The vast majority of Magdeburg's Jews fell into this category.

The position of businesses and self-employed merchants and business people deteriorated gradually, but salaried employees, professionals and civil servants faced the predicament of immediate collapse. In Magdeburg, given both the support and the efficiency of the Nazi Party, the city's authorities, the province's authorities and the associated professional associations, the situation for the majority of individuals became very grave from the early years of the regime. Almost all salaried employees in non-Jewish establishments were dismissed from their positions with the application of the Nuremberg Laws. For high-profile employees, the end of their careers came as early as 1933.

The situation of professionals in the fields of law and medicine, in which the Jews of Magdeburg were very well represented, was no less serious than the predicament of salaried employees. The effects of the application of the *Berufsbeamten-gesetz* in 1933 and the activities of the *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen* in Magdeburg effectively reduced the number of legal professionals in 1935 to less than one fifth of those in practice in 1933. The situation of medical professionals was very similar. However, the city's administrative authorities played the greatest role in reducing the number of Jewish physicians, by refusing them access to clinics. The survival rate of their private practices was better than that of their legal cohorts. In 1938, when all legal and medical professionals lost their licences to practise, Magdeburg still possessed

just fewer than 50% of its original medical professionals who were in practice in 1933.

Civil servants, including professionals in education, may have enjoyed a period of respite until the Nuremberg Laws, however, by the end of 1935 and at the very latest by early 1936, Jewish civil servants and non-Jewish civil servants with Jewish spouses had been forced into retirement. Clearly, a greater number of Jewish business people and self-employed individuals in the city were able to maintain their economic existence for a longer period of time than their professional or salaried co-religionists. The only exception to this observation was the case of medical professionals, who, statistically, fared slightly better than those in businesses. By 1938, given the number of businesses sold or 'aryanised' and the number of individuals forced from positions, the options for the two-thirds of the original community who still remained were very limited. With the flurry of legislation in 1938, the community was descending into a state of real impoverishment, which culminated in the registration of Jewish assets. By the time of the pogrom in November 1938, those Jews still holding jobs in Magdeburg were, almost without exception, working for Jewish employers. Consequently, the employment situation was largely dependent on the number of still extant Jewish firms and businesses.<sup>130</sup> A small minority were living off the proceeds of liquidated assets. The remainder were unemployed.

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<sup>130</sup> Barkai, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

### The Process of Aryanisation

‘Aryanisations’ in Magdeburg commenced as early as 1933. They initially occurred in the form of ‘voluntary’ sales.<sup>131</sup> The process of coercion and forced sales gathered momentum after the Nuremberg Laws. Sale prices in 1933 were still well below market value, but they were, nevertheless, better than the sale prices which Jewish vendors later experienced, as the acceleration of the displacement of the Jews from the city’s economic life gathered momentum. As the years progressed, sale prices plummeted. Those who gained principally were Nazi Party stalwarts and middle-class functionaries of the Nazi Party.<sup>132</sup> In April 1938 approximately 60% of Jewish-owned businesses in the city had been ‘aryanised.’

In Magdeburg the process of ‘aryanisation’ conforms to the pattern observed throughout Germany with the figure of businesses ‘aryanised’ by 1935 being between 20% and 25% of those in existence in 1933.<sup>133</sup> In addition to the ongoing activities of boycotts and defamation in the local press, small businesses whose shops appeared especially attractive to local Nazi Party functionaries were slowly worn down and demoralised by various means. Claims that building and health regulations had been violated was one such ploy. An example of this was discussed in the previous section in the case of the stationer, ‘L. Sperling & Co.’. Another effective ploy occurred after the application of the Nuremberg Laws when a number of Jews were threatened with the accusation of ‘*Rassenschande*,’ or, worse still, were arrested under suspicion of the charge. Through these means

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<sup>131</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>132</sup> Frank Bajohr, “The Beneficiaries of ‘Aryanization’: Hamburg as a Case Study,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XXVI, 1998, pp. 173–201.

<sup>133</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 70.

Jewish business owners, either due to accusations or after having been arrested and/or incarcerated, were ‘persuaded’ to sell their businesses. The incident at the shoe repair shop of Jakob Wurmser, also previously discussed, was an example of this. The owner of ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*’, Hermann Broder, was also ‘persuaded’ to sell his department store, after members of his senior staff were arrested and charged with ‘*Rassenschande*’ and his department store forced to close temporarily in December 1935<sup>134</sup> prior to its ‘aryanisation.’

Jewish eyewitnesses recalled the ‘disappearances’ of Jewish businesses from the commercial landscape of the city and how ‘aryanisations’ became a feature of everyday life for Jewish inhabitants, particularly after 1935. Even when businesses were in the process of being liquidated and inventories were being meticulously taken, Jews were still employed to perform these tasks, as one interviewee recalled:

*Otto-von-Guericke-Straße* was where ‘Sperling’ was. His building was about a four-storey building and the Nazis closed him down and then got Jewish people to do the stocktaking. See, Germans have to do everything correctly – they had to complete a full stocktaking before they took the business. So, Mum worked there for weeks and even Dad got a job there for a few days doing stocktaking.<sup>135</sup>

The evidence indicated here is confirmed by documentation.<sup>136</sup> In the case of ‘L. Sperling & Co.’ and other similar-sized enterprises, the precise and meticulous records of their ‘aryanisations’ occupy volumes of documentation.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Betrifft: Schließung des jüdischen Kaufhauses Barasch, Magdeburg, 13. Dezember 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 301–303.

<sup>135</sup> Personal interview, name withheld on request (recorded), Sydney, 18 June 1999.

<sup>136</sup> Status der Firma L. Sperling & Co. per 30. September 1939, 4. Dezember 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 15 (1938–1942), LHASA MD, pp. 1–133.

<sup>137</sup> Sperling, 16. Januar 1939 – 9. Oktober 1944, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 12 (1938–1942), LHASA MD, pp. 1–300.

An undated list of Jewish business people in Magdeburg compiled by the state police in Magdeburg for the provincial government provides the owners' names, the business names and the respective addresses of 322 establishments.<sup>138</sup> Attached to the list was a letter between governmental bodies in Magdeburg referring to the program of the removal of the Jews from the economy in the region.<sup>139</sup> The term used in the original letter was '*Entjudung der Wirtschaft im Regierungsbezirk Magdeburg*.'<sup>140</sup> This terminology,<sup>141</sup> together with the knowledge of the dates of the 'aryanisations' of a number of the listed businesses indicates that it is most likely that this list dates from early 1936. This would also conform to the already cited statistic that between 20% to 25% of Jewish businesses were in non-Jewish hands by the end of 1935. Another list, possibly from the same period, provides the details of the new and old names of owners of fifteen 'aryanised' businesses registered with the Magdeburg district court.<sup>142</sup> Importantly, the first list referred to provides evidence that the majority of 'aryanisations' prior to the pogrom of November 1938 occurred between early 1936 and early April 1938. As indicated, by April 1938 approximately 60% of Jewish businesses in the city had been 'aryanised.'

An insight into how the practice of 'aryanisation' worked in the city is provided by the examination of a number of cases. The process was never straightforward. It was designed to inflict as much financial damage as possible on the Jewish vendor, whilst simultaneously providing almost unlimited and never

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<sup>138</sup> Verzeichnis der jüdischen Gewerbebetriebe in Magdeburg, undated, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 14, LHASA MD, pp. 1–12.

<sup>139</sup> Correspondence from Der Landrat, An den Herren Regierungspräsidenten Magdeburg, undated, *ibid.*, unnumbered page, one page.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Barkai, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>142</sup> List of fifteen 'aryanised' businesses, undated, Bestand Rep. K 17, Signatur Nr. 101, LHASA MD, p. 30.

before experienced investment opportunities to non-Jews at extortionately low sale prices.<sup>143</sup> The first case involves one of the department stores in Magdeburg. ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Karfiol*’ was owned by Ida Karfiol and located at *Jakobstraße* 38. In early 1938 Ida Karfiol was pressured into selling her department store for RM 24,000 to a local member of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), Albert Wagner. At the time the net worth of the stock in the store was itself estimated at RM 70,000. Given the sum involved, Wagner was not in a position to pay and it was agreed that he would have to pay the first instalment of RM 1,000 by 25 December 1938. However, Wagner did not pay by the due date and after a series of complaints, Ida Karfiol received her first instalment of RM 1,000 on 27 May 1939. For Wagner this was the only amount he ever paid, as Ida Karfiol emigrated on 28 May 1939. Wagner had in effect purchased a department store in a prime retail location for RM 1,000.<sup>144</sup> Documentation detailing Ida Karfiol’s destination and fate has not been located.

The second case concerns the previously discussed Jakob Wurmser, who was also pressured into selling his leather and shoe repair business ‘*Elsaß*’. When Wurmser finally relented and agreed to sell, the solicitor Max Abraham lodged the application for the approval of the sale to the master cobbler Fritz Güssau on 30 June 1938. The price of the business in the contract of sale was RM 4,000.<sup>145</sup> When the contract reached the *Gauwirtschaftsberater* of the Nazi Party for

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<sup>143</sup> For a comparative case study see L. M. Stallbaumer, “Big Business and the Persecution of the Jews: The Flick Concern and the ‘Aryanization of Jewish Property before the War,’” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 13, number 1, 1993, pp. 1–27.

<sup>144</sup> Report by Hans Levy, Chairman of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, undated, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, pp. 1–3.

<sup>145</sup> Antrag auf Genehmigung eines Vertrages betreffend Veräußerung eines gewerblichen Betriebes nach der Anordnung auf Grund der Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden vom 26. April 1938, 30. Juni 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, pp. 296–300.

Magdeburg-Anhalt on 20 August 1938, he declined to approve the sale. He stated that the sale price was far too high and requested that the contract be revised and include all of the business's equipment and stock in the revised price.<sup>146</sup> By 7 October 1938 Wurmser had organised his emigration and that of his wife Betty and fifteen-year-old daughter Hannelore and wished to have his affairs finalised by 14 October. Without the sale of the business he could not receive certification from the Ministry of Finance, nor a passport. On the same day the head of the Cobblers' Guild of Magdeburg, having visited and taken a thoroughly documented inventory of Wurmser's premises, recommended that the sale price of the same business be reduced to RM 1,251.50.<sup>147</sup> The second contract was drawn up on the same day for the second price, and after its submission to the local authorities it was approved by the *Gauleiter* on 3 November 1938.<sup>148</sup> Not dissimilar to the predicament of Ida Karfiol, although on a smaller scale, Jakob Wurmser simply had to accept the reduced offer, knowing full well that he was absolutely defenceless and that he was being swindled. Evading arrest after the *Reichskristallnacht*, Wurmser, together with his family, left in the last week of November 1938 and emigrated to Australia.<sup>149</sup>

Deflated sale prices were not the only problems that Jewish vendors faced, as the siblings Joachim and Lilli Freiberg experienced when they also finally bowed to pressure to sell their leathersgoods shop '*Taschen-Freiberg*', located at *Breiter*

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<sup>146</sup> Arisierung der mechanischen Schuhbesohlanstalt nebst Lederhandlung Jakob Wurmser, Magdeburg, 20. August 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>147</sup> Betrifft: Übernahme des Schuhmachereibetriebes Wurmser/Güssau, 7. Oktober 1938, ibid., pp. 308–309.

<sup>148</sup> Betrifft: Übernahme der mechanischen Schuhbesohlanstalt nebst Lederhandlung Jakob Wurmser, Magdeburg, Breiter Weg 147, durch den Schuhmachermeister Fritz Güssau, Magdeburg, 3. November 1938, ibid., p. 315.

<sup>149</sup> Personal interview with H. B. (recorded), Sydney, 19 November 1997.

Weg 73–74. They had taken over the business from their father Gustav (Moses) Freiberg many years earlier.<sup>150</sup> On 22 July 1938, a contract for the sale of the business to Alfred Claus was lodged with the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce.<sup>151</sup> The estimated price was to have been between RM 10,000 and RM 12,000 and an additional RM 2,500 for the shop's fittings and inventory.<sup>152</sup> After much correspondence between the *Gauleiter*, the mayor and the provincial government, the contract was refused and Claus's application to take over the business rejected on account of the view held that he was an unsuitable applicant, based on political grounds.<sup>153</sup> No details of why he was objectionable were documented. Claus was duly informed of this decision in writing from the mayor's office on 3 December 1938<sup>154</sup> and the Freiberg siblings were left without a purchaser.

On 10 December 1938, a further contract was drawn up with a new purchaser, Hermann Semmelhaack. In this contract the new estimated price was to have been between RM 6,000 and RM 8,000 and an additional RM 500 for the shop's fittings and inventory.<sup>155</sup> The ensuing correspondence and resolution mirror that of the situation of Jakob Wurmser. Inventories were taken and a flurry of correspondence occurred between the *Gauwirtschaftsberater*, the mayor's office and the provincial government. The main aim was to ensure that the applicant was

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<sup>150</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>151</sup> Kaufvertrag Freiberg/Claus, 22. Juli 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 291–293.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>153</sup> Betrifft: Antrag des Alfred Claus, Magdeburg, Tischlerbrücke 1 auf Übernahme der Verkaufsstelle Freiberg, Magdeburg, Breiter Weg 73/74, 11. November 1938, ibid., p. 289. The cited quotation is the author's paraphrasing of the original German which reads: 'Gegen den Antragsteller bestehen politische Bedenken.'

<sup>154</sup> Betrifft: Übernahme der Verkaufsstelle Freiberg, Magdeburg, Breiter Weg 73/74, Inhaber: Freiberg, 3. Dezember 1938, ibid., p. 295.

<sup>155</sup> Kaufvertrag Freiberg/Semmelhaack, 10. Dezember 1938, ibid., pp. 165–166.

not politically objectionable. Certifications confirmed that he was not. On 23 January 1939, the Freibergs received RM 8,500 for their business.<sup>156</sup> On 4 April 1939, the mayor's office considered the matter and transfer finalised.<sup>157</sup> The experience of Joachim and Lilli Freiberg followed the same pattern as for Ida Karfiol and Jakob Wurmser. Yet, in this third example there was also the added tension for the Freibergs when the first contract was voided.

Forced reduced prices in contracts of sale and contracts being voided on the grounds of the unsuitability of the applicant were not the only difficult circumstances Jewish vendors found themselves in, as seen with the musical instrument shop owned by Heinrich and Bertha Silbermann. Their shop '*Parlophon-Haus Silbermann*' was located at *Breiter Weg* 10. In December 1938 a request from Erhard Dietrich to purchase the business was lodged. In January 1939 the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce reported to the mayor's office that this action was clearly not in the interests of other local businesses, as two other musical instrument shops were also located in the vicinity.<sup>158</sup> This position was further endorsed by the *Gauleiter* on 11 February 1939.<sup>159</sup> Dietrich lodged an official complaint over this, but was eventually pacified when he purchased a local lamp and lighting shop. Given the perceived oversupply of musical instrument shops in the locale, a further application was made to liquidate the business and to develop the site. When this occurred in March 1939, it came to

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<sup>156</sup> Remittance advice from Hermann Semmelhaack, Quedlinburg, 23 January 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 144.

<sup>157</sup> Betrifft: Übernahme der Verkaufsstelle Taschen-Freiberg, Magdeburg, 4. April 1939, *ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>158</sup> Betrifft: Erhard Dietrich auf Übernahme des jüdischen Musikwarengeschäftes Silbermann, Breiter Weg 10, 23. Januar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 5, LHASA MD, p. 99.

<sup>159</sup> Betrifft: Antrag Erhard Dietrich auf Übernahme des jüdischen Musikwarengeschäftes Silbermann, Breiter Weg 10, 11. Februar 1939, *ibid.*, p. 97.

the knowledge of the mayor's office that Bertha Silbermann had in fact already left Magdeburg between 27 and 29 October 1938.<sup>160</sup> Prior to these events, Heinrich Silbermann had died in Berlin.<sup>161</sup> Bertha Silbermann did leave Magdeburg, and together with her son Horst and daughter Rita emigrated to Australia. Quite clearly, she left without having sold her business. Given the events leading up to Dietrich's application in December 1938, it must be assumed that earlier in 1938 Bertha Silbermann had unsuccessfully attempted to sell the family business. In this instance, even with a willing Jewish vendor and a non-Jewish purchaser, the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, together with the other parties, had effectively blocked any sale at all. This situation was possibly the worst of all scenarios, as Bertha Silbermann received absolutely nothing at all for her business. This incident also highlights the collective power and might of governmental and non-governmental bodies working co-operatively to remove Jews from the local economy and to reduce them to financial ruin in the process.

In the aftermath of the pogrom in November 1938, the approximately 30% to 40% of the remaining Jewish-owned businesses were 'aryanised' at an expedited pace, abandoned and/or eventually confiscated. On 24 October 1940, a memorandum from the provincial government declared that the removal of the Jews from the local economy had been achieved. Only two businesses remained to be dealt with administratively, as their former major Jewish shareholders had

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<sup>160</sup> Betrifft: Bestellung eines Abwicklers für Musikhaus Silbermann, 11. März 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 5, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>161</sup> Prior to these events Heinrich Silbermann had died at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin on 21 February 1938 at the age of fifty-seven, Death Certificate of Heinrich Silbermann, 21 February 1938, Private Archive of Léa Rothberg, daughter of Rita White (née Silbermann).

emigrated to England.<sup>162</sup> These businesses were 'Max Brandus Pty. Ltd.', located at *Gröperstraße 2* and the pump factory 'Hannach & Co.', located at *Stolzestraße 2–5*.

In conclusion, the circumstances and the actual process of each particular 'aryanisation' had the potential to vary. Nevertheless, a number of observations can be made. In the initial years of the regime, businesses sold 'voluntarily' were still sold at greatly reduced prices. However, vendors did achieve better prices and generally without the same level of harassment as came in the later years. This is one explanation for the low figure of businesses sold up until the application of the Nuremberg Laws. The majority of Magdeburg's Jews adjusted to the change in power and attempted to continue conducting their livelihoods, even though under difficult circumstances.

However, when racial classification and legal disempowerment came with the Nuremberg Laws, the ramifications were immediate. This is manifested in the statistics of 'aryanisations' from 1936 until 1938. During this period Jewish business owners were actively harassed not only through boycotts and the ongoing very public campaign of defamation, but by threats of breaching civil codes and of the accusations of embezzlement and '*Rassenschande*.' Owing to the combined efforts of both governmental and non-governmental bodies acting in a co-operative manner, Jews were left in totally defenceless positions, even when they did agree to sell their businesses. At the centre of this activity must be placed the *Gauwirtschaftsberater* and *Gauleiter* of Magdeburg-Anhalt, whose counsel was

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<sup>162</sup> Betrifft: Entjudung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft, 24. Oktober 1940, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 211.

sought by all non-Jewish parties prior to any decision to purchase businesses owned by Jews.

If Jews were fortunate enough they achieved a sale at a deflated price. If they were not so fortunate they received nothing or simply abandoned their former businesses prior to emigration. In the wake of the pogrom of November 1938 'aryanisations' in the city were expedited as Jews grappled with the realisation of what had transpired. The removal of the Jews from the economic life of the city had now entered its final phase. This exclusion from the city's economic life also ran parallel to their exclusion in the public domain, where they had once enjoyed everything the city had to offer its entire population.

### **Chapter Three: Daily Life in the Public Domain, 1933–1938**

#### **Nazi Policy toward the Jews**

The introduction and the implementation of Nazi policy toward the Jews affected them in all aspects of their lives, including the public domain. As the years progressed, their level of insecurity and lack of safety escalated. Whether policy dealt with public or private space, Jewish or non-Jewish space was inconsequential. All policy was engineered toward the demonisation, humiliation and exclusion of Jews from all spheres of life and influence in Germany. Included in this was their constant surveillance as declared ‘enemies of the German people.’ All policy also affected the behaviours and attitudes of non-Jews towards Jews in the public domain, as Jews had been allocated pariah status.

In depicting the effect of Nazi policy on the daily lives of Jews in the city from 1933 until the pogrom in November 1938, a similar pattern corresponding to the time-line of economic disenfranchisement emerges. The initial shock and violence of 1933 was followed by a period of adjustment to their new and disturbing status.<sup>1</sup> Ongoing boycotts and public defamation, combined with the exclusion from some public places, were the main features until the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. After September 1935 Jews no longer possessed any legal status and were racially defined. This led to an open season of accusing Jews of either invented crimes or newly created crimes, such as ‘*Rassenschande*.’ In Magdeburg this resulted in show trials and the trial by media of a number of community members.

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete discussion on this period of transition from 1933 until 1935, see Matthäus, *op. cit.*

As the application of these race laws progressed, so too did a steady flow of antisemitic legislation and propaganda designed to make life as difficult as possible for Jews and to encourage them to emigrate. By the time the *Reichskristallnacht* occurred, very few aspects of Jewish life in both the public and private domains were not governed by Nazi policy. A chronological study of the legislative measures highlights this escalation of demonisation and exclusion.

In 1933 the Jews of Magdeburg were shocked and dismayed by the destruction of the German-Jewish 'symbiosis.' The majority of interviewees were either children or teenagers at this time and recalled the reactions of community members and their own families. The consensus of opinion of their parents' and grandparents' generation was that Hitler was a temporary aberration and that the German people would not tolerate such a government for long. They also assumed that the initial violence and defamation of Jews were temporary measures and would cease once the Nazis had established themselves and felt secure. Hemmi and Sigrid Freeman recall:

All the older generation still, I think, had hope that being German would save them and that Hitler was temporary and would die a sudden death. Everybody thought that it's a government that on one fine day will be kicked out. But it didn't work that way!<sup>2</sup>

The majority of the older generation retained this attitude for some time. Even when the boycott of 1 April 1933 took place, whilst community members were frightened and shocked, the majority still remained convinced that these new conditions were only temporary.<sup>3</sup>

From 1933 to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, Nazi policy toward the Jews in the city reflected the determination to consolidate power, to

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<sup>2</sup> H. and S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

target and to commence the isolation of the Jewish community, to maintain surveillance of the community and to collect data on the community. Whilst this was occurring, the Jewish community attempted to adjust to the new situation it faced on a daily basis in the public domain. The policies of separation commenced as early as 7 April 1933 with the enactment of the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* and on 25 April 1933<sup>4</sup> when quotas on the numbers of Jewish students at schools and universities were introduced. Exemptions for war veterans and their families played a vital role, as none of the interviewees was forced out of school in Magdeburg, owing to their fathers' war service.

Jews received mixed signals with these policies. Whilst they experienced the atmosphere of public defamation and boycott, a majority of the Jewish population remained exempt from a number of antisemitic measures.<sup>5</sup> This ambiguity in policy gave the Jewish population the hope that they had not been completely rejected. Consequently, the older generation still maintained and cherished its German-Jewish identities. So strong was this that during the period under discussion, the majority of community members still believed that the display of their German allegiance would prove to the non-Jewish population that they were not a separate and foreign body in Germany.

On 9 July 1934, the Gestapo in Berlin dispatched a national memorandum with the request that a detailed questionnaire on all existing Jewish organisations and institutions be completed and returned by 1 September 1934.<sup>6</sup> This marked the commencement of preparations for legal exclusion. By early 1935 the policy of exclusion needed to be formalised from the Nazi viewpoint, as there were still

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<sup>4</sup> Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 438.

<sup>5</sup> This has been previously demonstrated in Chapter Two.

<sup>6</sup> Betrifft: Überwachung des Judentums, 9. Juli 1934, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., pp. 7–10.

far too many Jewish organisations espousing the compatibility of Germanness and Jewishness. The end result was a clear ban on Jewish organisations that did not fit into the ideologies of the government. The memorandum of 31 May 1935 by Dr Werner Best<sup>7</sup> provided a blueprint for the consolidation of exclusion and a confirmation particularly for Jews that they were irrevocably placed outside the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*.’<sup>8</sup> From this point until the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws, measures on the local level reflected this.

On 5 July 1935, the State Police for the Magdeburg District issued a memorandum requesting the completion of a questionnaire concerning Jewish vocational retraining camps.<sup>9</sup> The memorandum acknowledged that such camps were in the process of retraining Jews in agricultural pursuits and trades. The police required that the number and nature of such camps be surveyed through a questionnaire to be completed by 10 August 1935. Included in the questionnaire were questions relating to the exact purpose and ideology of the camps. Their main concern was to confirm that the camps were Zionist in nature and were preparing Jews for emigration.<sup>10</sup> At least two such camps for Jewish youth were known to have existed just outside the city.<sup>11</sup>

One month later on 13 August 1935, the Gestapa in Berlin issued strict guidelines on how the *Reichsverband der jüdischen Kulturbünde in Deutschland*

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<sup>7</sup> Memorandum from the Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt, Berlin, An alle Staatspolizeistellen concerning the subject of the assemblies and activities of Jewish organisations, 31 May 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 052, op. cit., ASGM.

<sup>8</sup> This has been previously discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>9</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 249; Betr.: Jüdische Umschulungslager, 5. Juli 1935, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. For a discussion on the general reactions of the Zionist movement in Germany see Jehuda Reinharz, “The Zionist Response to Antisemitism in Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXX, 1985, pp. 105–140.

<sup>11</sup> This subject will be discussed in Chapter Five.

was to conduct its activities.<sup>12</sup> Included in the eleven stated guidelines was the instruction that all organised activities had to be registered with the Gestapa a minimum of ten days prior to the execution of any planned activity. The guidelines explicitly stated that only Jews and ‘non-Aryans’ were permitted to attend such activities.<sup>13</sup> On 20 August 1935, the office of the State Police for the Merseburg District dispatched a further memorandum to Magdeburg, instructing that henceforth any Jewish organisation that was not a member of the *Reichsverband der jüdischen Kulturbünde in Deutschland* was to be dissolved, with the exception of Jewish schools and religious communities.<sup>14</sup> It indicated that dissolving all unaffiliated organisations would enable a consistent and easier surveillance of the activities of Jews and that all Zionist activities (with a view to emigration) were to be encouraged.

As further evidence of this surveillance and separation, the same office issued instructions on 21 August 1935 that Jews were not to be given information on the activities of non-Jews, particularly on any business-related matter.<sup>15</sup> In a comprehensive measure to ensure the tabulation of data on all movements of Jews, on 2 September 1935, the office of the State Police for the Magdeburg

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<sup>12</sup> Richtlinien für die Tätigkeit des Reichsverbandes der jüdischen Kulturbünde in Deutschland, 13. August 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 040, ASGM, p. 74. For a comprehensive discussion on the history of this organisation, see Akademie der Künste, ed., *Geschlossene Veranstaltung. Der Jüdische Kulturbund in Deutschland 1933–1941* Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1992 and Alan E. Steinweis, “Hans Hinkel and German Jewry, 1933–1941,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXVIII, 1993, pp. 209–219.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

<sup>14</sup> Betrifft: Reichsverband der jüdischen Kulturbünde in Deutschland, 20. August 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 042, ASGM, p. 73.

<sup>15</sup> Rundschreiben; Betrifft: Auskunftseinholung durch Juden, 21. August 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

District<sup>16</sup> instructed that in Magdeburg, as in the entire country, an index of Jews and Jewish organisations was to be created. As a result, lists of community members and members of Jewish organisations were to be reported quarterly henceforth. These reports had to be submitted in triplicate and include departures resulting from relocation, death and emigration, as well as the arrival of new members.<sup>17</sup> This small selection of policies toward the Jews in the city prior to the Nuremberg Laws provides evidence of the clear policy to commence the isolation of the Jewish community, to maintain surveillance of it, in addition to the tabulating of data on the community. Simultaneously, the community suffered steadily from ongoing boycotts and public defamation. However, Nazi policy in itself was still largely evolving with regard to its measures toward the Jews. The full force of the development of this policy was felt on 15 September 1935 when the next phase was introduced with the enactment of the Nuremberg Laws, which marked the permanent segregation and the absolute disenfranchisement of Jews.

In a special session of the *Reichstag* at the Nazi Party convention in Nuremberg on 15 September 1935, three new laws were promulgated. *Das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre*<sup>18</sup> prohibited marriage and sexual relations between Jews and ‘Aryans’ and banned ‘Aryan’ women under the age of forty-five from working in Jewish households. The *Reichsflaggengesetz* prohibited Jews from ‘displaying national colours,’ while at

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<sup>16</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 340/35; Betr.: Judenkartei, 2. September 1935, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, p. 79.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheit, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und Das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. November 1935* Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1936, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 460, Band 3, LHASA MD, pp. 33–44.

the same time permitted them to display ‘the Jewish colours.’<sup>19</sup> *Das Reichsbürgergesetz* introduced a new category of civil law, namely that of ‘citizen with German blood,’ endowed with full political rights. A Jew, by contrast, could only now be a ‘subject of the state’<sup>20</sup> and for this reason this law was pivotal. The ensuing ordinances of this law stripped Jews of all legal rights and possessions and ultimately destroyed them.<sup>21</sup> The reinforcement of the image of the Jews as racially separate and as contaminators of everything features prominently in directives, laws and edicts. With the application of the Nuremberg Laws the Jews of Magdeburg were also targeted in the judiciary, as they were now without rights.

The impact of the Nuremberg Laws in Magdeburg was immediate. Gerry Levy recalled that his paternal uncle, Herbert Levy, had a non-Jewish partner at the time and they had a daughter, Jutta, aged approximately six years old. He married his partner as a matter of urgency prior to the laws taking effect, as if he had not he could have been accused of ‘*Rassenschande*.’<sup>22</sup> The application of these laws shocked all community members, as they were now subjected to a very public demonisation and had no possibility of recourse through the legal system. Nevertheless, ironically, the laws also clarified for the Jews their position in the new Germany.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Reichsgesetzblatt, Teil 1, 16. September 1935, Nr. 100* Berlin: 1935, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, pp. 141–142.

<sup>20</sup> Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheit, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und Das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. November 1935*, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 460, Band 3, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 33–44.

<sup>21</sup> Barkai, “Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938,” in Meyer, ed., op. cit., pp. 210–211.

<sup>22</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>23</sup> For a complete discussion on the reaction of the Jewish community to the Nuremberg Laws see Abraham Margalio, “The Reaction of the Jewish Public in Germany to the Nuremberg Laws,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XII, 1977, pp. 75–107

On 25 September 1935, the *Reich* Minister for Trade and Commerce requested that ‘non-Aryans’ be excluded from all markets as merchants and as clients.<sup>24</sup> On 11 November 1935, complaints were made at the number of Jewish commercial agents still representing ‘Aryan’ enterprises in Magdeburg and the assistance of the police was sought to rectify the situation. Another complaint was made that local farmers were still selling to Jewish cattle and horse dealers and that this situation had to be addressed.<sup>25</sup> The local authorities were determined to remove Jews from these areas and curtail any further interaction. The repeated reference made about ‘non-Aryans’ in the correspondence adds a racial component to the directive, in addition to the economic exclusion, which is obvious.

This sentiment of absolute segregation is further evidenced in a directive from the office of the State Police for the Merseburg District on 9 December 1935 concerning the local *Jüdische Winterhilfe*.<sup>26</sup> The memorandum indicated that the *Winterhilfe* was purely an internal matter for the Jews and under no circumstances would any form of public advertising of it be tolerated. The only exception granted was the use of advertising posters within the buildings of Jewish organisations and synagogues. Otherwise, all breaches of this were to be reported and registered.<sup>27</sup> From the end of 1935, the introduction and application of new policies and measures designed to segregate, to humiliate and demonise Jews in all avenues of life was expedited. This campaign in public was very important

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and Joseph Walk, “Reactions of the Jewish Press in Germany to the Nuremberg Laws,” in Bankier, ed., op. cit., pp. 329–338.

<sup>24</sup> Betr.: Marktverkehr, 25. September 1935, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 038, ASGM, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Betr: Polizeiliche Eingriffe in Dienstverträge mit Nichtariern, 11. November 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 168–169.

<sup>26</sup> Betrifft: Jüdische Winterhilfe, 9. Dezember 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

because of its propaganda value. The policy of racially cleansing Germany was a hallmark of this phase, which continued until the pogrom of 1938. Having formally defined and legislated the Jews as the ultimate other, the Nazis wanted them disassociated from all things German, and wanted this foreign body to leave Germany. The city of Magdeburg subjected its Jewish population to all the associated measures with diligence.

On 16 January 1936, the State Police for the Magdeburg District ordered that Jews were forbidden to wear the insignia of the *Reich Sports' Association*.<sup>28</sup> This included both the adult and youth divisions. In the case of the youth division, it was the responsibility of all group leaders to confirm the 'Aryan' lineage of their members under the age of eighteen.<sup>29</sup> Günter Manneberg, then a young Jewish teenager, fell victim to this and was expelled from his local non-Jewish sports' association days later.<sup>30</sup> On 7 January 1935, after careful consideration by the local police, Jews were still permitted to possess licences for firearms. A concern was raised that allowing Jews to possess any form of weaponry could prove a danger to the local population. The police also promised to re-assess the matter in the future, should too many Jews in the city apply for such licences.<sup>31</sup> In this instance the clear picture of demonisation is articulated as Jews are imagined to be a serious physical threat to the safety of the city's population. Further evidence of this occurred on 12 March 1936 when assemblies of any of the permitted Jewish organisations in Magdeburg were temporarily banned until the elections for the

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<sup>28</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 28/36; Betr.: Tragen der Reichssportabzeichens und des Reichsjugendabzeichens durch Juden, 16. Januar 1936, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Yogi Mayer, "Equality – Equality – Jews and Sport in Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXV, 1980, pp. 221–241.

<sup>30</sup> Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Betrifft: Erteilung von Waffenscheinen an Juden, 7. Januar 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 111.

*Reichstag* had taken place. The key concern appeared to have been that all ‘Jewish political activity’ could only lead to unrest.<sup>32</sup>

On 4 April 1936, the Prussian Gestapa in Berlin banned the use of Hebrew at any Jewish cultural assembly.<sup>33</sup> A complaint had reached its office that Hebrew was being used at public gatherings and this prevented surveillance. All organisations were ordered henceforth to use only German. However, Hebrew was still permitted at Jewish schools, synagogues and at ‘closed gatherings’ for Zionist purposes in preparation for emigration to Palestine.<sup>34</sup> On 22 April 1936, the provincial government of Saxony ordered that all antisemitic signage had to correspond in caption and form to that which had been mandated by the Nazi Party nationally, as uniformity was important, especially for foreign visitors.<sup>35</sup> This racial separation was paramount to Nazi ideology in both its propaganda campaign and in its manifestation of policy. On 23 April 1936, Jews were forbidden from having any female household staff who were of German (or related) blood and foreign nationality.<sup>36</sup> Gerry Levy recalled this vividly as he thought that his family’s non-Jewish maid would have to leave their employ. She had been with the family for many years. However, as she was over the age of forty-five, she remained with the family until the *Reichskristallnacht*.<sup>37</sup> All these

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<sup>32</sup> Betrifft: Versammlungstätigkeit der jüdischen Organisationen, 12. März 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>33</sup> Betrifft: Den Gebrauch der hebräischen Sprache in öffentlichen jüdischen Versammlungen, 4. April 1936, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 045, ASGM, p. 118.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Betrifft: Judenfeindliche Schilder, 22. April 1936, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>36</sup> Betrifft: Beschäftigung deutschblutiger Hausgehilfinnen fremder Staatsangehörigkeit in jüdischen Haushalten, 23. April 1936, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 033, ASGM, p. 119.

<sup>37</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

policies added to Jews' daily burden, particularly when they were in the public domain.

Toward the middle of 1936 the dispensing and application of policies and measures against the Jewish population came to a peak of activity. On 30 April 1936, the subject of antisemitic signage was of concern once more to the provincial government. A memorandum sent to all governmental bodies once again requested consistency, but also added that to date in Magdeburg the language of such signage had been 'particularly venomous' and that it was believed that a better approach would be to try and inform the local population of the 'crimes' of the Jews, rather than adopting such a spiteful approach.<sup>38</sup> On 9 October 1936, the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten* was ordered by the Gestapa not to undertake any other activities other than representing the interests of and addressing the needs of its membership, otherwise it would be banned from operation.<sup>39</sup> In November 1936 when the approaching campaign of the *Winterhilfswerk des Deutschen Volkes* for the winter of 1936–1937 was discussed, the Gestapa informed the population that Jews would not receive assistance, but were instructed to seek assistance from the *Zentral- Wohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland*. However, 'Mischlinge' and those in 'Mischehen' would receive assistance from both organisations.<sup>40</sup> On 14 December 1936, the Magdeburg Gestapa ordered henceforth that any expatriate Jews returning to the city for any

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<sup>38</sup> Betrifft: Judenfeindliche Schilder, 30. April 1936, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>39</sup> Betrifft: Betätigung des Reichbundes jüdischer Frontsoldaten in Versorgungssachen, 9. Oktober 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>40</sup> Betrifft: Betreuung der Juden im Winterhilfswerk 1936/37 und die Beteiligung der Juden am Spendenaufkommen, 14. November 1936, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 024, ASGM, pp. 158–160.

reason were to be taken into custody.<sup>41</sup> Their office was so efficient that it had already dispatched a memorandum on 10 December indicating the imminent arrival in Magdeburg of the Jewish expatriate, Lothar Kaminski from Ra'anana, Palestine.<sup>42</sup> As the years progressed, so too, did the intensity of antisemitic policies which regulated every aspect of the lives of the Jewish population. This pattern continued and compounded their segregation and social exclusion. The situation involving the issue of antisemitic signage in the city typifies this. Obviously, the form the campaign had taken had become so vulgar in its application that the local Nazi hierarchy began questioning the effectiveness of their techniques. The Winter Relief Program of 1936–1937 and the removal of the Jews from the consciousness of the public eye is aptly exemplified in the cited example.

This campaign of policy bombardment continued. In December 1936 all Jewish organisations were forbidden from meeting. This occurred nationally owing to the perception that the foreign press was receiving negative reports from Jewish organisations in Germany. The Gestapo was convinced that these reports were emanating from 'Jewish-political' organisations.<sup>43</sup> As Jewish political groups no longer existed, the assertion must be made that if anything had been reported from German-Jewish sources, then in all likelihood it would have come from Zionist sources and in the case of Magdeburg, numerous Zionist organisations and groups existed. This action later became a pattern of public

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<sup>41</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 610/36; Betr.: Einreise ausgebürgerter Personen in das Reichsgebiet, 14. Dezember 1936, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 054, ASGM, p. 206.

<sup>42</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 604/36, 10. Dezember 1936, *ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>43</sup> Betrifft: Verbot jüdischer Versammlungen und Veranstaltungen, 21. Dezember 1936, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

punishment for Jews.<sup>44</sup> This very same ban occurred again on 10 April 1937 and remained effective until 10 June 1937.<sup>45</sup> However, on this occasion the stated reason was that local Jewish organisations had conspired with international Jewry and foreign ‘assimilatory’ Jewish organisations in a propaganda campaign against Germany. Jewish sporting organisations were also included in the ban.<sup>46</sup> However, in both instances religious and ‘cultural’ gatherings were exempted.

In the pursuit of effective surveillance of all matters Jewish, in January 1937 the director of Magdeburg’s State Archive, Dr Möllenberg, ordered a complete inventory of archival material on the history of the Jews in the city to be completed and submitted by 1 March 1937.<sup>47</sup> This was duly completed and proved to be an extensive collection. It also included references to name changes registered with the Magdeburg State Police. These name changes were referred to as the falsification of names and the intimation in the memorandum was that Jews were changing their names owing to criminal activity and/or to avoid criminal prosecution.<sup>48</sup> This instance displays the extent of the vilification of the Jews. Name changes were not uncommon, yet the purported reason for Jews changing their names could only have been owing to their criminal behaviour, according to the Nazis.

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<sup>44</sup> Betrifft: Verbot jüdischer Versammlungen und Veranstaltungen, 21. Dezember 1936, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>45</sup> Betrifft: Verbot jüdischer Versammlungen und Veranstaltungen, 5. April 1937, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 021, ASGM, p. 175.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Betrifft: Ermittlung und Sicherung der Personenstandsquellen des Judentums, 15. Januar 1937, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 001, ASGM, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Betrifft: Ermittlung und Sicherung der Personenstandsquellen des Judentums, 31. März 1937, Bestand Rep. C 96 II, Signatur Nr. 40, LHASA MD, p. 17. This file contains an extensive list of the archival collection on the history of the Jews of Magdeburg at the time of the completion of the inventory in March 1937.

In further confirmation of the policy of the removal of Jews from public space and of their isolation, on 30 March 1937 the Gestapo requested that all its branch offices inform the Berlin office by 5 April of the names of spas and resorts frequented by Jews in their respective districts, as policy was to be developed segregating Jews from public spas and resorts. The view held was that segregated spas and resorts for Jews only were to be instituted in the near future.<sup>49</sup> Even with the intensity of the ongoing policies of segregation, the Gestapo was still concerned that too many Jews were taking up membership of ‘assimilatory’ Jewish organisations in Germany and in April 1937 the Magdeburg Gestapa increased its monitoring of the remaining Jewish organisations.<sup>50</sup> The concern was that this tendency on the part of the Jews was counter to the plans of the government, which was still encouraging emigration. The Nazis wanted the Jews segregated and to adhere to the Nazis’ perception of their own culture. However, they also wanted them to leave. In fine-tuning racial policy and the policies of exclusion on 15 May 1937, the Gestapo ordered the dissolution of the *Paulus-Bund* and ordered that ‘full racial Jews’ now become members of the Jewish communities and that they cease any social intercourse with ‘*Mischlinge*.’<sup>51</sup>

By the middle of 1938 a new inventory of Jewish organisations was being conducted as a component of ongoing surveillance.<sup>52</sup> In the furtherance of permanent segregation and to assist in the targeting of Jews, on 17 August 1938, a

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<sup>49</sup> Betrifft: Zuweisung besonderer Badeorte an Juden, 30. März 1937, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 022, ASGM, p. 174.

<sup>50</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 167/37; Betr.: Assimilatorisch eingestellte Juden in Deutschland, 3. April 1937, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 002, ASGM, p. 192.

<sup>51</sup> Betrifft: Paulus-Bund, 18. Mai 1937, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, op. cit., p. 232. See Beate Meyer, ‘*Jüdische Mischlinge*’. *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung 1933–1945* Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1999 and Cohn, op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> Betrifft: Jüdische Stiftungen, Vereine usw., 2. Juni 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 325.

law was enacted obligating all Jews who did not already have first names that were clearly Jewish to adopt the name Israel or Sarah, beginning 1 January 1939, and to always give that name orally and include it in their signatures.<sup>53</sup> In the final months prior to the *Reichskristallnacht* the frenzied activity of policy creation to include any remaining areas continued. In August 1938 guidelines for the activities of Jewish sports' organisations were issued by the Gestapo and made effective in Magdeburg on 1 September 1938.<sup>54</sup> On 3 October 1938, the Gestapo ordered that henceforth the transcripts of all oral presentations to be given at any Jewish organisation were to be submitted prior to the event for censorship purposes.<sup>55</sup> This became effective in Magdeburg on 7 October 1938.<sup>56</sup> In October 1938 the provincial government ordered that 'Jewish donations' to any 'Aryan' institution could not be accepted on racial grounds and banned the practice.<sup>57</sup> The volume and the pedantry of Nazi policy toward the Jews in this phase was exhaustive and left Jews suffocating from a barrage of exclusionary measures.

From the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935 until the *Reichskristallnacht* the application of Nazi policy toward the Jews was perfected by the Gestapo and the local authorities. This phase of policy creation and application was completely directed by the Nazi definition of race, by the ongoing

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<sup>53</sup> Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938," in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>54</sup> Betrifft: Richtlinien für die Betätigung jüdischer Sportvereine, 24. August 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 113–116. For a comprehensive discussion on the role of sport in Jewish life during the Nazi period, see Hajo Bernett, "Die jüdische Turn- und Sportbewegung als Ausdruck der Selbstfindung und Selbstbehauptung des deutschen Judentums," in Paucker, ed., op. cit., pp. 223–237.

<sup>55</sup> Betrifft: Vorträge bei Veranstaltungen jüdischer Organisationen, 3. Oktober 1938, *ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Betrifft: Annahme Jetztwilliger und anderer unentgeltlicher Zuwendungen von Juden durch öffentliche Körperschaften, 13. Oktober 1938, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, op. cit., p. 138.

and snowballing effects of exclusion and by the Nazi desire for Jewish emigration. All policies and measures affected all avenues of daily life, or had the potential to do so, by virtue of the fact that by November 1938 the lives of all Jews were completely regulated by Nazi policy. This exclusion from the '*Volksgemeinschaft*' was most noticeable in the public domain where Jews were easy and obvious targets. In the hostile climate of Magdeburg, daily life in the public domain for Jews was oppressive. However, owing to the initiatives of local authorities and the local branch of the Nazi Party the Jews of Magdeburg were subjected to even greater humiliation on a day-to-day basis<sup>58</sup> as will be discussed in the following section.

### **Daily Life and Exclusion**

The implementation and application of Nazi policy toward the Jews affected them in all avenues of their lives. Daily life in the public domain became increasingly onerous as the years progressed. The phases marking their situation and the reality of their exclusion mirror those previously discussed. For Jews, experiences in the public domain in 1933 were marked by shock, confusion, adjustment and a broad range of both supportive and antagonistic behaviours from non-Jews. For the period from 1933 up until the months preceding the Nuremberg Laws, Jewish citizens were either subjected to or witnessed a broad range of antisemitic behaviours in public, ranging from the standard antisemitic signage, boycotts, the singing of defamatory songs, to occasional street violence. However, during this phase the thrust of the antisemitic behaviour Jews experienced was largely

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<sup>58</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

confined to their terrorisation rather than their complete isolation and exclusion. From mid-1935, in the months leading up to the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws through to 1938, in addition to these behaviours, Jews were subjected publicly to exclusionary measures, designed to vilify and segregate simultaneously.<sup>59</sup> These measures ranged from the full application of the Nuremberg Laws to the introduction of accommodation hostels for Jews only, the revoking of hunting licences to Jews, the banning of Jews from public venues such as cinemas and public baths to the complete segregation for health reasons of Jewish patients in public hospitals.

All practices associated with day-to-day living increased in burden, whether it involved attempting to take public transport from one place to another or to undertake routine shopping. By November 1938 Jews in Magdeburg were so isolated in their city that they avoided going out in public and, other than attending to necessary daily affairs, they remained either indoors or only in the company of other Jews. They were effectively living in a ghetto without walls owing to the threats that surrounded them in non-Jewish space. By November 1938 only two public meeting places remained for Jews in Magdeburg – the synagogue and the cemetery with its adjacent field.

Interviewees' perception of daily life in public supports the view of an initial transitional period of uncertainty. Both Jews and non-Jews in the city were unsure about many of the antisemitic measures in 1933 and attempted to go about their

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<sup>59</sup> The cited phases and the ensuing levels of public exclusion and humiliation correspond to a study by Michael Wildt on the small Franconian Jewish community of Treuchtlingen. Whilst this community only numbered 119 Jews out of approximately 4,200 townspeople, owing to its regional nature and the lack of anonymity Jews faced in such communities, many similarities exist between its situation and that of the Magdeburg community. See Michael Wildt, "Violence against Jews in Germany 1933–1939," in Bankier, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 181–209.

daily affairs as though life had not changed. However, all interviewees concurred that the presence of uniforms and the boycott of 1 April 1933 forced Jews to accept this change. As early as 1933 it was already a precarious exercise to shop, as one young girl, then aged eight, recalled:

The sign “Jews are not wanted!” was on nearly every shop and I know it was difficult for my mother to do the shopping. Often she would send me. That, I remember very well.<sup>60</sup>

Interviewees repeatedly remarked on the antisemitic signage, particularly on shops, and the unnerving effect the presence of uniforms had on them.<sup>61</sup> This early campaign against Jews in the public domain resulted from the combined efforts of two leading local antisemites: the mayor of Magdeburg and the Nazi Party’s *Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter*, Rudolf Krause.<sup>62</sup>

The greatest cause of complaint on the part of Jews with regard to public order was the effect of the ongoing barrage of antisemitic signage in the city.<sup>63</sup> In addition to the signage previously discussed, two further signs, displayed at key junctions all over the city read: ‘Jews are not welcome here!’ and ‘Jews enter this area at their own risk!’<sup>64</sup> Obviously such signs only furthered Jews’ concerns for their safety in public. This fear escalated as the years progressed. A deterioration in public safety for Jews in February 1935 definitely resulted from the publication and distribution of tens of thousands of copies of the antisemitic booklet

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<sup>60</sup> Personal interview with R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 15 August 1997.

<sup>61</sup> Poppert, *op. cit.*, 9 January 1998.

<sup>62</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26.

<sup>63</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig concerning antisemitic signage in Magdeburg, 5 January 1934, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 102, File 721-1-2397, USHMMA, p. 71.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* The original German text of the signs read: ‘Juden sind hier unerwünscht!’ and ‘Juden betreten den Ort auf eigene Gefahr!’

*Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*,<sup>65</sup> which essentially identified and labelled every Jew in the city. The publication of this booklet marked a further transition in Magdeburg's treatment of its Jews in the public domain. From this point onward up until November 1938, a rapid escalation of the application of the policy of exclusion ensued. As the physical situation deteriorated for Jews in the city, their daily degradation and public humiliation increased severely.

On 6 March 1935, the office of the State Police for the Magdeburg District ordered that Jewish street artists were banned from performing in public, as the mingling of 'non-Aryans' with Germans would not be tolerated. Those Jews ignoring the ban were to be arrested.<sup>66</sup> On 8 March 1935, the Jewish community achieved a temporary victory after a four-month campaign to stop local *Sturmabteilung* (SA) troops and Hitler Youth groups from publicly singing the defamatory songs 'When Jewish blood sprays from the knife!' and 'Beat the Jews, throw the big shots into the wall!'<sup>67</sup> Gerry Levy recalled the popularity of the first song at one of his schools. On one occasion when his class, together with his teacher and some parents, went on an excursion by train to Potsdam, the children, all seated in rows, commenced singing the very same song. The teacher requested the children to cease singing the song and apologised to Gerry Levy's mother, who had accompanied the class. The teacher remarked to Mrs Levy that such

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<sup>65</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the Gestapo in Magdeburg, complaining about boycott lists and the publication *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 13 February 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 428–429.

<sup>66</sup> Betr.: Auftreten jüdischen Künstler, 6. März 1935, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>67</sup> Correspondence to and from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig, concerning the singing of defamatory songs, 18 November 1934 – 8 March 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 112, File 721-1-2499, USHMMA, pp. 19–40. The original German titles of the songs read: 'Wenn das Judenblut vom Messer spritzt!' and 'Schlagt die Juden, stellt die Bonzen an die Wand!'

behaviour would not be tolerated.<sup>68</sup> Whilst the noble act of the teacher must be acknowledged, the deep sense of embarrassment and humiliation of the Levys must also be noted. Day-to-day life for Jews in public included being publicly defamed verbally, and often to one's face.

In July 1935 spontaneous demonstrations against Jews had created such a degree of public disorder that the office of the State Police for the Magdeburg District condemned and outlawed such activities, claiming that those individuals involved were opponents of the state.<sup>69</sup> Such spontaneous demonstrations became an ongoing problem, and this situation is confirmed by oral history. So serious was the situation that on 22 August 1935 a local businessman and Nazi Party member by the name of Rellum wrote a detailed letter condemning the public disorder in Magdeburg and despatched it to the Minister for the Interior, Wilhelm Frick.<sup>70</sup> Rellum wrote that in his view the 'struggle against the Jews' in Magdeburg had become 'crude and indecent.'<sup>71</sup> Rellum provided a useful account of the sense of public disorder in Magdeburg at the time. He elaborated on the facts that Jews in the city were forbidden from theatres and public baths and no newspaper in the city would accept any business in the form of advertisements from Jews. He confirmed that any potential customer entering a Jewish business was set upon by either uniformed or plain-clothes officers and harangued. He also bemoaned the directive from the local Nazi Party that every business and even street pedlars had to purchase and display the mandatory sign 'Jews are not

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<sup>68</sup> Levy, *op. cit.*, 7 November 1996.

<sup>69</sup> Betr.: Antisemitische Demonstrationen, 18. Juli 1935, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Correspondence from the Magdeburg businessman and Nazi Party member, Rellum, to the Reich Minister for the Interior, Dr Frick, 22 August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band 4, LHASA MD, pp. 321–322. This letter provides a highly detailed report on the subject of public disorder in Magdeburg.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

welcome here!’<sup>72</sup> The signs were compulsory and were purchased for RM 1 each.<sup>73</sup>

Rellum’s main protest revolved around the issue of public disorder. He described how, in the week preceding the writing of his letter, a new practice had emerged. He wrote of how, in the evenings after dark, a motorcade of between eight and ten vehicles, each consisting of between ten and twenty SA men, would traverse the city’s streets shrieking antisemitic slogans, predominantly ‘Perish Jew!’,<sup>74</sup> and occasionally fire their rifles into the air. The vehicles were emblazoned with signs reading: ‘The Devil is the Father of the Jews’ and ‘Strike the Jews dead, wherever you may find them!’<sup>75</sup> Rellum concluded his letter by remarking that he was one of thousands of concerned Magdeburg citizens who felt that such behaviours were dishonourable to Germany and that, given such excesses, he questioned whether or not he was still residing in a cultured and law-abiding state. He also lamented that the city police could openly commit murder without recourse. In his final sentence, Rellum professes that there would be no peace in Magdeburg until *Gauleiter* Loeper and *Kreisleiter* Krause were replaced, and blamed the lawlessness solely on ‘their lack of discretion’ in all matters pertaining to the Jews.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Correspondence from the Magdeburg businessman and Nazi Party member, Rellum, to the Reich Minister for the Interior, Dr Frick, 22 August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band 4, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 321. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Juden sind hier unerwünscht!’

<sup>73</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>74</sup> Correspondence from the Magdeburg businessman and Nazi Party member, Rellum, to the Reich Minister for the Interior, Dr Frick, 22 August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band 4, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 321. The original German text reads: ‘Jude, verrecke!’

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 322. The original German texts of the signs read: ‘Der Teufel ist der Vater der Juden’ and ‘Schlagt die Juden tot, wo ihr sie findet!’

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Rellum's depiction of the situation is, perhaps, the most frank and graphic in describing the situation in the public domain for Jews at that time. Oral testimony confirms that Jews were set upon and the only way of evading this was to be vigilant in perceiving potential threats or to remain indoors. A small number of Jews escaped molestation owing to their lack of 'typical Jewish physiognomy,' unless they were publicly identified.<sup>77</sup>

From 31 August 1935 all trams in Magdeburg were outfitted with signs which bore the caption: 'Jews are not welcome here!'<sup>78</sup> Owing to the intervention of the *Centralverein* (CV), the signs were removed from 20 September 1935,<sup>79</sup> but were to later re-appear sporadically. Gerry Levy recalled travelling on a tram with his parents some time after this. Whilst sitting on the tram, a couple opposite the Levys were pointing at them and a little later they beckoned to the conductor and spoke to him. After their conversation, the conductor approached the Levys and remarked that the other passengers had indicated that the Levys were Jews. The conductor asked the Levys if this was correct and when they replied yes, the conductor politely requested them to disembark at the next tram stop. The Levys complied with the request.<sup>80</sup>

The Nazi Party was so dedicated and thorough in the distribution of mandatory antisemitic signage that during one particular boycott campaign on 24 September 1935, the order was given that all businesses had to use the prescribed Nazi Party aluminium signage in order to maintain uniformity and develop community spirit.

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<sup>77</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>78</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, concerning the introduction of antisemitic signage on Magdeburg trams, 31 August 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 392. The original German text of the sign reads: 'Juden sind hier unerwünscht!'

<sup>79</sup> Betrifft: Magdeburger Strassenbahn, 20. September 1935, *ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>80</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

All signs read: ‘Jews are not welcome here!’<sup>81</sup> Following the Nuremberg Laws, the campaign expanded. Interviewees who travelled to other parts of the country including Berlin, Hamburg and Königsberg recalled that Magdeburg had more antisemitic signage than any other city they had visited. They also noted that Magdeburg’s signage campaign commenced very early in comparison to other cities.<sup>82</sup> It is also clear that unofficial antisemitic signage was widely used in the city. One record of such an instance occurred in November 1935, when the provincial government requested confirmation from the chief of police in Magdeburg that unofficial signage had been removed from the cityscape. The offending signs included:

‘Whoever buys from a Jew is a traitor of the people!’  
 ‘Denounce the lackeys of the Jews!’  
 ‘The Jew is the master of all lies!’<sup>83</sup>

On 10 July 1935, approval was granted for the establishment of Jewish Youth Hostels. However, by January 1936 it had already been ordered that should such venues risk any disturbance to the peace, then they should be immediately closed down.<sup>84</sup> On 2 December 1935, the chief of police in Magdeburg ordered that Jews could only be sold milk in cases where the Jewish purchasers were of acceptable appearance and where their presence was deemed inconspicuous.<sup>85</sup> On the same

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<sup>81</sup> Betr.: Schilder: ‘Juden sind hier unerwünscht!’, 24. September 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 274. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Juden sind hier unerwünscht!’

<sup>82</sup> These memories have been confirmed in the writings of the CV’s Kurt Sabatzky.

<sup>83</sup> Correspondence from the Oberpräsident in Magdeburg to the Polizeipräsidenten in Magdeburg, 9 November 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 289. The original German texts of the signs read: ‘Wer beim Juden kauft, ist ein Volksverräter!’, ‘Brandmarkt die Judenknechte!’ and ‘Der Jude ist Meister im Lügen!’

<sup>84</sup> Betrifft: Jüdische Übernachtungsheime, 4. Januar 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>85</sup> Betrifft: Milchversorgung für jüdische Kinder, 2. Dezember 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 295.

day the Gestapa ruled that only in exceptional circumstances could Jewish functions take place on Christian holidays and/or Sundays, owing to the lack of available surveillance. The memorandum indicated that up to that time the Jews had taken advantage of this.<sup>86</sup>

By the end of 1935 exclusion of Jews in the public domain had been expedited and daily life in public became increasingly burdensome and the risk of public humiliation greater. Gisela Kent recalled the impossible situation when one came upon a Nazi parade:

You had to raise your hand to greet the flag. But I never knew if I raised my hand if someone would say: "There is a Jew and how dare you greet the flag!" Or, if I didn't greet the flag they would say to me: "Why didn't you greet the flag?" There were always opened doorways, where I ducked into. It was terrible. This was our home where you belonged and you didn't question that. And all of a sudden you were an outcast!<sup>87</sup>

Public chores and daily routines once considered simple took on a whole new meaning for Jews, who could find potential danger at every corner.

From 1936 onwards the opinion of interviewees was that exclusion from all non-Jewish public venues was normative. One interviewee recalled the existence of benches in parks marked for the use of Jews only.<sup>88</sup> She recalled incidents of the ongoing exclusion:

When we went ice-skating, we were thrown out. We could not go swimming; we could not go to the cinema. The risk was always being identified. If you weren't, you got through; otherwise you got thrown out. We couldn't even go to restaurants.<sup>89</sup>

The same situation applied to the families of Gisela Kent and Gerry Levy. Gisela Kent recalled a similar situation, which is graphically illustrative of the exclusion:

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<sup>86</sup> Betrifft: Jüdische Veranstaltungen, 2. Dezember 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>87</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>88</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

We didn't go out a lot socially. You couldn't go to the pictures because of the same signs: "Jews, Gypsies and Dogs are not allowed!" So, you just didn't go out. We kids sometimes did; we snuck in, but our parents never did. And there was one place in Magdeburg called '*Schwarzs Kaffee-Garten*' ['Schwarz's Coffee Garden'] where they used to go every Sunday. They still went there – my parents, my aunt, uncle and my grandparents, for quite a while, until about 1936. And then they stopped, or perhaps they were asked to stop.<sup>90</sup>

When Gerry Levy's aunt took him to a restaurant for a light refreshment they experienced the situation of being identified, approached by the manager and asked to leave. His aunt agreed to comply, but also added in her reply: 'Yes, but not before we finish our cherries and ice-cream!'<sup>91</sup> The defiance expressed here may sound light-hearted; however, it belies the reality of the deep hurt of this social ostracism. Eventually, the Jews in Magdeburg were excluded from the majority of public space, as evidenced in the preceding two situations. More and more Jews simply remained indoors and limited their outdoor activities to the confines of their business lives, to procuring household provisions and to activities conducted in the relative safety of Jewish space.

From 1937 until the pogrom of November 1938 exclusion from the daily life of the city continued apace. With each new policy or measure against the Jews came further isolation, further restrictions and greater insecurity and a mounting lack of public safety. Clearly a large element of policy had more to do with propaganda than with any real application. The desired outcome on the part of the Nazis was to fully isolate the Jews and to simultaneously present their presence in the community as a serious public danger. This is indicative in numerous policies. For example, on 21 March 1937 the Gestapo forbade the issuing of hunting

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<sup>90</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>91</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

licences to Jews on account of preserving public safety.<sup>92</sup> It is highly unlikely that Jews who previously did hold hunting licences were still hunting, which was not a favoured leisure activity in any event.<sup>93</sup> The premise in the memorandum was that allowing Jews to possess firearms posed a potential danger to the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*,’ given the view expressed that all Jews were opponents of the state.

With the initial policy of segregation in the public domain, governmental bodies encouraged the creation of establishments for Jewish clientele only. However, eventually all such establishments were reduced in number or dissolved, leaving Jews without any venues in the public domain. One such incident occurred on 26 August 1937 when the Ministry for the Interior decided that there was no longer any reason for the further establishment of any Jewish taverns and guest houses.<sup>94</sup> By September 1937 Jews in Magdeburg were only being treated in public hospitals under exceptional or life-threatening circumstances, owing to the rationale that their presence in public hospitals created a health risk for ‘Aryan’ patients and the mayor’s office drew up specific guidelines for this practice.<sup>95</sup> As a result of this, discussions about the possibility of establishing a Jewish clinic in Magdeburg were still being conducted in January 1938<sup>96</sup> and the approval for the

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<sup>92</sup> Betrifft: Ausstellung von Jagdscheinen an Juden, 21. März 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>93</sup> Jewish law (*Halacha*) prohibits the practice of hunting.

<sup>94</sup> Betrifft: Gesetzliche Bestimmungen für die Errichtung jüdischer Gast- und Schankwirtschaften, 26. August 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Betr.: Aufnahme und Behandlung von Juden in den städtischen Krankenhäusern, 15. September 1937, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 204–206.

<sup>96</sup> Correspondence to the Provinzialverband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege, Magdeburg, 28 January 1938, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 148, File 721-1-3042, USHMMA, pp. 15–16.

training of Jewish health professionals to specifically treat Jews only was approved by the authorities in June 1938.<sup>97</sup>

Confirmation of the city's perception of the Jewish threat to public safety is confirmed in correspondence to the provincial government concerning arrests in the city. Correspondence from 21 June 1938 indicated that for the period from and including 13 June 1938 to 18 June 1938 the police arrested twenty-one Jews and seventy-seven 'asocials,' all of whom were transported to either Buchenwald Concentration Camp or Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.<sup>98</sup> By this point in time, Jews were completely segregated from the non-Jewish community. They were prohibited from most public venues and were scorned or at best ignored at those few remaining areas still open to them, the most obvious being shops. As a result, they developed their own internal network of services. By November 1938 simply being identified in public as a Jew posed serious potential dangers.

From the months preceding the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws up until the pogrom of November 1938 the burden of everyday life in the public domain increased manifestly as exclusion of Jews from all public venues became complete. The compounding influence of the public vilification of the Jews also added to the strain of day-to-day living. The simultaneous campaigns of demonisation and segregation led to complete ostracism and humiliation. Daily life went on, but, Jews only ventured into the public domain when it was absolutely necessary, and even when doing so they attempted to remain invisible.

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<sup>97</sup> Zulassung nichtdeutschblütiger Personen zur staatlichen Prüfung als Krankenpfleger(in) und für verwandte Berufe, 11. April 1938, Bestand Arch., Signatur Nr. 002, ASGM, pp. 2–5.

<sup>98</sup> Betrifft: Vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung, 21. Juni 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1839, LHASA MD, p. 160.

By the time of the pogrom their contact with non-Jews was minimal, as Jews were effectively dwelling in their own private island in the city.

### **Contact with Non-Jews**

According to interviewees, on the eve of the Nazi accession to power, relations between Jews and non-Jews were not problematic. On occasion there had been incidents of antisemitism. However, the Jewish community felt totally integrated into the fabric of mainstream society in Magdeburg and fully accepted. The only exceptions would have been those Jews of Eastern European origins, whose strict Orthodoxy prevented them from complete acculturation. The pattern of behaviour between Jews and non-Jews from 1933 until 1938 in the social sphere conforms to those previously elaborated on in the economic sphere and in the public domain. From 1933 until 1935 the majority of interviewees confirmed that non-Jewish family acquaintances and business contacts remained often sympathetic and attempted to carry on established relationships. By the time of the Nuremberg Laws these relationships had already commenced their demise. Some non-Jews did acknowledge their former Jewish acquaintances in public. Others actually explained that, owing to the new political situation, such relationships had to end. A small number of non-Jews also remained loyal to the very end. By November 1938, few Jews in the city had any contact on a personal level with any non-Jews; by this time not one interviewee recalled either themselves or any family member possessing non-Jewish friends and acquaintances who acknowledged them in public. A minority of Jews, both children and adults, still possessed non-Jewish friends and acquaintances who met them clandestinely. The experiences varied from individual to individual and particularly from children to adults. One

common thread, however, was the strong emotional scarring that occurred when these relationships became casualties of Nazism.

In 1933, all of the families of the interviewees were typical acculturated Jews. Parents and grandparents of the interviewees mixed in predominantly Jewish social circles. However, a significant number had both friends and acquaintances who were non-Jews. These relationships had resulted from war service; lasting friendships at school; political connections prior to 1933; involvement in recreational activities such as sports and cards; mixed marriages; and most obviously from business lives. Few of these relationships continued to exist beyond 1935. In the case of the interviewees who were children and teenagers at the time, the same pattern applied. However, as a general rule, the majority did not even have the opportunity to develop relationships with non-Jewish children and teenagers, as the full effects of antisemitic propaganda at both school and in the youth movements ended any of these potentialities. A minority of young Jews did manage to maintain contacts with non-Jews; but these were the exceptions.

Gerry Levy recalled that his mother had non-Jewish friends, even though his parents as a couple possessed no non-Jewish friends. As a family the same applied. However, with regard to his parents' separate social circles he recalled:

My mother still had her *Kränzchen* [circle of friends] until the very end. But the friendships did cool off toward the end. My father had no such similar contacts. He had served in World War One, but never saw anyone from that group. However, there were one or two exceptions with whom he played football.<sup>99</sup>

The situation of the Levy family appeared to have been a common one in the Magdeburg community. Social interaction with non-Jews existed on a singular

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<sup>99</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

adult level, but seldom on the family level. Another interviewee recalled his family's social connections with non-Jews prior to the full application of the Nuremberg Laws:

Dad was a very strong believer in socialism and the Social Democratic Party and had lots of colleagues. And he was a bowler. As far as I know it was not a Jewish club. So again, he would have had quite a lot of non-Jewish friends.

I don't think my mother had any friends at all outside the family. I mean she had her brother, but I don't think she had many friends. From my very small days, there was an elderly [non-Jewish] couple living near us in Buckau and they were childless so they took great pleasure in having me and my brother around them and I think Mum used to go and help Dad in the shop. We spent a fair bit of time with this couple. So, they would have been very strong friends of my mother's. But once we went to live in the city we didn't see them all that often.<sup>100</sup>

This story, was, however, an exception to the rule. All interviewees possessed fond memories of the social events associated with male members of the family playing cards, which included non-Jews. Gisela Kent recalled this:

My father played *Skat* [Skat] and the other players were non-Jewish; naturally they brought their wives along, and friendships developed, yet not very close.

Once Hitler came to power this all changed. So much so that some of them made it quite obvious with such lines as: "We'll let you know when we can do it again." Eventually the meetings simply stopped.<sup>101</sup>

Hemmi Freeman had similar recollections of his father's non-Jewish *Skat* companions.<sup>102</sup>

One of the most common areas of social contact with non-Jews was with the non-Jewish families of those family members and/or friends who had non-Jewish spouses. Yet, even the majority of these social contacts ceased by the end of 1935, with the obvious exception of the immediate family of the non-Jewish spouse, who generally retained contact.

<sup>100</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>101</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>102</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

The final and most common area of all with regard to contact with non-Jews was in the business sphere. All interviewees concurred that their parents possessed numerous non-Jewish business contacts. In a community of Magdeburg's size this also stands to reason, as no one could have survived in any business relying on Jewish custom alone – something that Jewish businesses quickly learned when this, in fact, became the case due to Nazi regulations. Recollections of business relationships indicate that they were very cordial and even friendly; but seldom ventured into the social domain. Not dissimilar to the preceding areas of contact, these interactions faded away, with the only exception being of some businesses where contact did remain, although on strictly professional terms, until businesses were invariably 'aryanised.'

There were some instances where non-Jews did maintain contact with Jewish friends, but these were the exceptions and much of this contact was clandestine. Of particular note was a member of the Gestapo in Magdeburg by the name of Plettig. This man had served in World War One and had reputedly served with a Jewish man from Magdeburg and both formed a bond. Gerry Levy recalled that 'as a result of this association, communal organisations were often given warnings of anti-Jewish *Aktionen* that were to take place and that he was in fact a friend of the Jews.'<sup>103</sup> With prior knowledge of the pogrom to be unleashed on 9–10 November 1938, this man informed a number of Jews who were to be arrested. Some of them evaded incarceration thanks to this information.

Some non-Jews provided material comforts to Jews. Rosemarie Berndt, a non-Jewish friend of Inge-Ruth Herrmann, often took food to the Herrmanns.<sup>104</sup> Their

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<sup>103</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>104</sup> Austinat, op. cit., 29 January 2001.

daughter, Inge-Ruth, had left on a *Kindertransport* in August 1938<sup>105</sup> and Otto and Regina Herrmann had been reduced to impoverishment. The young Rosemarie recalled that it was common knowledge that her mother was sending her to the Herrmanns with food provisions and she remembered neighbours and friends remarking to her that she was '*judenfreundlich*' ['Jew-friendly'],<sup>106</sup> which she chose to ignore. Nevertheless, she was cognisant of the risks involved.

Gisela Kent recalled a non-Jewish friend of her mother's who remained loyal and with whom she made contact again after the end of the war.<sup>107</sup> In the case of Gisela Kent's mother and brother, Alice and Günther Jankelowitz, assistance was provided even after they had been deported to Warsaw in April 1942. Alice Jankelowitz's friend in Magdeburg, Ilse Riedel, continued to send food parcels to Warsaw. It is known that the parcels did arrive, as Alice Jankelowitz acknowledged receipt in her correspondence to her friend.<sup>108</sup>

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from these adult experiences. The pattern of attempting to maintain life and relationships continued after 1933. The transition period also existed in the social network between Jews and non-Jews. The majority of relationships, be they acquaintanceships or friendships, disappeared by September 1935. By this time any illusion of co-existence had evaporated and the full weight of the regime's racial policies were felt. However, the personal element was more prevalent for obvious reasons. It proved to be not unlike the impersonal interactions in the economic sphere and in the general public domain where Jews were treated with clinical contempt as

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<sup>105</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>106</sup> Austinat, op. cit., 29 January 2001.

<sup>107</sup> Kent, op. cit., 16 January 1998.

<sup>108</sup> Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM, op. cit.

faceless enemies. In all of the experiences of the parents and grandparents of the interviewees there were no reports of any type of abuse from those non-Jews who severed social and/or business contact. The relationships simply faded away or were ended abruptly without acrimony. However, there existed a minority of noble-minded non-Jews who continued to maintain contact and provide assistance to their Jewish friends and acquaintances as the situation worsened.

Unlike their parents or grandparents, Jewish children and youth drew most of their social circle from school and from the Jewish community. They felt the brutality after 1933 severely. Non-Jewish children were antagonistic toward Jewish children from very early on, particularly in public schools. Owing to the impact of both propaganda and the Nazi youth movements, the experiences of Jewish children and youth were predominantly negative and on occasion violent. By 1935, the overwhelming majority of Jewish youth possessed only Jewish friends. Owing to the obvious fact that non-Jewish children could identify their Jewish counterpart, from their school connections, Jewish children and youth were targeted constantly in public. This instilled a fear in most Jewish youth, who avoided any contact with all non-Jews in public. However, there were instances where the few Jews who possessed non-Jewish friends and acquaintances remained loyal and attempted to maintain their friendships as though they were normal. No single pattern characterising social contact between Jews and non-Jews who were children or youths emerges (not dissimilar to the situation of life at school). However, the majority of interviewees recalled a range of only negative experiences in any contact with their non-Jewish cohort.

Those interviewees who were already teenagers in 1933 recalled that they, too, experienced a period of transition. Non-Jewish friends were quick to remind their

Jewish friends that ‘they [the Nazis] don’t mean you!’<sup>109</sup> In discussing the attitudes of non-Jews toward Jews before 1935, Gisela Kent remarked:

It is very hard to say, because the people I knew, they said: “They don’t mean you! They mean the others!” And of course every Jew had a Christian who said: “They don’t mean you!” With reference to outright Jew-haters, we didn’t mix with them! They didn’t want us, and we didn’t want them!<sup>110</sup>

Hemmi Freeman elaborated on who the perceived ‘other’ was:

There were certain types of Germans that were anti-Jewish from the beginning; against non-German Jews more so. Let’s face it, Polish Jews or Eastern European Jews looked slightly different, dressed slightly different, behaved slightly different, and the Germans, that’s what they picked immediately. They didn’t speak German properly, or with an accent or with Yiddish German. That had an influence on some Germans. I remember at school if somebody pronounced a word badly, a non-Jewish boy, they immediately made an anti-Jewish remark: “You speak like a *polnische Jude!* [Polish Jew!]” It really depended on the background. Generally, the Germans that we came into contact with, business-wise or otherwise, they said: “Well it’s not you; we don’t mean you.” They made this excuse; we all know it.<sup>111</sup>

However, it did not take very long for even comments like these to cease. In the majority of cases, Jews often became invisible figures to those non-Jews who had known them prior to 1933. In the case of children and youth, some parents even went to the trouble of informing the Jewish parents as to why the friendship of their children could no longer continue. Gerry Levy recalled the case of his friend, Günther Hartwig:

At the *Mittelschule* [Middle Secondary School] I had a number of non-Jewish friends. However, only a couple were real friends. I would go to their homes and vice versa. This ceased, in any case, after a while. One of these friends, Günther Hartwig, whose parents were Social Democrats, even came to my parents and informed them that their Günther was no longer able to spend time with me, due to the current political climate.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>112</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

Perhaps even more psychologically brutal than this direct approach of severing relationships were occurrences where non-Jews simply ignored former Jewish friends if they encountered them, particularly in public. One such instance was that of a young Jewish girl and her 'adopted' non-Jewish aunt and uncle. Still sensitive to the rejection she suffered at the time, she recalled:

When we lived in Neustadt, across the street there lived a couple, who had no children. I was extremely fond of them, and they of me. I visited them each evening, and I called them aunt and uncle. I had the *Chanukah* [Jewish festival of lights] lights, and they had the Christmas tree, and I could go over. I also recall that they enjoyed our 'Jewish food,' and I theirs. What I also remember is that I liked them very, very much.

Then my family moved and this couple would still come to us for my birthday and then Hitler came. And then I saw them all of a sudden on the street and I ran towards them, and they turned around and went the other way, and I cried. I cried – that I remember, and they were supposed to have loved me very much!<sup>113</sup>

This non-violent, but no less damaging, rejection was in marked contradiction to the general abuse from non-Jewish youth which Jewish children and youth endured in public. This abuse ranged from verbal altercations to physical attacks and only increased as the years progressed and definitely escalated after September 1935. In a number of situations it also involved Jewish youth reaching saturation point, with regard to their constantly being taunted, and lashing out physically. This was a dangerous action to take and it indicated the near breaking-point level of frustration and anger which Jewish youth felt. The consensus of opinion of all interviewees was that members of the *Hitler Jugend* (HJ) were equally as prevalent in public as members of the *Bund deutscher Mädel* (BdM). However, the consensus was that the members of the HJ were far more brutal in their public behaviour and more aggressive toward Jews.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>114</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

In the instances where Jewish youth defended themselves physically, all felt great pride over their actions. They knew that this course of action was dangerous; however, it made them feel less humiliated and less of a victim. The young Inge-Ruth Herrmann recalled numerous altercations with members of the HJ, but one incident stood out:

They needled you, you know; just little things. I remember I came from school one day. I was walking with another couple of Jewish children and a couple of boys in the Hitler Youth pushed us off the footpath. I turned around and I shoved them back again. When I came home I told my mother. She was waiting for days for the Gestapo. I mean, we got told to keep away from them as much as we could.<sup>115</sup>

Gerry Levy also had similar experiences. He recalled a bicycle trip when he and a Jewish friend were cornered by a group of HJ. A fight ensued and Gerry's Jewish friend left him. He recalled that 'it was quite a good fight'<sup>116</sup> and that they threw stones at him and that he still actually possesses a scar from the incident. He remarked:

I am very proud that I didn't run away. I didn't win, but they left me alone. I think they rather respected me for the fact that I didn't run away.<sup>117</sup>

The epitome of the vulnerability of Jewish children and youth is evidenced in this final recollection of the same young girl who experienced the rejection by her adopted non-Jewish aunt and uncle:

Around the corner from my street, *Königgrätzer Straße*, there lived a boy and whenever I went past there, he spat at me and called me "*Jude! Itzig!*" ["Jew! Yid!"] One day I felt so annoyed, he was in full Hitler Youth uniform, and I just lunged at him. I started scratching and he pushed me and we fell down; and a woman opened a window and shouted: "Aren't you ashamed to hit a girl!" And he never spat at me again.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>116</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

Clearly most of the abuse Jewish children and youth encountered emanated from their initial identification as Jews in school, which made them potential targets anywhere. This would account for the experience of Günter Manneberg, who as the only Jew in his school remained unmolested until his peers learned that he was Jewish.<sup>119</sup>

There were few exceptions for Jewish children in their pre- and early teens who did not experience public abuse. The majority of interviewees remarked that by the time they were of an age ripe for forming friendships that the policy of state-sponsored antisemitism was well under way. Hence, in the majority of encounters they were treated as a faceless and depersonalised enemy. This trend did not always apply to those interviewees who were already teenagers when the change of regime took place. The pattern associated with Jewish children generally applied, but in the case of teenagers, there were some exceptions to this rule. These exceptions emanated, no doubt, from friendships having been formed prior to 1933. The situation of Hans Jensen (born Hansgünter Jeruchem in 1920) typifies this exception to the general rule of hostility:

I had a friend who was a leader in the *Hitler Jugend* [Hitler Youth]. He said to me one day: “We must go on a bicycle tour through the Harz and around that part of the world. My parents heard about this and said: “No way. No way, you can’t go.....you can’t sleep in a *Hitler Jugend-Heim* [Hitler Youth Hostel].” Anyway, I did in the end and I had a wonderful tour. We didn’t stay in a *Hitler Jugend-Heim*. He agreed that he would not risk that, but he didn’t travel in uniform either. I was about sixteen. I remember going to the famous *Denkmal* [monument] of Friedrich Barbarossa in Goslar and all that. We were gone close to two weeks.

I made another bicycle tour with this fellow Simon in 1937. From Magdeburg by train to Heidelberg. We had a tent; we couldn’t sleep in the *Jugendheime* so we took everything that we needed. And we went to the famous car race held every year near Heidelberg and got on our bikes to Mannheim; from Mannheim to Worms. We went to the oldest Jewish cemetery in Worms; and

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<sup>119</sup> Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

from Worms to Trier over the mountains; from Trier along the *Mosel* [River Moselle] to Koblenz: from Koblenz to Wiesbaden and to Frankfurt and then back to Magdeburg. That was a few weeks in the summer in 1937, and again without any problem.<sup>120</sup>

Hans Jensen's positive experiences remain the general exception. When Hans Jensen was asked whether or not he and this friend ever discussed the political situation and state antisemitism, he replied:

He never discussed anything like that. It is a version of the psyche of that time. Some of them were so imbued with hate; they showed it; and others like him did not.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, Jewish children and youth had similar experiences to their parents and grandparents in their contact with non-Jews in public. However, there were differences as well. They, too, generally experienced a period of transition, even though it was somewhat shorter, owing to the early effects of propaganda at school and in the youth movements. Most relationships already established ended abruptly or faded out, again without any acrimony, by 1935. Some teenagers proved to be the exceptions and managed to maintain friendships with non-Jews, some until 1938. However, the experiences of the majority of children and teenagers do diverge from the experiences of adults when assessing their contacts with non-Jewish children. Owing to their identification as Jews at school, all Jewish youth became potential targets of verbal and physical abuse anywhere at any time. Much of the time the assailants were unknown to them and they became simply the face of the enemy. This did not take place to the same extent in the adult world. Adults were also far more experienced and equipped to assess and deal with such situations, should they arise. They also had a broad experience of German society prior to Hitler. For the majority of Jewish children and youth this

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<sup>120</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>121</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 11 July 1999.

was not the case. Their rejection and humiliation was often compounded by their confusion. The abuse they experienced also led the majority of them to reject all things German, much earlier than those Jewish members of the adult world.

Contact with non-Jews continued for a relatively short time after 1933. For the majority of Jews, such relationships had been terminated by the time the Nuremberg Laws were enacted. A minority of Jews maintained some social contact with non-Jewish friends and acquaintances beyond this period up until the pogrom of November 1938; some even beyond it. The experiences of adults and children varied, with children generally experiencing greater abuse by their non-Jewish cohort. Particularly after September 1935 through until the pogrom of November 1938, Jews confined themselves socially to the company of other Jews. The Nuremberg Laws effectively ended any possibility of social intercourse between the two groups once all residents in Germany were defined racially. Contact with non-Jews became potentially fraught with serious danger and even with accusations of '*Rassenschande*,' a crime which featured in Magdeburg even before the Nuremberg Laws were promulgated.

### ***Rassenschande***

A favourite target for racially motivated antisemitic agitation was the sphere of alleged intimacy between Jews and 'Aryans.'<sup>122</sup> Such relations were branded '*Rassenschande*' or '*Rassenverseuchung*.' Relations between Jewish men and non-Jewish women were condemned as 'the product of a devilish universal plan for the poisoning of the races,' and German women were warned about such

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<sup>122</sup> Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938," in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 208.

temptations.<sup>123</sup> Even prior to the Nuremberg Laws this area of policy toward the Jews took on a violent form in Magdeburg. Organised terror always preceded any new laws or ordinances<sup>124</sup> and this proved equally so in the case of Magdeburg. Trials of Jews in Magdeburg for ‘*Rassenschande*’ featured as early as June 1935.<sup>125</sup> Owing to the co-operation of the Nazi Party (in *Gau* Magdeburg-Anhalt), the judiciary and the city council, Jews from all avenues of society in the city were publicly humiliated, degraded and in the end incarcerated for this crime,<sup>126</sup> the most notorious being that of the baptised Jew, Albert Hirschland. For the Jews of Magdeburg this crime, complete with its associated demonisation of Jews as racial polluters, exacerbated isolation and exclusion, whilst simultaneously adding further degradation to their already difficult daily lives. Further to this, it created a real fear of contact with non-Jews, especially in business relations, as unprotected by the law, they were easy targets. Given the grotesque and sensationalistic media coverage of the alleged crimes, the impact in the public domain for Jews was immediate and unrelenting.

A number of the recorded trials of Jews for ‘*Rassenschande*’ in Magdeburg bear witness to what can only be described as the legal application of the pseudo-scientific theories of ‘racial hygiene,’ whereby near pornographic fantasies were played out in trials and depicted in the print media. After passage of the Nuremberg Laws, many Jews were arrested throughout Germany on charges of ‘*Rassenschande*’ and then ‘persuaded’ in gaols or concentration camps to sell

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<sup>123</sup> Barkai, “Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938,” in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>125</sup> Correspondence to the Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten in Naumburg a/S, 22 June 1935, Bestand Rep. C 128, Signatur Nr. 81, LHASA MD, p. 153.

<sup>126</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., pp. 25–26.

their businesses.<sup>127</sup> Of the five cases to be discussed in this section, this was certainly the case for those employees accused of ‘*Rassenschande*’ at Magdeburg’s leading department store: ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*’, owned and operated by Hermann Broder, a member of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and prominent figure in the Jewish community. However, the remaining three cases only loosely fall into this category and perhaps bear even greater witness, not only to covetous greed, but to the city’s determination to publicly vilify and destroy ordinary Jews.<sup>128</sup> In the remaining four cases, one individual was the director of a business college, one a solicitor, one an unnamed woman and the final individual was a general practitioner. Of the five cases, only one of the accused miraculously escaped conviction and was acquitted. In the remaining four cases all three were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, but there was one exception.

The most widely publicised and sensationalised trial for ‘*Rassenschande*’ in Magdeburg for the entire Nazi period was that of Albert Hirschland, who was tried and convicted in June 1935.<sup>129</sup> This was the first show trial in the city<sup>130</sup> and attracted significant local and national media coverage. The propaganda value of the trial was maximised by the Nazi Party with a sixteen-page special edition of

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<sup>127</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>128</sup> For a discussion on the practice of denunciations involving ‘*Rassenschande*,’ see Christl Wickert, ‘Popular Attitudes to National Socialist Antisemitism: Denunciations for ‘Insidious Offenses’ and ‘Racial Ignominy’,’ in Bankier, ed., op. cit., pp. 282–295.

<sup>129</sup> Correspondence to the Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten in Naumburg a/S, 22 June 1935, Bestand Rep. C 128, Signatur Nr. 81, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>130</sup> Spector, ed., op. cit., p. 782. At the time of the completion of this chapter this famous trial had only been referred to in this source and in David J. Hogan, ed., *The Holocaust Chronicle* Lincolnwood, Illinois: Publications International, 2000, p. 92.

*Der Stürmer* dedicated solely to the Hirschland case published throughout Germany on 1 August 1935.<sup>131</sup>

In 1935 Albert Hirschland was the director of the formerly named ‘*Brucks höhere Handelsschule*’. The renamed ‘*Kaufmännische Privatschule*’ was a vocational institution which had been founded some thirty-eight years prior by Hirschland’s brother-in-law, Alfred Bruck.<sup>132</sup> Bruck was married to Hirschland’s sister, Elfriede. All parties were Jewish. Owing to Bruck’s partial blindness and ill-health, Hirschland had operated the business college for some time.<sup>133</sup>

Hirschland had commenced instruction for conversion to Lutheranism in November 1934 and was duly baptised on 17 March 1935.<sup>134</sup> According to a former acquaintance of Hirschland’s, Fritz Voss, Hirschland had undergone conversion as he had become engaged to a non-Jewish woman by May 1935.<sup>135</sup> Voss, also Jewish, had been the manager of the leading Magdeburg shoe store ‘*Rheingold*’ for approximately fifteen years. Originally a Jewish-owned business, the shop had been ‘aryanised’ in September 1933 and the new owners had retained Voss in their employ.<sup>136</sup> Even though a former acquaintance of Hirschland’s, they had not seen one another in seven years.

In the middle of May 1935 Hirschland was accused of ‘*Rassenschande*’ and of having sexual relations with under-aged females. His accusers were adult female

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<sup>131</sup> “Albert Hirschland: Der Rassenschänder von Magdeburg,” in *Der Stürmer*, Sondernummer 2, 1. August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 128, Signatur Nr. 81, LHASA MD, op. cit.

<sup>132</sup> Correspondence from Alfred Bruck to the Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden, Berlin, 5 September 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 388–389.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Betr.: Taufe Hirschland, undated, Bestand Rep. A, Spec. G, Signatur Nr. A 800, AKPS, unnumbered page, one page.

<sup>135</sup> Fritz Voss, *Sensationsprozess ‘Rassenschänder Hirschland’*, 21. Oktober 1935, Collection 0.2, File 1079, YVA, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

students of his college. In the ensuing investigation Hirschland's diaries were uncovered. Both Sabatzky<sup>137</sup> and Voss confirm that the diaries record amongst more pedestrian events, a sordid side of Hirschland's life. Voss recorded that he blushed with shame when he read the entries.<sup>138</sup> In his memoirs, Sabatzky writes that the alleged exploits of Hirschland should not have been glossed over, as he may have abused his position. However, he also writes that should Hirschland be found guilty, such a crime would normally have attracted a prison term of three years.<sup>139</sup>

Owing to the mentioning of Voss's name in a cursory manner in Hirschland's diaries, Voss was later called upon as a witness in the trial. According to Voss, the legal counsel for the office of the public prosecutor, a man by the name of Kürth, sought every avenue of attempting to accuse Voss of crimes as well.<sup>140</sup> Voss was targeted for interrogation and subjected to scrutiny because of his Jewishness. All parties involved intended to use the situation to the best advantage for the further vilification of not only the Jews in the city, but nationally as well.

The trial was set for 18 June 1935. Eight days before the trial, advertisements were placed in trams, on billboards and all over the city advertising the 'sensational court case against the race defiler Hirschland.'<sup>141</sup> Demonstrations were organised, where representatives of the *Gauleiter* and Chief Editor Holz of

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<sup>137</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>138</sup> Fritz Voss, *Sensationsprozess 'Rassenschänder Hirschland'*, 21. Oktober 1935, Collection 0.2, File 1079, YVA, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>139</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>140</sup> Fritz Voss, *Sensationsprozess 'Rassenschänder Hirschland'*, 21. Oktober 1935, Collection 0.2, File 1079, YVA, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

*Der Stürmer* addressed the masses on the subject of ‘The True Face of the Jew.’<sup>142</sup> Voss testified on 18 June 1935 to a closed court. Only Nazi hierarchy, Chief Editor Holz, photographers and those directly involved in the proceedings were present.

After two days of deliberation, on 19 June 1935 Hirschland was declared a dangerous and habitual criminal and found guilty of five counts of illicit sexual acts with female students. He was sentenced to a total of ten years’ imprisonment and ten years’ loss of civil rights in preventative detention.<sup>143</sup> It is not known what became of Hirschland and it can only be assumed that he died in prison.<sup>144</sup> For Hirschland the case ended with his incarceration, but, for those Jews associated with the defendant ramifications were to follow.

Both local newspapers the *Magdeburgische Zeitung* and *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* reported accounts of the proceedings of the two days, together with the verdict.<sup>145</sup> The former had, in its sensationalistic account of Hirschland’s misdeeds, included the fiction that Voss had made his apartment available to Hirschland for the purposes of mass orgies.<sup>146</sup> Voss was dismissed from his position at the shoe store and was informed by friends that he should leave Magdeburg immediately as the police were seeking him. Even though Voss had committed no crime, he knew, as a Jew, that this detail was irrelevant and he escaped. After travelling from place to place, he finally lodged with his nephew in

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<sup>142</sup> Fritz Voss, *Sensationsprozess ‘Rassenschänder Hirschland’*, 21. Oktober 1935, Collection 0.2, File 1079, YVA, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>143</sup> Correspondence to the Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten in Naumburg a/S, 22 June 1935, Bestand Rep. C 128, Signatur Nr. 81, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>144</sup> Spector, ed., op. cit., p. 782.

<sup>145</sup> Newspaper reports on the Hirschland case, Magdeburg, 19-20 June 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 412–423.

<sup>146</sup> Fritz Voss, *Sensationsprozess ‘Rassenschänder Hirschland’*, 21. Oktober 1935, Collection 0.2, File 1079, YVA, op. cit., p. 2.

Mannheim.<sup>147</sup> On 25 July 1935, advertisements nationwide were issued of the forthcoming special edition of *Der Stürmer* that appeared on 1 August, dedicated to the ‘sensational court case of Hirschland, the race defiler from Magdeburg.’<sup>148</sup>

After his nephew pleaded with him to leave Mannheim, Voss left for his parents’ home in Krefeld on 31 July. Later in Mainz he purchased a copy of the sixteen-page special edition of *Der Stürmer* and ‘was speechless over the outrageousness of the untruths’ and was even more shocked to discover photographs of himself in the newspaper.<sup>149</sup> The entire newspaper was replete with its well-known vulgar and crudely antisemitic language.<sup>150</sup> Realising that his situation was hopeless and in order to avoid arrest, Voss took a one-way flight from Cologne to Amsterdam.

Bruck’s college had been shut down in June 1935 during the demonstrations and a sign reading: ‘The Jews’ college is closed!’<sup>151</sup> had been affixed to its entrance. Alfred Bruck was soon thereafter accused of tax evasion and ordered to pay RM 30,000. As a result the college remained permanently closed and the real estate, which he owned, was sold off. Bruck and his family were left penniless.<sup>152</sup>

Clearly, it would appear that Hirschland was promiscuous and had a number of non-Jewish consensual sexual partners and he may have even abused his

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<sup>147</sup> Fritz Voss, *Sensationsprozess ‘Rassenschänder Hirschland’*, 21. Oktober 1935, Collection 0.2, File 1079, YVA, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> “Albert Hirschland: Der Rassenschänder von Magdeburg,” in *Der Stürmer*, Sondernummer 2, 1. August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 128, Signatur Nr. 81, LHASA MD, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. The original German text of the sign reads: ‘Die Judenschule ist geschlossen!’

<sup>152</sup> Correspondence from Alfred Bruck to the Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden, Berlin, 5 September 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 388–389.

position of trust at the college. However, this was maximised in the Nazi propaganda campaign against the Jews, both locally and nationally. The remaining details of the entire case and the campaign that followed conform to the desired and much-publicised image of Jews as sexual predators and of being capable of every type of sexual perversion. To this end the media campaign in Magdeburg and beyond reached a frenzy of demonisation and hatred. Through the diligence of *Der Stürmer* the case of Hirschland, and everyone whose photograph appeared in that special edition, became household knowledge throughout Germany. This also occurred before the Nuremberg Laws were even enacted. With such a public campaign in progress, all Jews in the city were potential targets.

The following multiple cases of '*Rassenschande*' occurred after the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws and involved senior staff at Magdeburg's leading and most modern department store: '*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*'. This establishment was owned and operated by Hermann Broder, a member of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.

This department store was a household name in Magdeburg and possessed a reputation as a fine establishment. The multiple cases of '*Rassenschande*' surrounding '*Barasch*' caused a sensation locally. Of the numerous cases of '*Rassenschande*' which took place in the city, this one particularly remained in the minds of all interviewees, largely due to the owner's highly respected profile in the Jewish community and the profile of the department store as an essential component of the cityscape.

Early in December 1935 an informant contacted the office of the State Police in Magdeburg claiming that a number of senior male staff at '*Barasch*' had committed 'serious acts of moral indecency' against female employees, including

apprentices.<sup>153</sup> All of the male staff implicated were Jewish and all of the alleged victims were non-Jewish females. The department store was ordered to close temporarily on 12 December 1935 and the owner was instructed by the police that it could re-open on 14 December,<sup>154</sup> provided that all senior managerial staff, including the accused, had been replaced by ‘Aryan’ staff.<sup>155</sup> The owner complied and four of the accused were arrested and taken into custody. Three managed to evade initial arrest, but were later apprehended.

The three senior male staff members who were originally arrested were Julius Fischel, Rudolf Friedländer and Isidor Gans.<sup>156</sup> The fourth man originally arrested appears to have been the non-Jewish owner of the hotel in *Kantstraße*, where the alleged crimes were to have taken place. His name was Oehm.<sup>157</sup> Three other Jews accused of involvement were also arrested; only two of whose names have been located, they being Petzall and Wertheimer.<sup>158</sup> Fischel had been the personnel chief at ‘*Barasch*’ since 1927; Friedländer was the supervisor of general staff, including apprentices; and Gans had been the company secretary since 1922.

Whilst attending to the assistance required by the defendants, Kurt Sabatzky of the CV makes repeated references in his correspondence to the number of Jews, both in Magdeburg and beyond, who were arrested for ‘*Rassenschande*.’ In all

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<sup>153</sup> Betrifft: Verfehlungen von leitenden Angestellten des jüdischen Warenhauses Barasch in Magdeburg, 13. Dezember 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 302.

<sup>154</sup> Betrifft: Schließung des jüdischen Kaufhauses Barasch in Magdeburg, 13. Dezember 1935, *ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>155</sup> Betrifft: Verfehlungen von leitenden Angestellten des jüdischen Warenhauses Barasch in Magdeburg, 13. Dezember 1935, *ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, 6 January 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 359.

instances this was for what would have been deemed normal relationships between Jews and non-Jews prior to September 1935. Reference is also made to the amount of publicity the case had drawn from the press in Frankfurt.<sup>159</sup> In the ensuing weeks, a large number of the store's Jewish employees tendered their immediate resignation. Although not implicated in any way in the alleged crimes, Hermann Broder was already investigating the sale of his business.<sup>160</sup> Clearly, both Broder and his staff were fearful and felt vulnerable.

As in the case of Albert Hirschland, the legal counsel for the office of the public prosecutor was the same representative, a man by the name of Kürth. Likewise, the presiding judge, Judge Pippig, was the same. Both men were notorious antisemites. On 25 February 1935, *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, which had been reporting the entire trial proceedings, triumphantly wrote that Fischel had been sentenced to four years' imprisonment, Gans to one year's imprisonment and Oehm to five months. The other accused had been acquitted.<sup>161</sup> It is not known if they were re-arrested, as was the tendency in such cases.

In these instances of '*Rassenschande*' the clear delineation was made that, as in accordance with the Nuremberg Laws, any sexual relations between Jews and 'Aryans' were prohibited. Sabatzky commented that Jews were being arrested for exactly this reason. This separation in accordance with both law and Nazi racial doctrine is demonstrated rigidly. As articulated by Barkai,<sup>162</sup> this instance is also an excellent example of sale by coercion, as Hermann Broder, sensing the

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<sup>159</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, 15 December 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 373.

<sup>160</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, 6 January 1936, *ibid.*, pp. 359–360.

<sup>161</sup> "Gefängnisstrafen im Barasch-Prozeß," in *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, 25. Februar 1935, *ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>162</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 71.

inevitable and fearful that he would be accused of such a crime, had sold his business to Willibald Lemke by March 1936.<sup>163</sup>

The three remaining examples of trials were not as well documented as the previous two. However, the recording of these offences conform to the Nazi policy in Magdeburg of forced segregation and of ‘proving’ the true nature of ‘Jewish sexual perversion and predatory practice.’ Throughout these trials there followed the associated vilification and ruination. In this respect they are not reflective of cases which arose from the sole motivation of ‘aryanisation.’

On 12 March 1936, a non-Jewish insurance agent, Bernhardt Gans of *Jakobstraße*, was sentenced to fourteen months’ imprisonment for ‘*Rassenschande*.’<sup>164</sup> Both he and the Jewess involved were also deprived of all civil rights for three years. Gans had spent the preceding New Year’s Eve with an unnamed Jewish woman and was denounced by one of his neighbours. Of particular interest in this case was the absence of a prison sentence for the Jewess involved. It could be postulated that as the ‘crime’ had taken place at Gans’ residence, that the judge found him more culpable and wished to make an example of him as a warning to ‘Aryans’ and Jews.

Another key case was the arrest, imprisonment and subsequent trial of the Magdeburg solicitor and notary, Willi Spanier in 1938. Spanier was accused of committing indecent sexual assault on a fifteen-year-old male office employee. A particularly well-organised hate campaign was instigated by the city’s governmental and legal bodies against the innocent Spanier, complete with an

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<sup>163</sup> Correspondence from the regional office of the CV in Leipzig to the head office of the CV in Berlin, 20 March 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>164</sup> Strafsache, 20. März 1936, Bestand Rep. C 144, Signatur Nr. 68, LHASA MD, p. 10.

article in *Der Stürmer* entitled: ‘The notary Spanier! The sex criminal from Magdeburg.’<sup>165</sup> The half-page article reported the alleged crime in its customary crude and grotesque language, which included an exploration of the topic: ‘The Jew as master of perversion.’<sup>166</sup> After a lengthy court battle he was found innocent and released,<sup>167</sup> an event which Gerry Levy recalled vividly. Rumour had circulated in the Jewish community that upon Spanier’s release, he was going to be re-arrested immediately. In an attempt to circumvent this, Hans Lewin, Gerry Levy’s maternal uncle, together with a group of other friends of Spanier’s, organised a car to be waiting at the rear of the Palace of Justice for him. Lewin himself collected Spanier and drove him out of the province.<sup>168</sup> It is not known what eventually became of Spanier.

The final case also occurred in 1938. On 26 August 1938, the general practitioner Dr Erich Böhm was convicted on two counts of ‘*Rassenschande*.’<sup>169</sup> He was found guilty of maintaining a sexual relationship with a married ‘Aryan’ woman since the application of the Nuremberg Laws and of employing a female ‘Aryan’ housekeeper under the age of forty-five years. The chief witness in the case was the co-accused – the woman who was having the extra-marital affair with Böhm. Their business relationship actually dated from 1920 and their personal one from 1930. At the time of the trial Böhm was unmarried. The judgement read that sexual relations took place approximately every three to four

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<sup>165</sup> “Notar Spanier! Der Sexualverbrecher von Magdeburg,” in *Der Stürmer*, undated, Bestand Rep. 30, Signatur Nr. 2501 199, STAM, pp. 37–38.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>167</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>168</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>169</sup> *Betrifft: Strafverfahren gegen den prakt. Arzt Dr. Böhm wegen Rassenschande*, 15. September 1935, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 16, Band 5, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 41.

weeks and that in spite of the known breaches of the Nuremberg Laws, Böhm maintained the relationship until arrested. Sentencing was set for 4 October and his sentence remains unknown. This final example is perhaps the most typical of the cases. The motivations of Böhm's lover, turned informant, accuser and witness, remain unknown. However, this case illustrates how perilously dangerous any social relationships with non-Jews had become. Quite separate from their public demonisation, Jews were also completely unprotected legally and put themselves at potential risk when interacting on any level with non-Jews.

By the very essence of the crime, '*Rassenschande*' could be viewed as perhaps the most humiliating and degrading of all 'crimes' a Jew could be accused of at that time. A number of observations may be drawn from these cases in Magdeburg. Not all cases resulted from the possibility of an 'aryanisation,' but the sample cases from Magdeburg indicate a range of motivations. The cases of Albert Hirschland and Willi Spanier provided the local Nazi Party and racial ideologists with perfect propagandistic opportunities. Regardless of the veracity of the accusations, they made sure that they used such cases to prove to the public the supposed perverse nature of Jewish sexuality. In the case of '*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*' the prime motivation would have been the 'aryanisation' of the business. In the remaining two cases of Gans and Böhm, personal motivations for gain or revenge came into play. However, the unifying element in all of the cases was the public humiliation, the shame and the degradation both the accused and the Jewish community experienced. In depriving Jews of any legal status, the Nuremberg Laws made them perfect targets for any accusation. With the introduction of the crime of '*Rassenschande*' added to the ongoing public campaign of demonisation, Jews were now defined legislatively as the ultimate

other and capable of racial pollution and ruination through social contact and sexual relations. Understandably, this led to fear and a sense of vulnerability on the part of Jews, and particularly so in the public domain, where they predominantly encountered non-Jews. The creation of this new crime also marked irrevocably the official nullification of what had been the success story of the much-loved and proudly nurtured German-Jewish identity.

### **The Destruction of the German-Jewish Symbiosis**

In the early years of the Nazi regime the majority of the adult Jewish population clung to their much-cherished German-Jewish identities. Magdeburg was no exception. The majority of the community proudly boasted that they were German citizens of the Jewish faith. With the onslaught of antisemitic policies and their application in all spheres of life, many Jewish Germans wanted to maintain the traditional symbiosis they had grown up to know and love, while the Nazis intended its complete nullification. With the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws the German-Jewish symbiosis was irrevocably destroyed. Whether Jews accepted it or not became irrelevant, as the process of public vilification and incrimination increased. In Magdeburg the very public destruction of this relationship was perhaps best symbolised by both the judicial and the media campaigns against the Jews. By the end of 1935 the Jews of Magdeburg were suffocating in their own city. The pursuit of economic strangulation, of racial segregation and vilification was undertaken with great energy by the judiciary and reported regularly in the media. It is in this pursuit of media coverage of trials of Jews accused of fabricated crimes that the end of this relationship is well viewed. In Magdeburg, as elsewhere, the humiliation and the despair over this state-sponsored persecution

was felt so keenly by some of the accused, that they could not bear the daily strain of incrimination and degradation anymore and committed suicide.<sup>170</sup> For the Jews who accepted this forced separation a renewal or (re-) discovery of their Jewishness took place.<sup>171</sup> For those who did not, a gaping void emerged as they were thrown into an identity crisis and often remained in a vacuum.

The unanimous opinion of all interviewees when the subject of identities was raised was of the absolute and irresolute Germanness of the adult generation in their social circle. Countless male members of their families had served with honour and pride in World War One. Their family pedigrees were thoroughly rooted in the German-speaking lands. One interviewee expressed the attitude prevalent in his own home, which could easily be applied to all of the interviewees. He remarked:

I remember my father describing himself as a *deutscher Bürger jüdischen Glaubens* [German citizen of the Jewish faith]. I also remember very well my father's father having a picture of the *Kaiser* [Emperor] on the wall. He didn't have too many religious things around, but he had a picture of the *Kaiser*!<sup>172</sup>

Gisela Kent expressed similar sentiments indicating the level of nationalism in this small community, when she remarked that her family was 'very liberal, very German. They were Germans with a Jewish religion.'<sup>173</sup>

Conversely, whilst social contact with non-Jews in the city was limited, the Jews of Magdeburg felt perfectly equal and fully accepted into the city's fabric.

For this reason alone, particularly in the early years, and for some Jews even up

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<sup>170</sup> For a detailed discussion on the position of suicide in the Jewish community of Germany under Nazism, see Konrad Kwiet, "The Ultimate Refuge – Suicide in the Jewish Community under Nazism," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXIX, 1984, pp. 173–198.

<sup>171</sup> Jehuda Reinharz, "Jewish Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Central Europe," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXVII, 1992, pp. 147–167.

<sup>172</sup> Personal interview, name withheld on request (recorded), Sydney, 13 July 2004.

<sup>173</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

until 1938, the community felt that as loyal citizens the legal apparatus of the state would protect them. Given the large number of war veterans in the community, there was also a strong feeling that their service record would protect them and their loved ones. Until 1935, whilst some Jews were confused about events, others were in total denial of the situation with regard to their new and evolving place, or lack thereof, in Hitler's Germany. Gisela Kent lamented her father's denial of the situation:

This is a very sore point with me. My father said it can't last, and that: "They don't mean me. I was a soldier on the front; I got an Iron Cross. Those people in the concentration camps, they must have done something wrong."<sup>174</sup>

Prior to the Nuremberg Laws, the majority of adult community members attempted to adjust to their changed status, yet still clung to their trusted German-Jewish identities. Simultaneously, they learned to cope with taunting and public displays of antisemitism. Most felt it was temporary. However, this did not make it any easier. Interviewees recalled many instances of being excluded or publicly embarrassed on account of their Jewishness. Gisela Kent recalled such an instance:

This girl said to me: "My mother told me that Jews cannot sing the national anthem." And I said that's silly, of course we can. So she said: "Then sing it!" So, I sang it! Unfortunately, I cannot sing. So, I'm sure that she never doubted her mother's word again [laughing]! I knew all the words, but the notes weren't there!<sup>175</sup>

All illusions of the hoped-for temporary nature of their situation evaporated in September 1935. In Magdeburg this symbolic end was made manifest in the judiciary and the press. On 7 December 1935, the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for the Interior requested that the coverage of all criminal trials of Jews be made a

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<sup>174</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

priority.<sup>176</sup> Magdeburg proved no exception to this rule, as previously demonstrated in the coverage of ‘*Rassenschande*’ trials. Given the new legal and racial status of Jews, propaganda only intensified. On 3 January 1936, *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* in Magdeburg published an article discussing the topic: ‘No national minority.’<sup>177</sup> The reality of the end of this relationship was now being played out to the full. Jews were not only to be pursued in the judiciary and the press, but Jewish voices were also going to be forbidden in the public domain. In Magdeburg regular bans on Jewish public speakers were ordered, with the strict instruction that should such bans be breached, then the offending parties were to be arrested.<sup>178</sup>

As in the trials involving the crime of ‘*Rassenschande*,’ other cases which were played out in Magdeburg emanated from the same variety of motivations. The primary purpose was to expose ‘Jewish criminality.’ Two high-profile cases involving invented crimes typify the torment played out publicly and also represent this tragic end.

Ernst Fliess was a prominent solicitor and respected member of the Jewish community. Having been arrested and charged for the alleged crime of trafficking in foreign currency, he opted to represent himself. The charges were manufactured and Fliess was innocent. In spite of the judicial ruling which guaranteed that legal counsel could not be detained when representing a defendant, Fliess’s opponent,

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<sup>176</sup> Memorandum the Reich and Prussian Minister for the Interior to the State Governments, 7 December 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>177</sup> “Keine nationale Minderheit! Grundsätzliche Ausführungen zur Judenfrage,” in *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung*, 3. Januar 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>178</sup> Rundschreiben; Redeverbot, 21. Februar 1935 – 12. Februar 1937, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 230–233; Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., pp. 91–152; Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 099, ASGM, p. 99.

Dr Kulmey, insisted that Fliess be detained and Judge Pippig obliged.<sup>179</sup> Fliess was eventually found guilty and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in January 1936. Sabatzky wrote that 'not long thereafter in a moment of despair Fliess took his own life.'<sup>180</sup> Sabatzky also wrote that the campaign of public defamation in the city's press had shattered Fliess's already fragile nervous state.<sup>181</sup>

The case of the prominent Magdeburg banker, Philipp Schmulewitz, and three of his clients in August 1936 mirrored the situation of Fliess. Schmulewitz was accused of the same crime. Once again the combination of the judiciary and the press proved no match and all of the defendants were publicly harangued. On 8 August 1936, Sabatzky reported that all four defendants had been found guilty as charged.<sup>182</sup> Throughout the course of the trials *Die Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* had reported in sensationalistic and antisemitic rhetoric the entire proceedings and the final verdicts. Philipp Schmulewitz was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, ten years' loss of civil rights and ordered to pay a fine of RM 320,000; Max Friedländer was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, three years' loss of civil rights and ordered to pay a fine of RM 5,000; Ilse Friedländer was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, three years' loss of civil rights and ordered to pay a fine of RM 3,000; and Jenny Lederer was sentenced to fourteen months'

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<sup>179</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>180</sup> Betr.: Prozessangelegenheit Rechtsanwalt Fliess, 1. Februar 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>181</sup> Kurt Sabatzky, *Meine Erinnerungen an den Nationalsozialismus*, undated, File ME 541; MM65, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>182</sup> Betr.: Prozess Schmulewitz - Magdeburg, 8. August 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 335.

imprisonment, three years' loss of civil rights and ordered to pay a fine of RM 10,000.<sup>183</sup>

Regardless of how Jews felt about their identities, after September 1935 a decision had been made for them. As far as the Nazis were concerned there were only Jews in Germany and not Jewish Germans. With the full application of the Nuremberg Laws this separation enabled the public vilification of Jews as the apparatus of the state sought to lay bare their 'criminality.' In Magdeburg the combined efforts of the judiciary and the press proved highly successful. In many respects this symbolised the destruction of the German-Jewish symbiosis in the city. One of the outcomes of this amputation was the creation and nurturing of Jewish identities and Jewish space. Jewish education became a priority. Owing to their exclusion in every sphere, by 1938 Jewish lives in Magdeburg were centred on the home and the few remaining Jewish institutions still operational.

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<sup>183</sup> Newspaper reports on the Schmulewitz case, Magdeburg, 15 August 1936, Collection RG-11.00M.31, Reel 130, File 721-1-2845, USHMMA, op. cit., pp. 335–339.

## **Chapter Four: Daily Life in the Private Domain, 1933–1938**

### **Jewish Family Life and Social Life**

Prior to 1933 the acculturated Jewish Germans of Magdeburg led full and rich family and social lives. They benefited from the wide array of activities offered both by their community and the city. Between 1933 and September 1935 they attempted to maintain what had been normal family and social lives, constantly encountering exclusion and defamation. As a result of these policies, community members gravitated increasingly to their own cultural institutions. The majority of these were still operational until May 1935. This led to a distinctive increase in awareness and interest in the various expressions of Jewishness. Jewish homes and institutions became havens of refuge from the reality of the worsening situation in the outside world and Jewish identities, particularly those of the young, were fostered or renewed. From May 1935 the dissolution of the community's institutions gathered momentum and by the time of the pogrom of November 1938, the only bodies operational were those providing religious and welfare services. Social networks became almost exclusively Jewish and the fulcrum of the community became the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. Life continued and Jews attempted to maintain full and dignified social lives within their invisible ghetto. In this respect, the home and the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* became cherished spaces. They were the only safe spaces still in existence on the eve of the November pogrom.

Both family and social life suffered from the effects of all antisemitic measures that occurred between 1933 and May 1935, but Jews attempted to adjust and continue to live as normally as possible. Given the encroaching hostility of the

outside world, the home became an especially important private space. Most families affiliated with the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* consisted of two parents, with one or two children. Families possessing more than this number of children were considered large and were in the minority.<sup>1</sup>

The only real recorded direct impact of antisemitic policy entering into this domain in the practical sense prior to November 1938 was when the Nuremberg Laws forbade Jews from employing female ‘Aryan’ domestic staff under the age of forty-five years. When this occurred, it shocked the community. On 30 April 1936, this law was extended to ‘Aryans’ who held foreign citizenship.<sup>2</sup> The only exceptions to this ruling were ‘Aryan’ females employed in Jewish households, where the Jewish males resident were infirm and not deemed a danger.<sup>3</sup>

The antisemitic measures in all domains beyond the confines of the home placed much pressure on family and social life and subsequently had the potential to also invade home life. Older Jews made every attempt to shield the younger members of the community from what was occurring.<sup>4</sup> This practice was not always successful. The young teenager Sigrid Schetzer recalled when her paternal uncle was arrested in 1938 for a minor offence:

Uncle Hermann was sent in 1938 to Dachau. The Gestapo made a law or something. Anybody who had a police fine or anything at all like that would be taken to a concentration camp. So, when I came home [on] Saturday night from ping pong at the synagogue, and you know children, they hear all sorts of things. And I came home and I said: “Do you know what we heard?” So, my uncle said: “*Ach!* [Oh!], nothing will happen to me, because I’ve got

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<sup>1</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Betr.: Beschäftigung deutschblütiger Hausgehilfinnen fremder Staatsangehörigkeit in jüdischen Haushalten, 30. April 1936, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For a general discussion on the disruption of Jewish family life in Nazi Germany see Trude Maurer, “From Everyday Life to State of Emergency: Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany,” in Marion Kaplan, ed., op. cit., pp. 271–373.

the Iron Cross!” The next day he was taken to Dachau, and he was there for six months. He came back a broken man. But they had an affidavit and could have gone to America. They wouldn’t go, and when they saw us off at the station, he said: “You’re crazy!”<sup>5</sup>

When he told my parents of his experiences in Dachau my father said: “What you are telling us is impossible! It’s hard to believe.”<sup>6</sup>

Outside the home, Jews gravitated to the community’s long-established and much-valued institutions, including the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. For the period from 1933 until May 1935, community members continued all of their Jewish affiliations.<sup>7</sup> Whilst the interviewees were all involved in Jewish youth groups, their adult counterparts maintained strong links with the particular institutions which had been longstanding components of their communal and social lives. Gerry Levy remembered that his father had held the position of treasurer of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg*.<sup>8</sup> All interviewees confirmed that their fathers and/or male relations who were war veterans were committed members.<sup>9</sup> The remaining predominant affiliations recalled by interviewees were those with the *B’nai B’rith Mendelssohn-Loge XII 357*, its female wing the *Frauenbund der Mendelssohn-Loge*<sup>10</sup> and for a limited few *Makkabi*.<sup>11</sup> One interviewee described his father’s involvement with the latter organisation, recalling both the athletics and handball teams.<sup>12</sup> From May 1935 these institutions were all dissolved and, as a direct result, the role and activities of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* expanded.

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<sup>5</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Personal interview with Sigrid Freeman (recorded), Sydney, 3 June 1998.

<sup>7</sup> The roles and eventual dissolutions of these institutions which chart the full period between 1933 and 1938 have been discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>8</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* continued its religious functions, but also operated increasingly as a social centre for Jews.<sup>13</sup> Religious celebrations were combined into social events and leisure activities were also provided for the youth within the safe walls of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.<sup>14</sup> Gerry Levy recalled how the celebration of his *Bar Mitzvah* on 1 May 1937 was such an event, both religious and social in essence.<sup>15</sup>

Until November 1938, community members still felt relatively safe within the confines of their homes and the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. In contra-distinction to this, there was no such sanctuary in the public domain in the city centre, where the majority of Jews lived. Jews developed strategies to meet socially in public, for example, at the Jewish cemetery and leased garden allotments. Jews also attempted to find respite from public degradation by travelling to other places.

The sports ground adjacent to the Jewish cemetery was actually a vacant field, which the community had purchased for the cemetery's eventual expansion. It had been turned into a football field and had always been used by the community for recreational events.<sup>16</sup> After 1933 and particularly after September 1935, the field was used as a social centre for Jews. As the cemetery was located outside the city centre in the suburb of Sudenburg, it also offered relative safety. This field provided the only outdoor space where Jews as a large group could socialise with relative safety and was still being utilised for this purpose during World War

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<sup>13</sup> For a general discussion on social ostracism and the intensification of social life among Jews see Maurer, "From Everyday Life to State of Emergency: Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany," in Kaplan, ed., op. cit., pp. 336–342.

<sup>14</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>15</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>16</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

Two.<sup>17</sup> The only other opportunity that Jews availed themselves of was the possibility of leasing garden allotments, as the following recollection indicates:

We hired such a garden so that we could be together; but a lot of Jewish families had gardens there; so we visited each other. But my parents and Ruth's parents hired this garden together, and then the whole family came to visit us.<sup>18</sup>

By the middle of 1935 Jews were resorting to such measures, and the oft-repeated comment of interviewees was that their social sphere only consisted of Jews. This practice was also definitely used as a coping mechanism against the brutal reality of what they encountered in the public domain, as one interviewee remarked:

That was my life there. I mean we lived within the Jewish community. We only had our Jewish friends.<sup>19</sup>

Gerry Levy articulated the essence of the situation when he remarked: 'There was a separation from the rest of the world.'<sup>20</sup>

Even when Jews organised events for themselves outside the known Jewish institutions for social purposes, the regulated separation and Nazi concern for public safety always followed. Such an instance occurred not long after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in December 1935<sup>21</sup> and concerned Jews organising dances in Magdeburg. The concern arose when 'Aryans' were noted to be frequenting such events. As a result, in consort with the Gestapa and the *Reich* Chamber of Culture, the office of the State Police for the Merseburg District issued a memorandum indicating that only such events which could guarantee a 'Jews only' clientele would henceforth be granted permission to operate.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>18</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Betrifft: Jüdische Tanzveranstaltungen, 10. Dezember 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

All interviewees recalled holidaying with their families before 1933 and how some holidays continued into the early years of the Nazi regime. They particularly recalled that after September 1935 visits to relations in other parts of Germany were undertaken not just to visit family but also as a temporary respite from the situation in Magdeburg. The Harz Mountains, the Thuringia Forest and the Baltic Sea coast were popular holiday destinations. Gisela Kent recalled family holidays to both the Harz and to Thuringia.<sup>23</sup> Gerry Levy also recalled his holidays in the Harz. He noted that in spite of not being known in a different place, this did not always guarantee protection from antisemitism. He recalled one of his family's holidays:

We normally went to the Harz as a family at least twice per year, occasionally once per year. We never had any incidents of antisemitism there, with one exception. This particular place had anti-Jewish signs, which were larger and more prominent than usual. In Magdeburg the signs were generally small and made of metal. But in Bad Harzburg the signs were large and the text was in red: '*Juden ist hier Zutritt verboten.*' We went there not knowing this. So we never went back there.<sup>24</sup>

The Baltic Sea coast was equally popular. The Herrmann family holidayed every summer at Heringsdorf, near Wollin on the Pomeranian Bay. The Herrmanns' daughter fondly recalled the local delicacies of smoked eels.<sup>25</sup> The Jeruchem family also holidayed in coastal towns. Hans Jensen recalled holidaying in Swinemünde, near Stettin<sup>26</sup> and in the spa towns of Kranz, Rauschen and Zoppot, all in the vicinity of Königsberg.<sup>27</sup> Sigrid Freeman recalled being sent to the North Sea coast for a short holiday with a girlfriend after the death of her only sister, Brigitte, on 24 February 1936:

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<sup>23</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>24</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Personal interview with I. Poppert (recorded), Sydney, 16 January 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 11 July 1999.

I went once to Wyk auf Föhr [Wyk on the Isle of Föhr]. On Wyk auf Föhr was a Jewish girls' *Pensionat* [Boarding School]. I went with a girlfriend, Eva Riese. That was the only time I went on my own [on a holiday]. Wyk auf Föhr – it's a little island, absolutely beautiful!<sup>28</sup>

At the beginning of 1936 Jews were still travelling. However, they were no longer taking holidays as such, but lodged with relatives. Interviewees recalled such stays in Berlin, Hamburg, Königsberg and other parts of East Prussia. A number also witnessed the Olympic Games in Berlin. Sigrid Freeman recalled a trip her family undertook:

I visited East Prussia only once in 1936. My sister had died in 1936, and we wanted to go on a little bit of a holiday; so we went when the Olympic Games were on, via Berlin, to East Prussia to a town called Ortelsburg. My uncle's parents still lived there and we visited them. And we stayed with them for about three or four weeks.<sup>29</sup>

Hans Jensen also remembered attending one event of the Olympic Games.<sup>30</sup> Those in Magdeburg who were too young to personally experience the Olympic Games, also followed them with keen interest, as recounted in the following episode:

We had a great time with the Olympic Games. I was only four years old, but Dad being a sportsperson was extremely excited about the Olympic Games. And we were out collecting cigarette coupons which we then could exchange for official photos. We had these two thick books of Olympic photos. Yes, that was a really good time.<sup>31</sup>

His older brother, who was five years old at the time, concurred, indicating quite clearly how this was an important family event in their already difficult lives.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, even the desired anonymity that accompanied most trips also possessed the potential to expose Jews to unknown dangers, as the teenager Inge-Ruth Herrmann discovered when she was in Berlin, where she stayed with her maternal grandmother, Jenny Manneberg, and her spinster aunt, Käthe Manneberg, both of

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<sup>28</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>29</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>32</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

whom lived together in Charlottenburg. She recalled her terror of being caught alone in a crowd in busy Berlin:

I was walking along the *Kurfürstendamm*, and suddenly everybody stopped, saying: “Hitler is coming! Hitler is coming!” And everybody rushed to the front and Hitler, Göring and Goebbels, every one of them came. As the car passed, I was right in the back. And somebody said: “Oh, that poor little girl, she can’t see anything in the back.” And they got me right in the front, and I stood between two SS men. And of course, everybody went: “*Heil!*” And I just stood there. If I don’t put my hand up, I’m in trouble, so I put my hand up and was going: “Huh! Huh! Huh!” [motioning to cough], as though I couldn’t say anything. I [will] never forget this. I was terrified. I just got caught in the whole crowd: “That little girl; she won’t see our *Führer*. We have to put her at the front.” I was in the front line. I got a beautiful view.<sup>33</sup>

I was terrified, absolutely terrified. And when I came back and told my grandmother, she nearly had kittens!<sup>34</sup>

The teenager was never to see her Berlin relatives again. Both her grandmother and aunt were deported to Theresienstadt on her grandmother’s eighty-third birthday on 26 June 1942. After spending more than two years in Theresienstadt, both women were transported to Auschwitz on 28 October 1944, where they perished.<sup>35</sup> Two female relatives of the Mannebergs, a mother and her adult daughter, lived in the same building as the Mannebergs. When called for deportation, they gassed themselves in their apartment.<sup>36</sup>

Another example is noteworthy as, other than recounting the respite that Gerry Levy was to enjoy by a trip to Westphalia in 1937, it also highlighted some of the internal prejudices extant in German society. Gerry Levy recalled his holiday in Nieheim:

During the long summer holiday I went with a group of friends to Nieheim in Westphalia for a holiday. A Jewish lady there had a type of country store, and

<sup>33</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 16 January 1998.

<sup>35</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., *Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch: Die Opfer der Judentransporte aus Deutschland nach Theresienstadt 1942–1945* Prag und Berlin: Verlag Academia und Metropol Verlag, 2000, p. 142.

<sup>36</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

in order to make some extra money she took in children at holiday time. We had a fantastic time. In this village there was a Jewish farmer, there were Jewish storekeepers, there was a Jewish department store; there was quite a considerable Jewish community; also a beautiful little synagogue.

All the non-Jews in the village were Catholics. In Magdeburg, and in central Germany as a whole, the majority religion was Lutheranism, and the Catholics, like the Jews were a minority. Anyway, the attitude in Nieheim was quite different. We were readily accepted because, thanks G-d, we weren't Lutherans! The kids in our age played with us. We played war, we bashed each other up; it wasn't because we were Jewish. We came from central Germany and were simply regarded as different. It was really a revelation. I went back there a couple of times and then finally one last time before we left Germany at the end of December [1938].

The time in Westphalia was so different and so free, in contra-distinction to the tension that we experienced in our normal environment. We three boys slept in the one room during our visit there; and very early in the morning some boys outside starting throwing stones at the windows. We were strangers, not Jews, so they wanted to test us out. We got on all right afterwards. I believe the main thing they wanted to establish was that the visiting boys were not Lutherans!<sup>37</sup>

Such temporary respites for Jews became a valued safety valve and assisted them, possibly even fortified them, on return to their home city, where they were known and could not escape all forms of both official and unofficial antisemitism.

Life for Jews within the confines of the home provided some sense of sanctuary. Prior to the pogrom of November 1938, Jewish identities were fostered or renewed within Jewish space. Jews had no option other than to gravitate to all things Jewish, particularly after September 1935, when they were officially cast out of the '*Volksgemeinschaft*.' With public ostracism, family life became even more important, although the impact of antisemitism always had the potential to enter the domain of the home. The home may have been a physical sanctuary, but it was not a psychological one. The stress and strain of the reality of the hostile outside world impacted on family and social life.

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<sup>37</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

Until May 1935, Jews could still find solace in their communal institutions. Owing to the dissolution of these institutions from this point on up until November 1938, the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* filled the void created and attempted to meet both the religious and social needs of community members. Whilst more than one third of the community had left the city by the time of the pogrom of November 1938, the remainder of the community waited and considered their options, including emigration. Jews were left in utter shock and even further disbelief from the violent and wanton destruction of the remaining bastions of safety on the *Reichskristallnacht*, as their homes, businesses and synagogues were violated and lives shattered forever.

### **The Emigration Quandary**

By June 1937 more than one third of the Jewish population of Magdeburg had relocated or emigrated. Statistics for the Jewish population for the city indicate that in June 1933<sup>38</sup> the city counted 1,973 Jews. By June 1937 the figure had reduced to 1,256,<sup>39</sup> indicating that 717 Jews had left Magdeburg, accounting for approximately 36% of the original population. Those who remained attempted to navigate their difficult lives under increasingly hostile circumstances. The subject of emigration was one that featured widely in all Jewish households and within the community itself. Those adults and families who had left Germany by the time of the *Reichskristallnacht* had either much foresight or, in the majority of cases,

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<sup>38</sup> Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933, Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich*, Bestand R 3102, BAB, op. cit., pp. 15–33.

<sup>39</sup> Mitgliederzahl der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Stichtag 1937, Collection D/Ma3, File VIII.8, CAHJP, op. cit.

were forced to, owing to their impoverishment which had resulted from unemployment. Youth in the community prepared themselves for unaccompanied emigration, intending to be re-united with family members at a later stage. A majority of the younger generation, having only known Nazism for much of their lives, did not feel the same sense of nostalgia for a German homeland as the older generation still felt in 1938.

For the majority of the Jewish adult generation there were more reasons to stay than to leave. Legal restrictions on what could be taken out of Germany created a financial dilemma. This was coupled with affection for family members and rootedness in their country. In the case of the elderly, they generally did not wish to leave. There still existed the hope that things would improve. Their essential Germanness made it difficult for them to consider adapting to foreign lands, particularly Palestine and countries in the New World. They also had to grapple with the realisation that their choices in destinations willing to accept them were extremely limited. When the *Reichskristallnacht* took place, the majority of community members were at this stage of their lives. In the wake of the pogrom, few saw emigration as a quandary, but rather as a means of survival.

The majority of Magdeburg's Jews were self-employed business people. As Barkai has stated, between 1934 and 1937 many Jews still had property and assets and these could serve as a source for financing emigration. However, they were also pivotal factors in inducing Jews to remain in Germany.<sup>40</sup> This was particularly so for the middle classes, and the longer they postponed their departure, the more assets they lost.

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<sup>40</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 99.

The *Reichsfluchtsteuer* enabled the Nazi government to ‘legally’ plunder the assets of emigrating Jews. The tax was applicable to assets totalling more than RM 200,000. However, this figure was reduced to RM 50,000 in 1934. This burden was compounded by currency regulations. Emigrants could not transfer their money abroad even after the payment of the tax, as their capital had to be deposited into special blocked accounts in German currency. Sale of German currency from such blocked accounts for foreign currency entailed a considerable loss, due to the set exchange rate, which, after initially being set at half the official rate in 1935 only continued to spiral downwards. The value of the blocked-account *Reichsmark* for emigration to countries other than Palestine had plummeted by September 1939 to a value of only 4% of the official exchange rate. This was equivalent to a devaluation of approximately 96%.<sup>41</sup>

Emigration to Palestine constituted the exception. The *Haavara* Agreement signed in 1933 made it easier to transfer capital to Palestine.<sup>42</sup> There was a higher exchange rate than the usual one for the *Reichsmark*, which in this case also had to be deposited into a special blocked account. Over the course of years this rate also worsened significantly. However, the devaluation of the *Haavara* blocked-account *Reichsmark* was comparatively lower and only ever approximately 70% at its lowest point.<sup>43</sup>

Added to this were a plethora of bureaucratic processes designed to strip Jews of assets, whilst simultaneously placing a greater burden on the process of

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<sup>41</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> Yfaat Weiss, “The Transfer Agreement and The Boycott Movement: A Jewish Dilemma on the Eve of the Holocaust,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XXVI, 1998, pp. 129–171 and David Bankier, “German Interests in the Haavara-Transfer Agreement 1933–1939,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXV, 1990, pp. 245–266.

<sup>43</sup> Barkai, op. cit., p. 101.

emigration.<sup>44</sup> Jews in Magdeburg experienced this for the entire period and on the eve of the *Reichskristallnacht* the majority were still waiting and hoping for the long-desired change, which never came.

The subject of emigration (and ordinances concerning Jewish emigration) prior to September 1935 did not feature significantly in Magdeburg.<sup>45</sup> However, after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, and even more so from the beginning of 1938 until the pogrom, measures against Jewish emigrants in the city gradually gained more prominence.

On 2 August 1935, the State Police for the Magdeburg District issued a directive that Jews who had already emigrated but desired to return for any reason, were to be refused.<sup>46</sup> In October 1935 a memorandum was despatched to all offices in the province reminding them of the financial obligations of emigrating Jews. The office also issued a reminder that this was to be policed and alerted staff to the ‘illegal smuggling of goods by Jewish emigrants.’<sup>47</sup> Further to this concern over ‘smuggling,’ on 30 July 1936, the Gestapa in Magdeburg issued a memorandum alerting all offices to ‘the practice of the smuggling of gold and

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<sup>44</sup> Both the subject of Nazi policies on Jewish emigration and the Jewish responses to them are comprehensively discussed in Herbert A. Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany – Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (I),” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXV, 1980, pp. 313–358 and Herbert A. Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany – Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (II),” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXVI, 1981, pp. 343–404.

<sup>45</sup> This pattern conforms to all of the previously discussed subjects during what may be termed as the period of transition from 1933 until the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws.

<sup>46</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 288; Betrifft: Maßnahmen gegen zurückkehrende Emigranten, 2. August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> Betrifft: Ausreise von steuerpflichtigen, insbesondere nichtarische Personen, 29. Oktober 1935, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 89.

other fine metals by Jews emigrating.’<sup>48</sup> The issue of returning emigrants featured repeatedly. On 5 January 1938, the Gestapa acknowledged receipt of a memorandum from Berlin which had been despatched nationally, reinforcing the message that ‘the return of Jewish emigrants into the territories of the *Reich* was fundamentally undesirable.’<sup>49</sup>

The incidence of this directive appearing repeatedly is of interest, as it is known that in the case of Magdeburg that a number of Jews did not emigrate, but rather made repeated investigatory trips abroad to such destinations as Palestine and the United States of America (USA) with the view to emigration. Whilst the memorandum only concerns returning emigrants, it may also indicate the bureaucratic level of frustration of the Nazi administration with Jews leaving and then returning. From the viewpoint of the Nazis, such trips went counter to their desired outcome of permanent Jewish emigration.

Hemmi Freeman’s three siblings settled in Palestine in 1933. He recalled his parents’ attitude to the idea of emigration:

My parents went to Palestine to visit my brothers in 1936. They came back and said: “No way!” They didn’t want to live there. My mother went on her own to America to see her sisters and came back and they stayed. My parents were still in Magdeburg until the very last moment before war broke out. They went to Palestine in August 1939. In fact, they rang me up in London, and said: “We’ve just got the papers for Palestine. Should we go?” And I said: “For goodness sake, go!” And they did. But, it was not easy parting [with Germany]. I mean they were retired; they lived off investments. And yet they had no reason to stay in the country – the four of us [children] were gone; but they still didn’t leave the country. They saw Palestine, which they both didn’t fancy and my mother saw America, which she didn’t fancy. Magdeburg was still a small paradise in their eyes.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 384/36; Betr.: Goldausfuhr durch Juden – Handel mit Goldwaren, 30. Juli 1936, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 221–222.

<sup>49</sup> Betrifft: Rückkehr von Emigranten in das Reichsgebiet, 5. Januar 1938, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>50</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

This practice of investigation before emigration was also undertaken by the father of another interviewee, who recalled his father travelling to Palestine in 1936. He returned to Germany and the family did not emigrate.<sup>51</sup> When World War Two commenced the family had already made its preparations for immigration to Australia. With the outbreak of war, they missed their ship from Hamburg and were trapped in Germany. They survived the war years in Magdeburg and eventually arrived in Australia in 1947.<sup>52</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that emigrants returned to Magdeburg to visit family.

From 30 August 1938, Jews were excluded completely from the travel industry and Jews were henceforth forced to book their passages through ‘Aryan’ travel agents.<sup>53</sup> This no doubt allowed close monitoring of all emigration practices. The local Nazi authorities also recorded emigration statistics for each six-month period, which were then forwarded on to Berlin. On 17 September 1938, the emigration statistics for the Magdeburg district for the period from 1 January 1938 – 30 June 1938 were despatched to the *Reich* Minister for Trade and Commerce.<sup>54</sup> The report included five individuals from the city of Magdeburg and a further twenty-two from the administrative district of Magdeburg.<sup>55</sup>

Of all the interviewees only one family group emigrated as one unit prior to the *Reichskristallnacht*. The Röhricht family left Magdeburg in February 1937.<sup>56</sup>

A further two families had every intention to emigrate. However, owing to a

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<sup>51</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Betrifft: Juden im Reisevermittlungsgewerbe, 30. August 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>54</sup> Report of Emigration Statistics for the Magdeburg District from 1 January 1938 – 30 June 1938, 17 September 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 227, Band 3 LHASA MD, pp. 38–39.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>56</sup> Reed, op. cit., 4 August 1999.

combination of the currency restrictions in Germany and immigration requirements of the Australian government, this was delayed until after the November pogrom.

This final difficulty involved the problem of accessing funds from blocked accounts in Germany and also the need to meet the requirements of those governments willing to accept Jewish refugees. Numerous restrictions and demands were placed on potential emigrants, which furthered the burden. The case of the family of Jakob Wurmser highlights this difficulty. Wurmser had received permits in 1937 for his family for Australia. His wife's brother, together with his wife and daughter, had also received permits and the six were to emigrate together. However, they faced the hurdle of securing the 'landing money' for their families, which was a requirement for entry into Australia, as his daughter recalled:

We had to have £200 landing money to come here [to Australia] because we didn't have a guarantor. So we had to apply to the *Devisenstelle* [Foreign Exchange Office] for that money. We had our permits already in 1937. They did not give us the money, so we managed to prolong the permits and we got them for another year. We wanted first £400; £200 for each family, and they didn't give it to us, so our parents reduced it to £200. We were sitting, waiting for £200! We had our tickets for Australia, we had our 'lift,' everything was organised; and then *Kristallnacht* came! My father said: "If we don't get out now, we will never get out." This he said the day after the pogrom.

My mother had a younger sister, who had left Germany in 1936 to go to Palestine. We sent them a telegram: "Please help!" And they helped. They sent £200 for us.<sup>57</sup>

Both families eventually emigrated to Australia, arriving on 14 January 1939.<sup>58</sup>

Clearly, from this example, even after emigrants had fulfilled all of the requirements in Germany, they still faced additional requirements imposed by the

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<sup>57</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

countries of migration. The two female cousins reflected on why their parents had made this decision to leave prior to the occurrence of the *Reichskristallnacht*:

My father was absolutely pure, pure German, from generation to generation, and he always thought that because of this that nothing would happen to us, and also because he had the Iron Cross. For a long time he thought that nothing could ever happen to us, and then he suddenly woke up to it. (Cousin One)

My father was different. He wanted to leave as soon as Hitler came. He wanted to go to France to his brother, but my mother didn't want to go, because her whole family was in Magdeburg. I think my father was the one who really pushed, because he kept saying: "There is no future, and there will be a war, and if there is a war, then we are lost." And he was right! (Cousin Two)<sup>59</sup>

In discussing the subject of emigration and the attitudes of the adult generation, the connection to family members and Germany feature prominently, and this quotation typifies the predicament of older German Jews, who had considerable life experience before 1933. Prior to November 1938 the majority of the Jewish population of Magdeburg still maintained hope. They were reluctant to leave their homes, extended families and livelihoods. The potential burden of emigration was also exacerbated by the limited destinations. Initially, Palestine featured primarily, but this was soon expanded to the European countries, the British Empire, South America and the USA. Most did not support Zionism, but even those dedicated Zionists were often disappointed with the realities of life in Palestine. The majority still felt connected to Germany.

Most interviewees agreed that Zionism was not very popular and that emigration to Palestine was considered a last option. Gisela Kent even went so far as to say that the community was anti-Zionist and that emigration to Palestine 'was the last thing anybody wanted to do.'<sup>60</sup> Gerry Levy also recalled the

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<sup>59</sup> H. B. and R. Z., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>60</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

immigration of his paternal uncle, Paul Levy, to Palestine in the early years of the regime and that the family was not at all happy about this.<sup>61</sup> One interviewee recalls the attitude of his father, who had every intention of settling, together with his family, in Palestine, but changed his mind after visiting there in 1936:

Dad told us how poor things were in Palestine, that people he knew well, people of great professions, were actually hawking pencils and such on the street. I think that really knocked his Zionism very hard and after that he never mentioned it again.

It was always our intention to leave, but Dad was a bit reluctant to leave and throw himself into a completely different economic situation. I mean, we were fairly well off and he could only see himself making a very poor living. He didn't want to go to a strange country. He knew he'd have to be a paid labourer or something like that, so he was very reluctant to do that. So he took his time. Australia was our hope! But when we did get the entry visas to come to Australia and we did have a passage booked to come on a steamer for 1939, September 1939, we missed the boat. And we didn't make it.<sup>62</sup>

After the visit to Palestine I still remember him saying later: "I wouldn't go there if they paid me!" That was the end of his Zionist interests.<sup>63</sup>

Consequently, this family did not emigrate and endured the war years in Magdeburg. However, the same interviewee also recalled that his paternal aunt and uncle by marriage managed to coerce his paternal grandfather to emigrate to Palestine.<sup>64</sup> All interviewees remarked that by the time of the pogrom in November 1938, many Jews were reconsidering their positions. Gisela Kent recalled that when she left in August 1938 there were people who were becoming quite desperate. In her view, she felt that the realisation that the regime was not a temporary aberration had hit them quite suddenly.<sup>65</sup>

One final and perhaps the most tragic obstacle in the decision-making process involving emigration was that of the separation of families. In Magdeburg, as

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<sup>61</sup> Levy, *op. cit.*, 7 November 1996.

<sup>62</sup> Name withheld, *op. cit.*, 18 June 1999.

<sup>63</sup> Name withheld, *op. cit.*, 13 July 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Personal interview, name withheld on request (recorded), Sydney, 23 July 1999.

<sup>65</sup> Kent, *op. cit.*, 12 January 1998.

elsewhere, unmarried adult children, largely female, often remained behind with elderly relatives who would not or could not emigrate.<sup>66</sup> However, there existed situations where families would have to be broken up, if emigration was to occur. The teenager Inge-Ruth Herrmann left on a *Kindertransport* for England in August 1938. After her father's release from Buchenwald Concentration Camp in the wake of the *Reichskristallnacht*, he was faced with a very difficult decision. If he wanted to emigrate, he would have to do so alone, as his wife's emigration had been refused. His daughter recollected:

Shortly after I left they took my father to Buchenwald, but they let him out after a few months on condition that within one month he is out of Germany. For some unearthly reason they wouldn't let my mother out. At that time the only place you could go to was Shanghai. My father could have gone to Shanghai, but he wasn't going to leave my mother. He wrote to me as to how the position was. So they both perished. They went both to Theresienstadt – I have letters from them. I have family in Sweden, and through the Red Cross they sent to Sweden letters. We knew they were alive.....and right at the end they killed them.<sup>67</sup>

The young teenager corresponded with her parents, but she was never to see them again. Both parents, Otto Herrmann and Regina Herrmann née Manneberg, were deported to Theresienstadt from Berlin on 28 October 1942.<sup>68</sup> There, they were reunited with Regina Herrmann's, mother and sister, Jenny and Käthe Manneberg. Approximately two years later Otto Herrmann was transported to Auschwitz on 16 October 1944. Twelve days later Regina Herrmann was sent to Auschwitz, as were her eighty-five-year-old mother and sister on 28 October 1944.<sup>69</sup> They all perished there.

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<sup>66</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>67</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>68</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

The decision to emigrate and the dilemmas Jews faced varied according to specific circumstances. However, a number of conclusions may be drawn. In the case of Magdeburg, by November 1938 the remaining Jews may have at any time considered emigration, but definitely not acted on it. Both legal restrictions in Germany and abroad acted as great disincentives. Countries offering refuge to Jews were generally not desired destinations. Finally, Jews were reluctant to leave their homes and their country of birth. They felt strongly about their perception of nation, of Germany and of Germanness; their extended families; and their livelihoods. The only way separation of family could be perceived and endured, was if emigrants told themselves that it was only a temporary measure. The reason why emigration prior to the *Reichskristallnacht* could be perceived as a quandary was that the majority of Jews felt that they still had choices and still possessed hope. Both of these were shattered on the evening and morning of 9–10 November 1938.

## **Chapter Five: Daily Lives of Children and Youth, 1933–1938**

### **Jewish and Non-Jewish Schools**

In 1933 there were 320 children in Magdeburg's Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> As no Jewish day school existed in the city, children of school age attended local public schools, whilst also attending the *Religionsschule* or *Cheder* of the local synagogues. Consequently, Jewish pupils were confronted with their vulnerability from both teaching staff and non-Jewish pupils from the very inception of the Nazi regime. The period from September 1935 through until November 1938 was particularly characterised by daily and incessant torment, humiliation and even occasional violence. Jewish youth became cognisant of their pariah status very early in the regime. The majority of Jewish pupils remained in public schools until the pogrom in November 1938, despite local governmental attempts to force them to attend segregated schooling from April 1938. However, a significant number of pupils began attending the segregated school when it opened in June 1938. This practice of segregated schooling continued until the dissolution of the so-called '*Judenschule*' ('Jews' School') on 1 July 1942. The learning experience in the segregated school was positive and imbued with a love of Jewish learning and Judaism. In spite of the pervading hostile environment in the school domain, there were notable exceptions where teachers and pupils performed noble acts of kindness and even courage toward Jewish pupils under siege.

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<sup>1</sup> Correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 213.

Prior to 1933, school life was relatively normal and most Jewish children experienced few, if any, forms of antisemitism.<sup>2</sup> As children of highly acculturated Jewish Germans, they felt no great attraction toward things Jewish.<sup>3</sup> These young pupils felt as German as their non-Jewish peers.

From all interviews conducted, the overall image of school life before 1933 was of a happy, secure and normal existence. As there were usually only between one and three Jewish pupils in a class, most Jewish pupils socialised at school with their non-Jewish peers and experienced normal relationships. Only a minority had exclusively Jewish friends or non-Jewish friends. This situation changed dramatically once the Nazis came to power.

On 25 April 1933, quotas were introduced to limit the number of Jewish pupils attending public schools and Jewish students attending universities in Germany.<sup>4</sup> However, in Magdeburg, owing to exemptions for war veterans and their families, no recorded cases of exclusion have been identified. This could also be due to the small number of Jewish children in the city. In June 1933 exemptions from attending school on Saturdays were retained for Jewish pupils. If their parents did permit them to attend school, they were exempted from writing and drawing.<sup>5</sup> This enabled Orthodox Jews to maintain traditional observance and those who were not from observant families to attend synagogue services if they wished. The exemption stated that if Jews chose to take advantage of it, the relevant school

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<sup>2</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 438. For a list of Nazi legislation enacted against German Jews, see Joseph Walk, ed., *Das Sonderrecht für die Juden im NS-Staat. Eine Sammlung der gesetzlichen Maßnahmen und Richtlinien – Inhalt und Bedeutung*, second edition, Heidelberg: C. F. Müller Verlag, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence from Der Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung, 17 June 1933, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, p. 32.

authorities would bear no responsibility for negligence in the event of a negative outcome in the children's education.<sup>6</sup>

In January 1934, the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Education commenced preparations for changes to Jewish educational institutions.<sup>7</sup> On 26 January 1934, the provincial government in Magdeburg was requested to inform the aforementioned ministry in Berlin within two weeks of how many private Jewish schools existed in its jurisdiction.<sup>8</sup> This also included religious schools attached to synagogues.

As religion was a mandatory component of the school curriculum under the Nazi regime, Jewish pupils were exempted from religious instruction during school time and attended the *Religionsschule* of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. Those Jewish pupils who were members of one of the *Shtiblech* would probably have attended their congregation's *Cheder*.<sup>9</sup> Jewish pupils attended religious instruction until they either completed their schooling or until they commenced their schooling at the segregated Jewish school in June 1938 or at the very latest until the occurrence of the pogrom in November 1938.

The *Religionsschule* was directed by Rabbi Dr Wilde. The nominated teacher of the school was Rudolf Rosenberg. However, both the rabbi and the cantor, Max

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<sup>6</sup> Correspondence from Der Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung, 17 June 1933, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Betrifft: jüdische und gemischt-jüdische Volksschulen, 8. Januar 1934, *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> Correspondence from Der Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung, 26 January 1934, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 131, LHASA MD, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> No documentation confirming the existence and operations of these organisations in Magdeburg has been located. Further to this, one interviewee, Hemmi Freeman, suggested that he thought that all of the community's children, irrespective of affiliation or background, attended the *Religionsschule*, as he thought it was the only 'official' school. However, this has not been substantiated, owing to an absence of archival material and further oral history material.

(Meier) Teller, taught classes as well. All three men were in these positions in 1933 and continued to perform their duties until the *Reichskristallnacht*.<sup>10</sup> Pupils studied the following subjects: Religious Studies; Biblical History; Jewish History and Literature; Hebrew; and Jewish Prayer and Scriptures.<sup>11</sup> Between two and three classes existed and lessons were conducted between once and twice per week after regular school hours. On 25 May 1937, when mandatory registration of all Jewish schools occurred, the school was composed of three classes, consisting of fifty-nine pupils and three teaching staff.<sup>12</sup> The *Religionsschule* awarded pupils annual report cards with grades, which were forwarded on to their relevant public schools.

Interviewees' recollections of the *Religionsschule* were always highly complimentary of the personal qualities of the teachers, the quality of the actual teaching and the teaching environment. However, the majority were not over-enthusiastic about having to attend the lessons, particularly as they were after regular school hours. Gisela Kent's opinion represented the views held by the majority of the interviewees:

I didn't like it at all. I wasn't very good at it. It was on an afternoon when I wanted to play. I quite liked the Biblical stories, because they were interesting. The Hebrew I never understood, never.....the teachers were very good, it was just me!<sup>13</sup>

Gerry Levy recalled, with some amusement, his shock at the time to learn that one of his friends actually enjoyed classes:

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<sup>10</sup> Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg Haushaltsplan für 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1935/1936, 1936/1937, Bestand Rep. A II, Signatur Nr. 2478 J 13a, Band 7, STAM, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Zeugnis für Hansgünter Jeruchem, Religionsschule der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Schuljahr 1935/1936, Private Archive of Hans Jensen.

<sup>12</sup> Nachweisung über das jüdische Volksschulwesen, 25. Mai 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, pp. 59–60.

<sup>13</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

I went to *Cheder* with Hanni Wurmser. Hannelore was a beautiful girl and her mother really watched over her. Her mother always collected her in order that none of the boys had the opportunity to fraternise with her. I recall one afternoon, when her mother collected her and said: “*Wie war es Hanni?*” [“How was it Hanni?”] To which she replied: “*Mutti, es war fabelhaft!*” [“Mummy, it was splendid!”] I had never heard that word before! Ever since that event, to the other children, she was always ‘*fabelhaft*.’ She must have been about twelve years old; she wore white gloves to *Cheder*, because she was so refined.

Nothing could be further from my mind than to refer to *Cheder* as ‘*fabelhaft*.’ If anything, ‘*furchtbar*’ [‘dreadful’] would have been a better expression for me!<sup>14</sup>

Whilst the opinions of interviewees may have been mixed about their feelings on their compulsory attendance of the *Religionsschule*, their views on the safety and security of their learning environment were unanimous. For the vast majority of pupils, this was the only learning space where they were not potential targets for humiliation and exclusion.

Jewish pupils in the city were represented in the various school strands from the comprehensive-style *Volksschule* and *Mittelschule* to the academic *Gymnasium*. In the years between 1933 and 1935 most Jewish children were initially confused as to why they were being singled out. When the teenager Gisela Jankelowitz wore a black armband to school as a mark of respect when President von Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934, she was totally unprepared for a comment made to her by a non-Jewish peer from her class. She recalled this and a number of other incidents prior to 1935 at her girls’ high school:

We were told to wear a black armband as a sign of respect, and one girl said to me: “Why have you got one on, you’re Jewish!” And I said that we had a member of the family die. It wasn’t true, but I felt instinctively, I’ve got to defend myself. That was the first time that I ever felt different. I can still remember it! All of a sudden it sort of crept in. We went on holidays, I think, with the school, and one day the teacher told me to stay back, and he said: “I am sorry but you can’t go.” And I said: “My parents said I could.”

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<sup>14</sup> Levy, op. cit., 16 December 1997. In his interview Gerry Levy referred to ‘Cheder,’ but in fact he is talking about the Religionsschule.

And he said: “Your parents might have, but you’re not allowed, you’re Jewish.” You know as a child, I was thirteen or fourteen years old, I always remember.<sup>15</sup>

Jewish pupils understood the ramifications of the situation very quickly and attempted at all times to remain unnoticed. Gerry Levy remembered how he enjoyed studying History, as early as his primary school years. Nothing could have prepared him for the humiliation he suffered, when he answered a question in class pertaining to some aspect of German history. Upon receiving the correct answer the teacher bellowed to the class: ‘Aren’t you ashamed of yourselves, that this Jew Levy has to teach you your history.’<sup>16</sup>

School was no longer enjoyable for Jewish pupils. Even when both classmates and teachers were supportive or even neutral, pupils generally did not feel at home.<sup>17</sup> They felt increasingly fearful, isolated and rejected. This experience has remained a source of psychological pain for some of the interviewees. This loss of identity, coupled with the humiliation and degradation forced the pupils, just as it did the adults, to rediscover, to renew or to strengthen their Jewish identities.<sup>18</sup>

This sense of loss was expressed poignantly by Warner Reed:

For a small boy whose hero was Frederick the Great and who identified with the Siegfried legend, this was more than a transgression against his heritage – it was, and still is, the rape of one’s national identity.<sup>19</sup>

Some Jewish pupils still retained their non-Jewish friends and felt that the situation did not greatly impact on them. One of the most common responses from interviewees was that they were ‘needled’ by both teachers and non-Jewish pupils;

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<sup>15</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview with R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 15 August 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Michael E. Abrahams-Sprod, “‘But the Jews have to go out!’ The School Experience of Jewish Pupils in Nazi Magdeburg,” *More From All Quarters: Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, vol. 26, 2004, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> Reed, op. cit., 4 August 1999.

otherwise they generally felt ‘fortunate’ or ‘lucky.’ A minority of interviewees did not discern any change for the worst.

By the time of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, the situation changed for the worst. Most pupils were no longer simply being ‘needled,’ but were now being subjected to both verbal and, on occasion, physical abuse. As a result of antisemitic laws slowly forbidding Jews to live, work and socialise amongst non-Jews, combined with the city of Magdeburg’s effective propaganda campaign, Jewish children only mixed amongst other Jews (outside school), at the synagogue or within the various Jewish youth groups. Non-Jewish school friends disappeared. Some parents even took the trouble to tell the Jewish parents that their respective children could no longer be friends.

On 21 September 1935, the office of the mayor in Magdeburg received a questionnaire regarding the racial classification of all pupils, which had to be returned to the provincial government by 1 November 1935.<sup>20</sup> *Rassentrennung* or ‘Separation of the Races’ in schools was desired, as the presence of Jewish pupils in the classroom presented a major obstacle in the National Socialist education of ‘Aryan’ pupils. After the collection of the required statistics, on 24 September 1935 the mayor reported that there were over ‘100 Jews and half-Jews’<sup>21</sup> in public schools and requested that a separate school be made available for their instruction for the commencement of the 1936 school year. On 6 October 1935, he received a reply stating that the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Education had not as

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<sup>20</sup> Nachweisung der Rassenzugehörigkeit der die öffentlichen und privaten Volksschulen besuchenden Reichsdeutschen Kinder, 21. September 1935, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 89, Band 2, LHASA MD, pp. 11–12.

<sup>21</sup> Correspondence from Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Magdeburg, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten zu Magdeburg, 24 September 1936, *ibid.*, p. 21.

yet decided on any further action.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, the education authorities in the mayor's office were disappointed with the reply. The primary concerns of the mayor's office appeared to have been '*Rassentrennung*' and the question as to who would fund the new school for the approximately 120 Jewish pupils.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the registration of Jewish pupils, two private Jewish educational establishments under the directorship of Sebastian Kaltenstadler and Rabbi Dr Wilde were registered<sup>24</sup> and were placed under surveillance by 19 February 1937.<sup>25</sup> Jewish staff offering private lessons were registered and preparations were made for securing the necessary Jewish teaching staff for the new segregated school.<sup>26</sup> Local school authorities also began approving, revoking and refusing teaching permits to Jews. On 6 February 1937, a list of such cases was despatched to the provincial government. Of the seven individuals mentioned, only two were granted approval to teach privately.<sup>27</sup> The teachers provided tutoring and some specifically taught Hebrew, Spanish and Music. In May, such culling activities continued and the city's inspector of schools confirmed that no Jewish sports

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<sup>22</sup> Correspondence from Der Regierungspräsident, An den Herrn Oberbürgermeister in Magdeburg, 6 October 1936, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 89, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Betr.: Rassentrennung auf den öffentlichen Schulen, 1. Oktober 1935, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 89, Band 1, LHASA MD, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Correspondence from Der Magistratsschulrat Magdeburg An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Magdeburg, 9 January 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 131, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 118. The names of these educational establishments were 'Die Schrader'sche Vorbereitungsanstalt' and 'Die Magdeburger höhere Privatschule Dr. Wilde'.

<sup>25</sup> Correspondence from Der Oberpräsident der Provinz Sachsen, Abt. für höheres Schulwesen Magdeburg, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Magdeburg, 19 February 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 130, Band 2, LHASA MD, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Correspondence from Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, 7 February 1936, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> Correspondence from Der Magistratsschulrat Magdeburg, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten zu Magdeburg, 6 February 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 131, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 138.

and/or gymnastics teacher had either received teaching certification or had such certification renewed.<sup>28</sup> In March 1937, guidelines for Jewish teachers instructing Jewish pupils were despatched nationally.<sup>29</sup> At this point, the authorities in Magdeburg not only sought to segregate pupils, but also to monitor stringently and maintain control over any Jewish activity in education. The relevant authorities in Magdeburg and Berlin continued to disagree on when the segregated school was to be established. In Magdeburg, the office of the inspector of schools exerted its full control over Jews educating Jews and the position of Jewish pupils in public schools. Given the persistent local requests for segregated schooling, it is not surprising that after September 1935 the situation for Jewish pupils in public schools seriously deteriorated.

The creation of a sense of ‘otherness’ relating to Jewish children was highly effective within the school system, owing to the combination of propaganda, the application of official racial antisemitism coupled with the controlled nature of the environment. The application of antisemitism in the classroom operated both directly and in subtle ways. Both forms had the desired effect on the victims, who were well aware of the inherent dangers of retaliation. Interviewees remarked that the generally small number of Jews in any given class made them even more of a target.

Pupils endured blatant forms of antisemitism in the classroom and in the general confines of the school from fellow non-Jewish pupils and from non-Jewish teaching staff. One pupil found the situation in his school so unbearable

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<sup>28</sup> Correspondence from Der städtische Schulrat für Magdeburg, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten zu Magdeburg, 19 May 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 130, Band 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>29</sup> Privatunterricht an Juden, 12. März 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 130, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 12–13.

that he was constantly ill and consequently lost a lot of school time due to ongoing absenteeism.<sup>30</sup> Gerry Levy recalled his experiences in his first high school were so difficult that his parents removed him from there to another school:

I attended the ‘*Wilhelm-Raabe-Schule*’ [‘Wilhelm Raabe School’]. I was permitted to attend this school, as my father was a returned soldier, otherwise Jews were not permitted. The first year there I did very well. When I went into *Quinta*, that is second year, the form master was a virulent antisemite. His name was Kettlitz. On most of the school’s special occasions he would wear full Nazi uniform with regalia, complete with dagger. He never missed out on making snide remarks about me being Jewish, and always had a shot at Jews in general. It was very uncomfortable. It became so unpleasant that my studies really suffered and my parents decided to take me out of the school and enrol me into a *Mittelschule*, which was a grade lower.

I felt completely at home there. At the *Gymnasium* we sat integrated anywhere in the class. However, at this *Mittelschule*, the three Jewish pupils had to sit on a designated seat at the rear, *die Judenbank* [the Jews’ bench], other than this, there was no discrimination.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike Gerry Levy, who felt some sense of respite in his new school, one female interviewee recalled painful memories of both school assemblies and lessons at her high school where she remained until the pogrom of November 1938:

I went to the ‘*Augustaschule*’ [‘Augusta School’] and every Monday morning before we started the school day, the whole school went into a huge hall and the *Direktor* spoke and before they started they always sang the *Horst-Wessel-Lied* [Horst Wessel song], along with other Nazi songs. So that was how the day started. Horrible! I hated going to school!

I also remember my French teacher, who came back from Spain, and said she was going to tell the class of her experiences, and of how the people suffered there and so on. She said: “But the Jews have to go out, because their parents didn’t fight [in World War One].” So we had to stand outside in the corridor, while she talked about it. My father had fought and I am sure that Hannah’s father had too, but I couldn’t have cared less; I hated them, really!<sup>32</sup>

Both incidents indicate the level and regularity of the exclusion and humiliation Jewish pupils encountered.

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<sup>30</sup> Reed, op. cit., 4 August 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>32</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

Pupils were often degraded in subtle, but no less cruel, ways. One of Gisela Jankelowitz's high school teachers, Mrs Grützberg, who taught her Geography or History,<sup>33</sup> ignored her whenever she attempted to answer a question:

The only thing that this teacher did, you know when you answer a question you lift your hand, and this teacher could never see my hand, so I never got asked; she just didn't want me to answer. But other than that she was never abusive.<sup>34</sup>

Teachers told pupils not to be associated with Jewish pupils. One interviewee recalled as a very athletic teenage girl, being told by her teacher that the headmaster of her school, the '*Augustaschule*', had forbidden her from competing for the school in a sports carnival. He informed the young girl that Jews could not represent the school.<sup>35</sup> Negative characteristics were attributed to Jews, reinforcing stereotypes. When pupils pronounced a word poorly in German, antisemitic remarks followed as pupils were rebuked for 'speaking like Polish Jews.'<sup>36</sup>

Fear also became a feature of the school experience. The young Hansgünter Jeruchem was one of the few pupils who felt accepted by his teachers and non-Jewish peers for his entire schooling. One day he was gripped by terror during a *Rassenkunde* lesson at his school, the '*Vereinigtes Dom- und Klostersgymnasium*', when the new teacher, Mr Nüßler, set the class the task of ascertaining, who in the class, possessed the most 'Aryan' cranium. The teacher, being new, did not know that Hansgünter was Jewish and expected him to complete the task. The pupils were each given a set of calipers, instructed to measure their peers' heads and to arrive at a particular figure. At the end of the task the students were asked who

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<sup>33</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>35</sup> R. Z., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>36</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

had the lowest figure, as this pupil would in fact be the bearer of finest 'Aryan' cranium. To his horror, Hansgünter had to raise his hand, as he had the lowest figure. When the pupils began laughing the teacher became annoyed and asked the class to explain what was so amusing. When he was told that Hansgünter was Jewish, he was shaken beyond description. The teacher politely asked the youth to leave the room and followed him out of the classroom. Hansgünter, then aged seventeen, thought only the worst and was terrified. To his amazement the teacher simply requested that he not attend any more lessons for the subject and dismissed him. Jensen also recalled that the brother of the notorious antisemite *Gauleiter* Loeper taught him Mathematics at the school and never uttered an antisemitic word to the teenager.<sup>37</sup> These examples indicate the diversity of responses from non-Jewish teachers to official Nazi ideology.

Fights regularly broke out when Jewish children were taunted or set upon. Often Jewish children fled, rather than confront the situation, as they were acutely aware of the ramifications were they to retaliate. This awareness did not prevent some Jewish children from defending themselves when they felt they had reached saturation point. Many of the children who defended themselves felt a great sense of satisfaction and pride at striking back, as this was a dangerous and courageous thing to do. Others settled scores in the sporting arena. Many interviewees remarked that this was one of the few occasions when their non-Jewish peers were cordial, as they were all keen and talented participants in various sports. A minority of Jewish pupils felt that it was possibly due to their sporting endeavours and achievements that they were accepted by some of their non-Jewish peers.

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<sup>37</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

The duress of school life did not have any unifying effect on Jewish pupils from the different backgrounds of German-born and Eastern European Jews. In the majority of cases, the division was only exacerbated by the already tense situation and spilled over into the school domain. In fact, there existed occasions when one group set out to malign the other. Gerry Levy recalled, with aggrieved feelings, an incident at school when two Jewish boys of Polish background ‘set him up,’ leading to an altercation with non-Jewish pupils. He recalled: ‘They really did the dirty on me, which of course led to a certain amount of acrimony.’<sup>38</sup> Hemmi Freeman recalled with anger how one Polish-Jewish youth at his school set out to wilfully provoke non-Jewish pupils. He related the incident:

We had a boy who was very unpopular. Let’s say that he just had a bad character, Jew or not. The fact that he was a Jew incited the rest of the class.<sup>39</sup>

Manfred Pelz – he was hateful! He came into the school with the Nazi flag on his bicycle. And of course, all the boys at school pounced on him, and I felt embarrassed. I mean, he was an idiot! Why should a Jew do this! And he looked Jewish too. And he was clumsy in sports, so that was another thing that nobody liked. But this boy wanted to provoke them. He comes on his bicycle with a swastika flag. Stupid! Stupid!<sup>40</sup>

In behaving in such a manner, Freeman felt that this youth only increased the culture of exclusion and negative stereotyping and furthered potential physical confrontation.

Despite the pervasive hostile culture a number of teachers in a variety of schools also displayed great acts of kindness and humanity. Many non-Jewish pupils also acted cordially toward their Jewish peers. Yet, whilst these acts on the part of the pupils were noble, they were not perceived as controversial, unlike the actions of some teachers, who made no secret of their antagonism to the Nazi

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<sup>38</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>39</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>40</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

regime or their sympathy to the plight of the Jews. The young Sigrid Schetzer remembered with great fondness her English teacher, *Studienrätin* Justus, who was also her class teacher at the ‘*Augustaschule*’. The teacher made it perfectly clear that she was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews and was later sent to a concentration camp for refusing to swear an oath to Hitler.<sup>41</sup> Not dissimilar were the feelings of Gisela Jankelowitz, then aged sixteen years old, toward her class teacher, Mr Schwienhagen, who, after learning that she was not attending the informal farewell for her class arranged at a local café, telephoned her and insisted she attend, remarking to her: ‘You are a part of us.’<sup>42</sup> Equally as noble is the account of an incident at the ‘*Augustaschule*’ in a particular class where there were two Jewish girls who sat together. The interviewee recalled the incident:

One winter morning, we came inside and there was huge lettering across our desk, which read: “Jewish Pigs!” We left the room, and when the teacher came in she saw it immediately, and said: “Who did this?” Naturally, no one said anything. So she picked four girls to clean it up. She was very popular and in winter if it was snowing, she would tell us that if we worked very hard she would allow us ten minutes at the end of the class to play in the snow, and she said: “If this ever happens again.....Not in my class!.....No one is different here!” I thought this was very, very brave.<sup>43</sup>

Hans Jensen could not recall any antisemitism on the part of his teachers at his school, the ‘*Vereinigtes Dom- und Klostersgymnasium*’, and completed his schooling there on 24 February 1938.<sup>44</sup> However, his predominantly positive or neutral experiences with regard to the occurrence of everyday antisemitism were unusual. For the majority of interviewees antisemitism was a regular school experience. For a minority, it was encountered often, but not with any regularity.

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<sup>41</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>43</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Zeugnis der Reife, Vereinigtes Staatliches Dom- und Klostersgymnasium Magdeburg, 24 February 1938, Private Archive of Hans Jensen, op. cit.

By the time the mayor's office despatched its final insistence for segregated schooling on 31 May 1937, the majority of Jewish pupils were experiencing daily terrorisation. The correspondence from the mayor's office to the provincial government in Magdeburg indicates that there were 139 Jewish pupils in public schools.<sup>45</sup> The letter reiterates the previous complaint and requests that the 'evil state of affairs be rectified by the establishment of *'Judenschulen.'*'<sup>46</sup> The nature of the complaint read:

These Jew children create a strong impediment to the unity of the classroom community and to the undisturbed execution of National Socialist education to youth in all public schools.<sup>47</sup>

Henceforth, the pejorative terms of *'Judenkinder'* and *'Judenschule'* were used in all correspondence emanating from Magdeburg. Another request was forwarded on to the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for Science, Art and Education on 28 June 1937.<sup>48</sup>

On 7 July the provincial government received a memorandum despatched nationally which laid the foundations for either segregated schools or segregated classes for Jewish pupils.<sup>49</sup> It discussed school attendance, education for *'Mischlinge,'* examinations and teacher education requirements.<sup>50</sup> In November 1937, a new curriculum for all Jewish schools designed by the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* in consort with the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for

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<sup>45</sup> Correspondence from Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Magdeburg, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten zu Magdeburg, 31 May 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 89, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Diese Judenkinder bilden für die Einheitlichkeit der Klassengemeinschaften und die ungestörte Durchführung der nationalsozialistischen Jugenderziehung an allen allgemeinen öffentlichen Schulen ein starkes Hindernis.'

<sup>48</sup> Betrifft: Rassentrennung auf den öffentlichen Schulen, 28. Juni 1937, ibid., p. 22.

<sup>49</sup> Auswirkung des Reichsbürgergesetzes auf das Schulwesen, 2. Juli 1937, ibid., p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 23–27.

Science, Art and Education was received in Magdeburg.<sup>51</sup> All Jewish schools were instructed to adhere to the new syllabi. One of the stated goals was the preparation of every Jewish child for emigration, with a particular emphasis on emigration to Palestine. The mandated subjects were listed in the following order: Religion and Hebrew; Biblical and Jewish History; German; Jewish Civilisation (*Heimatkunde*); Geography; Music and Drawing.<sup>52</sup> In January 1938 the provincial government received a directive from Berlin to commence the process of establishing a segregated school by seeking suitable Jewish staff.<sup>53</sup> From 1 January 1938, the only Jewish schools permitted to operate were the new segregated schools and/or authorised classes. All non-authorised schools and classes ceased to exist after 28 March 1938.<sup>54</sup>

In March 1938, preparations for the establishment of the '*Judenschule*' in Magdeburg commenced. The number of pupils was estimated at eighty-five and the school was to consist of two composite classes. It was to be located in a building at the front of another school, the '*Zweite Gemeindeschule*', at *Kleine Schulstraße* 24. The buildings were in fact only metres apart in proximity and were at right angles to one another. Jewish pupils were to enter from a separate entrance from the street and separate toilet facilities were provided. Owing to the proximity of the two schools, segregation was to be policed by the headmaster of the '*Zweite Gemeindeschule*' to ensure 'the desired complete isolation of the

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<sup>51</sup> Richtlinien zur Aufstellung von Lehrplänen für jüdische Volksschulen, 29. Oktober 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 62–63.

<sup>53</sup> Beschäftigung jüdischer Lehrer an öffentlichen jüdischen Schulen, 30. Dezember 1937, *ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>54</sup> Correspondence from Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, 28 April 1938, *ibid.*, p. 68.

Jews.’<sup>55</sup> The approval for the school’s establishment was received by the mayor’s office on 6 May 1938. The school was to originally have had three teaching staff. However, owing to a staff shortage it was decided to employ only two teachers. The provincial government bowed to the city’s pressure and agreed that the province, and not the city, would fund the new school and the remuneration of staff.<sup>56</sup>

Separate classes for Jewish pupils in the new segregated school were supposed to have commenced on 1 April 1938. However, due to a number of bureaucratic problems, including employing the necessary Jewish teachers, this was delayed until 1 June 1938.<sup>57</sup> After a lengthy application process Rudolf Rosenberg, who already occupied a teaching position at the *Religionsschule*, and Kurt Schindler, formerly of Berlin, were appointed.<sup>58</sup> The two classes were to attend to the needs of approximately eighty-five children and to take place in the designated school building located at *Kleine Schulstraße 24*.

At the time not all Jewish children attended the ‘*Judenschule*,’ since there were various exemptions. Those pupils not in possession of such exemptions were forced out of public schools and into the ‘*Judenschule*.’ One interviewee recalled commencing his school life in 1937 at the ‘*Zweite Gemeindeschule*’. Ironically, the ‘*Judenschule*’ was established adjacent to his ‘old’ school. He recalled his experiences at the ‘*Judenschule*’ and that the pupils of both schools shared the

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<sup>55</sup> Betr.: Einrichtung einer Judenschule, 12. März 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Betr.: Errichtung von Lehrstellen für die Judenschule, 18. Januar 1938 – 28. Januar 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

<sup>57</sup> Correspondence from the office of Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Magdeburg, 17 May 1938 – 12 August 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 7–21.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

same courtyard in the summer months, however, at different times.<sup>59</sup> The ‘*Judenschule*’ was still operating when the *Reichskristallnacht* occurred, whilst a minority of Jewish pupils still attended public schools. In the wake of the pogrom both teachers emigrated with their families to the United States of America (USA). Rosenberg had been released from custody on condition of his immediate emigration. He tendered his resignation on 30 November 1938 to be effective from 15 November 1938, and he and his family left for the USA after a short stay in the Netherlands.

Classes at the school were officially suspended on 7 December 1938, as there was no teaching staff left. Schindler was already in the USA attempting to procure guarantors for his children’s emigration.<sup>60</sup> It is not known whether or not he was already in the USA at the time of the pogrom.

For the period under discussion there is no single pattern characterising the situation of Jewish pupils in public schools. Some felt that a number of their teachers and some of their fellow pupils remained neutral in their relations with them. For some pupils relations were distant, even strained, yet not overtly hostile on the part of non-Jews. For others, open hostility pervaded the entire school environment. Until the middle of 1935 the emergence of antisemitism was generally gradual. However, the deterioration in the school environment from this point in time can be linked directly to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws and the ensuing persistent antisemitism of the school authorities in Magdeburg, which sought segregation shortly thereafter. This culminated in the establishment of the ‘*Judenschule*’ in June 1938. After the *Reichskristallnacht* and the wave of

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<sup>59</sup> M. F., *op. cit.*, 27 June 1999.

<sup>60</sup> Correspondence from the office of Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Magdeburg, 7 December 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

emigration, the remaining Jewish pupils did not return to their segregated school until June 1939, when it had moved to a new location.

Experiences of Jewish pupils at the *Religionsschule* and at the ‘*Judenschule*,’ even though it operated for only six months, were very positive. Even though the school authorities desired segregation, in the end it also provided Jewish pupils with a safe and nurturing learning space, free from humiliation and degradation. As a result of the circumstances, Jewish pupils mixed entirely within the Jewish community; the community essentially became their life, whether they wanted it to or not.<sup>61</sup> A significant number of interviewees regarded their involvement in the Jewish community and their youth groups at the time as having fostered their love of their Jewishness and their religion in their later life. Dwelling in this culture of fear and hate, the children certainly ceased identifying themselves as Germans of the Jewish faith and began to identify directly as Jewish.

### Youth Movements

After 1933 Jewish youth groups became an increasingly important source of camaraderie, distraction and hope for young people.<sup>62</sup> They also fostered and developed positive Jewish identities in young Jews.<sup>63</sup> Despite the comparatively small number of children and youth in Magdeburg, the number and variety of youth groups represented both the organisational quality and diversity of the

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<sup>61</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>62</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>63</sup> For a personal account of a Jewish youth growing up in Nazi Germany, see Peter Gay, *My German Question: Growing Up in Nazi Berlin* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998. The subject of the development of positive Jewish identities in young Jews in Nazi Germany is also discussed at length in Werner T. Angress, *Generation zwischen Furcht und Hoffnung. Jüdische Jugend im Dritten Reich* Hamburg: Christians-Verlag, 1985.

Jewish community. Both non-Zionist and Zionist groups operated in the city. Apart from family life, youth groups became the focal point of their social and sporting lives, until all groups were dissolved or the members emigrated. Until that point, for a large number of Jewish youth, these groups and their respective activities were of more importance than the synagogue. Youth groups not only provided a relatively safe environment for informal Jewish education, social activities and sporting competitions, but also provided young Jews with the opportunity to mix and enjoy the company of other young Jews. Youth groups also provided an opportunity for education according to the values of the movements, be they non-Zionist or Zionist. In this sense, the role the youth groups played in the lives of young Jews was highly valued. The dissolution of such groups commenced as early as August 1935. Prior to the pogrom of November 1938, one of the three documented non-Zionist youth groups<sup>64</sup> was still operating and all four documented Zionist youth groups had been dissolved.<sup>65</sup> After the *Reichskristallnacht* there is no evidence to indicate the continued operation of the sole remaining youth group in Magdeburg, the sports group *Der Schild*.

Membership of Jewish youth groups in Magdeburg generally corresponded to the religious affiliations and identities of parents.<sup>66</sup> As a general rule, the children of members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* belonged to one or even all of the non-Zionist groups. These were represented by the *Jüdisch-liberaler Jugendbund*

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<sup>64</sup> Very limited archival documentation exists on these organisations and their dissolutions. The majority of evidence detailing their roles and activities emanates from oral history material.

<sup>65</sup> Very limited archival documentation and oral history material exist on these organisations and their dissolutions.

<sup>66</sup> This pattern in Magdeburg conforms to the general pattern of the youth group affiliations of Jewish youth in both Weimar and Nazi Germany. See Herbert A. Strauss, *Über dem Abgrund. Eine jüdische Jugend in Deutschland 1918–1943* Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 1999. For a discussion on both non-Zionist and Zionist youth groups in Nazi Germany see also Schatzker, op. cit.

'Heimat', which had renamed itself the *Jüdisch-religiöser Jugendbund 'Heimat'* sometime before 1 July 1933;<sup>67</sup> the 'Ring', *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*, which was forced to rename itself in 1936 to the 'Ring', *Bund Jüdischer Jugend*; and the youth wing of the sports' group of the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*, known as *Der Schild*. There were, however, exceptions. The children of a number of members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* were members of Zionist youth groups. This occurrence was largely due to either their parents' interest in Zionism and/or, more commonly, the family possessing relatives who had emigrated to Palestine.

The children of members of the *Shtiblech* generally belonged to one or even a number of the Zionist youth groups. Evidence confirms the existence of *Habonim*, *Hechalutz*, *Makkabi* and *Mizrachi* youth groups.<sup>68</sup> The *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg* also offered Hebrew lessons to children under the age of sixteen years. A Polish Jew by the name of Jakob Färber was one of those teachers until his certification was revoked on 6 February 1937.<sup>69</sup> It cannot be established whether the *Zionistische Vereinigung* also operated its own youth group. As discussed in Chapter One, a number of further political and ideological strands of Zionism existed in Magdeburg and it might be assumed that a number operated their own youth groups as well.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Correspondence from the *Jüdisch-religiöser Jugendbund 'Heimat'*, An den Jugendführer des Deutschen Reiches, Abt. Verbände, 1 July 1933, Bestand 1, 75C Ar 1, Signatur Nr. 3, CJA, pp. 45–47.

<sup>68</sup> Oral history material provides limited evidence of the roles and activities of these four organisations. With regard to the *Mizrachi* youth group, it is most probable that the organisation in Magdeburg known as *Brith Chaluzim Dathiim* was in fact the local *Mizrachi* group. However, other than the linguistic link in its name, no other evidence has been located to support this.

<sup>69</sup> Correspondence from Der Magistratsschulrat Magdeburg, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten zu Magdeburg, 6 February 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 131, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>70</sup> No documentation confirming the existence and operations of these organisations in Magdeburg has been located.

Of all the non-Zionist youth groups, the *Jüdisch-liberaler Jugendbund* ‘*Heimat*’, which became the *Jüdisch-religiöser Jugendbund* ‘*Heimat*’, could not be recalled by any interviewee, although its existence is confirmed through archival material. However, other than its official registration, including its constitution, no other documentation has been located. Its original name indicated that it espoused a liberal form of Judaism, which would have attracted a sizeable number of members from the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. There can be little doubt that it was forced to change its name, as by the time it was registered in July 1933<sup>71</sup> its modified name was being used. The constitution of the group indicated its aim was the spiritual and physical education of Jewish youth. It also referred to its belief that German Jewry was both a component of the German ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’ and the Jewish religious community. However, it repudiated the notion that Jewish Germans were, indeed, a ‘foreign body’ within the German people.<sup>72</sup> Given the name of the group ‘*Heimat*’ and the aims in its constitution, clearly the group was nationalist in the German sense, whilst espousing pride in its Jewishness within the German sphere. Membership was open to children above ten years of age and the activities included lessons in Jewish history and literature and religious festivals; discussion evenings on Jewish and German themes; and

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<sup>71</sup> Correspondence from the *Jüdisch-religiöser Jugendbund* ‘*Heimat*’, An den Jugendführer des Deutschen Reiches, Abt. Verbände, 1 July 1933, Bestand 1, 75C Ar 1, Signatur Nr. 3, CJA, op. cit., pp. 45–47.

<sup>72</sup> Satzungen des *Jüdisch-religiösen Jugendbundes* ‘*Heimat*’, Magdeburg, 1. Juli 1933, *ibid.*, pp. 46–47. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Der *Jüdisch-religiöse Jugendbund* ‘*Heimat*’ erstrebt die Erziehung einer seelisch und körperlich gesunden Jugend, die sich bewusst als Glied der deutschen *Volksgemeinschaft* und der jüdischen *Religionsgemeinschaft* fühlt. Infolgedessen weisst der Jugendbund Bestrebungen, die die jüdischen Deutschen zu einem Fremdkörper machen wollen im deutschen Volke, von welcher Seite sie auch kommen mögen, mit aller Entschiedenheit zurück.’

hiking.<sup>73</sup> At the time of registration, the group possessed forty-five members.<sup>74</sup> It was a local group and, given its lack of affiliations and its ideological standpoint, it is most likely that it was dissolved early in the regime. This would also account for not one interviewee recalling its existence, even though they had vivid recollections of the other groups.

The Magdeburg branch of the ‘Ring’, *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend* (‘Ring’, *Bund Jüdischer Jugend* after 1936) was a popular youth group. It sought to explore and develop Jewish identity within the German context. Its educational and recreational aims were not dissimilar to that of the group ‘Heimat’ and both professed a loyalty to Germany and a pride in the position of German Jews since the Enlightenment; a pride they attempted to maintain.

The majority of interviewees were dedicated members of this group and recalled the camaraderie and the feeling of unity amongst the youth. Gerry Levy characterised his feelings this way:

At that time there was a sort of turning inwards. We only had Jewish friends and we all belonged to Jewish youth groups. All of my friends were there. You see, we became separated from the rest of the world. It was a haven to get away from the outside world; to be protected.<sup>75</sup>

Gisela Kent recalled her time in the group and especially of how both the group and its members perceived their respective identities:

My memories of the *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*: Well, again we were Germans! *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*, so the ‘deutsch’ came before the ‘jüdisch.’ We did what the *Hitler Jugend* did; we sang songs, we had a uniform with a neckerchief, and we went on outings, bicycle outings; it was a social get together. It had nothing to do with religion, other than we were all Jews.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Satzungen des Jüdisch-religiösen Jugendbundes ‘Heimat’, Magdeburg, 1. Juli 1933, Bestand 1, 75C Ar 1, Signatur Nr. 3, CJA, op. cit., pp. 46–47.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>75</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>76</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

In addition to her perception on identity, Gisela Kent's remarks about the social aspect of the group are especially important. Interviewees simply did not have the option of retaining memberships of non-Jewish organisations or of joining them.

All interviewees who were members recalled with a combination of excitement and fondness a camp in Göttingen in the spring of 1936. They recalled sleeping in tents and singing songs around open campfires. Owing to restrictions placed on Jewish youth groups in July 1935, the camp would have been located on property owned by Jews and the participants would not have numbered more than twenty persons.<sup>77</sup> Some interviewees still possess photographs of the event, as it was an exciting adventure, as well as serving as a respite from the situation in Magdeburg. The camp was organised by Hans Jensen, who played an important role in this youth group as a leader. He recalled his commitment to the group:

I was fourteen and a half when I came to Magdeburg and obviously I was very keen to mix with Jewish people. And the only way to do it was in a youth group. I joined this group, the *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*, because of my attitude, because I was German. Zionism didn't play a big role in my family. My parents were just not interested.

I think I had about thirty-five young people; there may have been 100 young people. But there was more than one group; mine wasn't the only one. I think there were about four groups.

We had a *Jugendheim* [Youth Club] where we met in the *Kantstraße*. That's where we sang. Some people were playing the guitar. We certainly met once a month. We had camps for that youth group too.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Correspondence from Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, 10 July 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. Ib, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, p. 165. This memorandum, despatched nationally, sanctioned the establishment of Jewish youth hostels, provided that they were not located in areas where contact with 'Aryans' could easily occur. Designated camping sites for Jews were prohibited. However, where freehold land belonged to a Jew, so long as its intended use as a camping site was registered prior to the event, this was permitted. Jewish youth groups were only permitted to undertake such activities, including organised hiking, if the number of participants amounted to no more than twenty individuals.

<sup>78</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

This organisation was numerically the most popular and clearly provided a large variety of activities for its members in an attempt to meet all their educational and recreational needs. The majority of its membership also belonged to *Der Schild*.

*Der Schild* was the sporting association of the national Jewish war veterans' association, the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*. It operated both adult and youth sports' associations and the youth wing in Magdeburg was well represented and extremely popular. All interviewees recalled their uniforms of black shorts, white shirts with a sewn-on badge bearing the word '*Schild*' in a shield in black lettering on white background. When Gisela Kent was interviewed, she produced the badge, an important and symbolic reminder of her past, that was packed amongst her possessions when she emigrated in August 1938. Interviewees recalled participating in competition sports in football and European handball, both at the sports ground adjacent to the Jewish cemetery and in other places. This organisation was the only Jewish youth group in Magdeburg still operational when the *Reichskristallnacht* took place.

Former members of these non-Zionist youth groups believed that the groups and their associated activities did foster a positive Jewish identity for them, but they also stressed how limited their options for social gatherings and activities with other young Jews were. Many felt that this was the driving force behind their active membership, rather than ideology. Like all young people they wanted to access both social and recreational activities. Despite the groups' non-Zionist and nationalist ideology, the majority of members did not generally share the views of their adult counterparts toward their German identities. They did not reject their Germanness outright. However, owing to the pervading culture of hate and the

segregated world in which the youth groups dwelled, a majority of members, after a period of confusion, clung only to a Jewish identity.

Numerically, the membership numbers of the Zionist youth groups *Habonim*, *Hechalutz*, *Makkabi* and *Mizrachi* were less than the membership numbers of the non-Zionist groups.<sup>79</sup> Interviewees recalled both the ethnic and the political division between the youth who were members of the non-Zionist organisations and the Zionist organisations. Only a small number of children from German-Jewish families were members, whilst the majority of the membership came from Eastern European backgrounds.<sup>80</sup> Former members of *Habonim* clearly recall their families' connection to Zionism and to Palestine.<sup>81</sup> Yet, this connection did not extend to the emigration of their families to Palestine. Hemmi Freeman recalled his association with *Habonim*, even though his main association was with *Makkabi*. As a sports group *Makkabi* was larger than *Habonim*. However, as a group which organised social activities *Habonim* was the larger of the two. The majority of those involved in *Habonim* were involved in *Makkabi* for sporting activities. Former members of *Habonim* particularly recalled that the group was regularly monitored and visited by the Gestapo.<sup>82</sup> Hemmi Freeman, who was an avid athlete, recalled that the sporting activities organised by the *Jüdischer Turn- und Sportverein 'Bar Kochba'*, the Magdeburg branch of *Makkabi*, included 'football, athletics, jumping, discus and gymnasium activities in the winter.'<sup>83</sup> This youth group was dissolved in August 1935 and the remaining Zionist youth groups were dissolved in July 1938.

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<sup>79</sup> Whilst exact statistics have not been located, oral history material from former members of both non-Zionist and Zionist youth groups provides evidence for this.

<sup>80</sup> Personal interview with R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 19 November 1997.

<sup>81</sup> H. B., op. cit., 19 November 1997.

<sup>82</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>83</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

Despite the ideological differences, there was no acrimony between the two groups. Hemmi Freeman recalled that the political situation had indirectly forced the two groups to be more tolerant, as ‘all Jews had been thrown together.’<sup>84</sup> However, whilst the small size of the community meant that all children and youth involved in both non-Zionist and Zionist groups knew each other and relations were cordial, they could not be characterised as close. As late as 1938 one interviewee recalled:

I was a member of *Habonim*. My father was a Zionist. I remember we had this sports field where we used to go, next to the cemetery. We used to go there on Sundays and we used to change around. One Sunday they [that is, members of the non-Zionist youth groups] were there in the morning and we were in the afternoon and the other way around the next week. In *Habonim* they probably had various age groups. When I went there I would have been about ten. Most of those people were mainly of Polish background.<sup>85</sup>

Clearly, the two factions shared sporting fields, sometimes resources and building venues. However, after youth groups were dissolved, there exists no evidence to indicate that the ideological and cultural differences were bridged and the two branches of youth groups in the community amalgamated in the period prior to the pogrom in November 1938. Evidence indicates that the two youth factions remained disunited until they were forced to unite by the circumstances in the wake of the pogrom.

A number of conclusions and observations can be drawn from the activities and roles of both non-Zionist and Zionist youth groups. Whilst their ideologies on German and Jewish identities and the role of Palestine and Zionism for German Jewry were at variance, both strands of youth groups filled the social void for Jewish youth, when they were excluded from German society. Jewish youth were

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<sup>84</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>85</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

provided with a rich cultural, educational, social and sporting life. Additionally, the community provided the resources for these activities to take place in relative safety. This led to the development of positive Jewish identities; to broad educational and sporting experiences; and for a majority it also led to, at best, an ambivalence toward their German identities and the country of their birth, and, at worst, an eventual rejection of that identity and Germany. For a number of children and teenagers, the youth groups, together with a number of communal organisations, also prepared them for unaccompanied emigration.

### **Preparation for Emigration**

Preparation of youth for emigration occurred both directly and indirectly. Direct preparation was organised by the Zionist movement, the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg* and by the families of the emigrants themselves. Magdeburg's two *Hachsharah* centres provided preparatory training for Jewish youth in the early years of the regime and continued operations until they were dissolved in 1938. The intended destination was always Palestine and the majority of those attending such training programs in the early years were Zionists. For the non-Zionist component of Magdeburg Jewry, it was not until after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws that the emigration of unaccompanied children and youth became an option for the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*. Unlike those at the *Hachsharah* centres, their preparation came somewhat later, because their intention had never been to leave their German homes. Indirect preparation for all youth also developed due to the limited employment opportunities for Jewish school leavers. Consequently,

Jewish youth in Magdeburg were trained and/or employed in Jewish establishments both in the city and beyond. There were a broad range of preparatory activities, but no similar psychological preparation was possible for this unprecedented event in German Jewry's history. Neither Jewish youth nor their families could prepare themselves for the pain of separation. The only means by which Jews were able to bear the reality was by clinging to the belief that it was only a temporary measure.

On 11 March 1934, the *Provinzial-Verband (für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg)* reported that approximately forty young Jews from Magdeburg and its neighbouring towns were undertaking training in agriculture and trades at the *Hachsharah* centres of *Hechaluz* and *Brith Chaluzim Dathiim*.<sup>86</sup> This evidence not only confirms the early work of these centres, but also indicates that on an official level there existed co-operation between the non-Zionist and Zionist communities. Rabbi Dr Wilde was the president of this welfare organisation and personified the predominantly non-Zionist attitude of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. While official co-operation existed, evidence indicates that emigration to Palestine was not considered an option for the majority of the members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and their children until early 1938.

On 2 July 1935,<sup>87</sup> the office of the State Police for the Magdeburg District fully endorsed the collection of funds by local Zionist organisations supporting their work in training and promoting emigration. These activities were perceived

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<sup>86</sup> Protokoll der Hauptversammlung des Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, 11. März 1934, ALJGSA, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 240/35; Betr.: Geldsammlung der Zionisten, 2. Juli 1935, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 6.

by the police as ‘assisting toward a practical solution to the Jewish question.’<sup>88</sup> On 5 July 1935, the same office requested the registration of all Jewish training centres by 10 August 1935.<sup>89</sup> On 15 August 1935, the Gestapa in Berlin was informed that two such centres were operating in Magdeburg.<sup>90</sup>

In the wake of the Nuremberg Laws the unaccompanied emigration of young Jews to Palestine became an even greater priority for the Zionist movement, assisted by the Jewish welfare organisations in Magdeburg.<sup>91</sup> Correspondence from the *Provinzial-Verband* in May 1936 discussed in detail the preparation of young Jews in Hebrew, domestic science, trades and agriculture for their eventual emigration to Palestine with *Jugend-Alijah*.<sup>92</sup> On 24 December 1936, the Gestapa in Berlin wrote to its Magdeburg branch requesting its view on leasing further farmland to assist in the preparation of young Jews for their emigration to Palestine. After investigating the matter with the local farming community and the mayor, on 3 April 1937 the Magdeburg office replied that it had no objection, given the isolated location of the land.<sup>93</sup> On 24 April 1937, the Gestapa in Berlin despatched its written approval to its Magdeburg office.<sup>94</sup> Clearly at this point in

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<sup>88</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 240/35; Betr.: Geldsammlung der Zionisten, 2. Juli 1935, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> Rundschreiben Nr. 249; Betr.: Jüdische Umschulungslager, 5. Juli 1935, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., p. 232..

<sup>90</sup> Betr.: Jüdische Umschulungslager, 15. August 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.01, Reel 2, File 500-1-173, USHMMA, p. 75.

<sup>91</sup> For a detailed account of the history of Youth Aliyah, see Recha Freier, *Let the Children Come: The Early History of the Youth Aliyah* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961.

<sup>92</sup> Correspondence from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg, An die Wirtschaftshilfe der Synagogen-Gemeinde Halle, 4 May 1936, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit. p. 193.

<sup>93</sup> Betr.: Pachtung von Land zur Vorbereitung junger Juden zu ihrer künftigen Auswanderung nach Palästina, 3. April 1937, Collection RG-11.00M.01, Reel 2, File 500-1-173, USHMMA, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>94</sup> Betr.: Pachtung von Land zur Vorbereitung junger Juden zu ihrer künftigen Auswanderung nach Palästina, 24. April 1937, *ibid.*, p. 107.

time, the demand of the two known *Hachsharah* centres had exceeded supply, and consequently further farmland was requested and granted.

Hemmi Freeman recalled the *Hachsharah* centres and that those involved in the preparatory activities were drawn largely from the Zionist groups in Magdeburg and its immediate environs.<sup>95</sup> The goal of such centres was *Aliyah* and the majority of the participants were drawn from Zionist youth groups, particularly prior to September 1935. However, as the situation deteriorated, a number of parents and even youths themselves, irrespective of their ideological standpoint on Zionism, sought training at such centres. Interviewees remarked that already in early 1936 the Jewish youth in the city were openly discussing with one another their options with a view to leaving Germany. George Mannings' aunt in Berlin, Käthe Manneberg, organised a place for him at a *Hachsharah* centre in East Prussia.<sup>96</sup> His family did not support Zionism and neither did the youth himself wish to emigrate to Palestine; yet this seemed the only option. Prior to the dissolution of all Zionist organisations in July 1938 a concerted effort was made to prevent Jewish youth who had emigrated from returning to Germany to visit relatives. The State Police was informed to obstruct these visits, even in the cases of Jewish children under the age of sixteen years. The memorandum indicated that in view of the government's position on the 'Jewish question,' the return of young Jews to Germany was not desired under any circumstances.<sup>97</sup>

The first documentary evidence of youth from the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* expressing their desire to leave Germany on their own and then putting this difficult decision into practice occurred in early to mid-1936. Attitudes of

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<sup>95</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>96</sup> Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

<sup>97</sup> Betrifft: Maßnahmen gegen zurückkehrende Emigranten, 20. Dezember 1937, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 92.

interviewees who eventually left unaccompanied on *Kindertransporte*<sup>98</sup> provide both an insight into the discussions which were taking place in a number of Jewish households and the profound level of unhappiness of most of the Jewish youth.

Gisela Kent remembered conversations with her peers and remarked that despite the deteriorating situation, no one in her circle of friends wanted to leave Germany, let alone emigrate to Palestine. However, she also recalled that ‘as it got worse, instead of better, people wanted to go.’<sup>99</sup> The subject of emigration was also discussed at her home, where she had expressed her desire to leave:

The discussions were never heated. In fact, my parents were very comforting. I felt I didn’t want to stay. I wanted to get out. And my parents just thought, give it time, it will change; it can’t last forever.

But I had had enough. I said to myself: “That’s it!” It was degrading and it was everything that is bad. Although, at that stage I hadn’t been attacked or anything like that; I think I was just lucky.<sup>100</sup>

She also felt that in early 1936 it was still uncommon in her own family’s circle and that in general of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* for younger Jews to want to leave without their families.<sup>101</sup> However, she always felt that she would be able to facilitate her family’s emigration. This was something that she was never able to achieve and out of her entire extended family in Germany, only three individuals survived the *Shoah*. The young girl who eventually accompanied her on the voyage to Australia expressed similar sentiments with regard to the perceived temporary nature of the separation from her family:

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<sup>98</sup> See Wolfgang Benz, “Emigration as Rescue and Trauma: The Historical Context of the Kindertransport,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 23, number 1, 2004, pp. 2–7 and Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Das Exil der kleinen Leute. Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1994.

<sup>99</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

No, I didn't think it would ever get better. I wanted my parents to get out. But when I was accepted to come on a youth transport to Sydney with Gisela [Kent née Jankelowitz], they told us that within two years you will have your parents out. Otherwise, if I would have known, I most probably never would have gone. But they said, look, within two years you will have your parents in Australia. Well, that was 1938. 1939 the war started, and that was it. So, I never saw them again.<sup>102</sup>

In early 1936 Inge-Ruth Herrmann and Gisela Jankelowitz were fourteen and sixteen years of age respectively. Both girls registered their names in Magdeburg for emigration to any country willing to accept them. Gisela Kent recalled the event:

I recall putting my name down in 1936 for anywhere. I recall it vividly, as I had just commenced or finished a job, having only left school shortly before this. Having put my name down, I was told that I could go to Queensland, Australia. It sounded pretty good. And what did I want to do? I could be a hairdresser or a few other professions. And I said I would like to be a hairdresser; it sounded okay. You don't need any English for that! I was a housemaid when I got there; there were no hairdressers!

I told my parents this and they said: "You shouldn't do this, you can't leave Germany!" Eventually they said it was probably right, and that Günther [my younger brother] should go too, and Günther said no, that he wanted to stay with my parents. So another two years went by, and he stayed with my parents and I left.<sup>103</sup>

Approximately one year after this registration, Inge-Ruth Herrmann was offered asylum in Brazil in 1937, but owing to her parents' opposition she remained in Magdeburg, as she recalled:

It's a very sad story. I had a chance to go to *Brasilien* [Brazil] and I was my mother's only child. My mother said: "My only child. All the way to *Brasilien*! No way!" So, things got worse, and then Gisela and I, and a few others, we were called into Berlin, to a test there. Because we wanted to go to Australia, and we were accepted. So, then it came that I was coming to Australia. Brazil was too far for my mother, which was nothing compared to Australia. But things got so bad that she agreed!<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>103</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>104</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

Whilst the Olympic Games were taking place in Berlin both girls were requested to travel to Berlin for an interview and to sit an examination, which they both did. Both were to wait until August 1938 before they left Magdeburg on a *Kindertransport* to England and from there sailed directly on to Australia.<sup>105</sup> Both recalled with great sadness the atmosphere of utter desperation of many of their family members and friends, who, by the middle of 1938, also wanted to leave. Gisela Kent remembered the large number of people who asked her to obtain the necessary documentation for their emigration to Australia as well, as she remarked: ‘When I left, they said try and get us a permit, which, of course, I knew I couldn’t do.’<sup>106</sup>

It is most probable that the organisation in Magdeburg that had advertised the emigration opportunities to which the two girls responded was the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*. This welfare organisation maintained constant communication with the *Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der deutschen Juden* of the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* in Berlin in all matters relating to emigration. In July 1937 the *Provinzial-Verband* notified all of the branch offices in the province of the possibilities of American couples adopting Jewish children from Germany.<sup>107</sup> In the same time period, in a bid to ensure that school leavers were suitably prepared

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<sup>105</sup> Neither of these two interviewees who sailed together on to Australia from England could recall which of the four main Australian sponsorship schemes facilitated their immigration. This subject has been well documented. See Glen Palmer, *Reluctant Refuge: Unaccompanied Refugee and Evacuee Children in Australia, 1933–1945* Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 1997 and Anne Andgel, *Fifty Years of Caring: The History of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society 1936–1986* Sydney: The Australian Jewish Welfare Society and the Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1986.

<sup>106</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>107</sup> Betr.: Amerika-Unterbringungen, 26. Juli 1937, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., pp. 270–271.

for emigration, the Magdeburg-based welfare organisation advised school leavers on training options and co-ordinated this closely with the *Palästina-Amt* in Berlin.<sup>108</sup>

In February 1938<sup>109</sup> the *Provinzial-Verband* reported that the existing emigration opportunities to the United States of America (USA) for unaccompanied children were limited to children up to six years of age.<sup>110</sup> However, the situation for emigration to England was more favourable.<sup>111</sup> Age restrictions were not as rigid. In one reported scheme, young German Jews would be housed in boarding schools and provided with training for employment. However, the immigrant Jews would not remain in England. After completion of their further education they would be sent to the British dominions and colonies. When opportunities for the emigration of young ‘*Mischlinge*’ ‘on a limited scale’<sup>112</sup> to New Zealand and Australia were reported in May 1938 by this welfare organisation, its branch office in Halle sought clarification of the requirements, asking whether the applicants had to be ‘*Mischlinge*’ of the first degree,<sup>113</sup> or

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<sup>108</sup> Correspondence from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg, An die Wirtschaftshilfe der Synagogengemeinde Halle, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>109</sup> Betr.: England – Unterbringung von Jugendlichen, 22. Februar 1938, *ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>110</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the immigration of unaccompanied Jewish children and youth to the discussed destinations, including the USA, see Herbert A. Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany – Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (I),” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXV, 1980, pp. 313–358 and Herbert A. Strauss, “Jewish Emigration from Germany – Nazi Policies and Jewish Responses (II),” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXVI, 1981, pp. 343–404.

<sup>111</sup> Betr.: Amerika-Unterbringungen, 26. Juli 1937, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., pp. 270–271.

<sup>112</sup> Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 25. März 1938 – 28. März 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 300–301.

<sup>113</sup> Half-Jews and quarter Jews according to Nazi racial doctrine. This doctrine defined ‘*Mischlinge*’ of the first degree as half-Jews who were descended from two Jewish grandparents who did not adhere to the Jewish religion and who were not married to Jews. ‘*Mischlinge*’ of the second degree, or quarter-Jews, were those descended from one Jewish grandparent. In general, the ‘*Mischlinge*’ were to be

whether one Jewish grandparent would suffice; whether or not the religious knowledge of the applicant or the parents would play a role; and what the age and training requirements of the applicants needed to be.<sup>114</sup>

On 29 March 1938, the Magdeburg office responded that the scheme was in its early stages. However, it confirmed that the religious knowledge of the applicants would play ‘a decisive role as the organisation was a Jewish one and its concern was for Jewish children.’<sup>115</sup> It also indicated that applications could only be considered from ‘*Mischlinge*’ of the first degree, who were between the ages of fifteen and seventeen years of age in the case of males and between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years of age in the case of females. Knowledge of English was mandatory. In May 1938, applications were still being accepted as the Magdeburg office waited for further details on the execution of the scheme from Berlin and London.<sup>116</sup> It is not known how the scheme unfolded. What can be confirmed, however, is that couples of mixed marriage and their children, from Magdeburg, did emigrate to Australia. When Gisela Kent arrived in Adelaide in September 1938, she stayed there for one month and took comfort in her friendship with a girlfriend from Magdeburg, who was of mixed parentage. She relayed the sad series of events that unfolded for this girl, who after being rejected and excluded in Magdeburg on account of her Jewishness, was to suffer the same fate in Adelaide, only this time at the hands of the local Jewish community there:

I had a friend who settled in Adelaide with her parents. Her name was Ursula Rosenberg. Her father was Jewish, her mother not. Although she had been raised Jewish and attended Jewish scripture in Magdeburg, she was not

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distinguished from Jews and were not to be subjected to deportation and extermination.

<sup>114</sup> Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 25. März 1938 – 28. März 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>115</sup> Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 29. März 1938, *ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>116</sup> Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 6. Mai 1938, *ibid.*, p. 309.

accepted as a Jewess in Adelaide. They wouldn't even let her marry a Jew, they wouldn't accept her at all, so she married a non-Jew. This was so unfair, as she was Jewish; she lived Jewish.<sup>117</sup>

Whilst families such as the Rosenbergs emigrated to Australia there is no evidence to suggest that unaccompanied '*Mischlinge*' youth succeeded in emigrating to Australia.

Clearly, in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and particularly the *Provinzial-Verband* reconsidered their positions on and their attitudes to the emigration of unaccompanied children and youth. The pressure from the youth themselves must have played a role in this, together with the realisation of parents that the situation was deteriorating rapidly. This emigration was facilitated by local organisations and co-ordinated through its associated welfare organisations, chiefly in Berlin. The most significant impediment to this process, however, was the unbearable thought of families separating. Nevertheless, this was undertaken.

The final area in which direct preparation for emigration was undertaken was when the families themselves organised the emigration without the assistance of local organisations. The case of Hemmi Freeman was one such example. He always felt that his emigration shortly prior to the *Reichskristallnacht* in 1938 was more a stroke of good fortune than good planning, as he explained:

My sister had married an Englishman living in South Africa and he worked for an English lady who was a very great pacifist and she arranged for me to go to England. In fact, she paid. In those days we had to pay £200 to the government as a security and she took in six refugees, paying £1,200; in those days quite a lot of money. This enabled me to come to England; otherwise I wouldn't have had a chance either.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>118</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

Of the recorded cases in Magdeburg this occurrence was generally the exception to the rule and more often than not it involved family connections, as evidenced in the quotation.

However, even when such plans were carefully and successfully organised, they did not necessarily take place. This situation arose in the case of Hans Jensen. Having lost his right to practise as a physician in Schönebeck in the middle of 1938, his father, Dr Max Jeruchem, realised that emigration was the only option. He wrote to relatives in Bridgeport, Connecticut, seeking their sponsorship of his family's emigration to the USA. At the time his relatives could only secure an affidavit for his eighteen-year-old son, Hansgünter. The family discussed the option of separation and decided they wanted to remain together. Consequently, they declined the offer.<sup>119</sup> It was not until mid-February 1939 that the family of four emigrated together. They departed from Trieste on the *Conte Rosso*, bound for Shanghai. Disembarking in Bombay, they decided to remain in India, where a relative of Dr Jeruchem's wife, Margarete, had settled. Hansgünter did not leave India for Australia until it achieved independence from the British in August 1947. His parents left for Perth in 1946.<sup>120</sup>

In recalling their preparation for emigration, all interviewees confirmed that parents provided foreign language teachers and where possible parents, or in some cases young Jews themselves, organised their own training or practical experience in employment areas, which they thought would be useful. In early 1938, the parents of fifteen-year-old Inge-Ruth Herrmann, after accepting that their only child was emigrating, attempted to provide her with practical preparation for her new life:

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<sup>119</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

A few months before I left my parents said you will have to work over there, so they gave me to a family to help in the household there. I had no idea about housework, but I wanted to get an idea. And they had a maid, and she had epilepsy. One day she got an attack and fell down and that frightened the hell out of me. After I saw that, I gave such a performance that my parents took me out of there again. I was only supposed to stay to get an idea of how to work for other people. Also, my parents took a teacher; I learnt English at school, and they took a teacher in English for me that I have a bit more knowledge.....Yes, it did help me.<sup>121</sup>

When Hans Jensen ceased his university studies in Hamburg in mid-1938, he learned the locksmith trade. Simultaneously, his sister Ursula trained as a cook and domestic servant in Berlin in preparation for emigration to any country willing to accept her.<sup>122</sup> At that time, in 1938, she applied to emigrate to Australia. She was to wait more than three years before the Australian government wrote to her in India, informing her of the success of her application. At nineteen years of age, she left her parents and brother in Bombay and set sail for Australia.<sup>123</sup>

The remaining area of preparation occurred indirectly in Magdeburg, arising as a result of the limited employment opportunities for Jewish school leavers. Jewish youth were trained and/or employed in Jewish establishments both in the city and beyond. Both apprenticeships and positions for youth were offered as early as 1933 and continued while positions and the demand existed.<sup>124</sup> Clearly, both continued to shrink as businesses were 'aryanised' or abandoned or emigration became an option for both individuals and families. Some positions and apprenticeships were offered in Magdeburg itself, but predominantly in other towns and cities and included those in building, paving, gardening, farming, carpentry, clothing manufacturing, millinery, dental nursing, auto mechanics,

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<sup>121</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Correspondence from the Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg, 11 September 1933 – 28 March 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., pp. 1–300.

book-keeping and sales.<sup>125</sup> Regardless of the area of training and/or employment, most found such experiences useful.

Non-Zionist and Zionist perspectives affected attitudes to emigration and particularly in the case of youth, the priority for their unaccompanied emigration. Youth from a non-Zionist background did not leave as early as youth who came from a Zionist family. Whilst this differentiates the two groups, their common bid to provide practical training and safe countries of refuge for young Jews united them. Whilst attempts to equip Jewish youth with life skills thought to be useful in their new homes-to-be were undertaken, the reality was that these young Jews did not know what to expect. The majority knew very little, if anything, about their destinations and what situations would greet them and what they could expect. Given the uniqueness of the situation, there was also little that could be done to prepare both themselves and their families psychologically for that moment of physical separation, when the day finally arrived.

### **Children and Youth Leaving Home**

For those children and youth who left Magdeburg prior to the pogrom of November 1938, departure was well organised and executed. Precious belongings were packed and on a number of occasions farewell presentations were made by religious communities. This was generally not the case for those whose emigration had been organised prior to the pogrom, but delayed by its occurrence. When their departure took place in the wake of the *Reichskristallnacht* it was enveloped by

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<sup>125</sup> Offene Praktikanten- u. Lehrstellen, 8. März 1935, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., p. 118.

the chaos and panic that followed.<sup>126</sup> For the majority of emigrants departure was a very private affair and characterised chiefly by the disbelief of what was taking place and the fear of the unknown, both for the emigrant and for those who remained behind. For both parties the greatest fear was that they would not be reunited. In the case of three out of the four interviewees who left as unaccompanied emigrants this was, indeed, the case.

Amongst the belongings packed in the suitcase of the fifteen-year-old Inge-Ruth Herrmann were a porcelain doll and its knitted clothing. The clothing had been carefully knitted by the young girl's mother years before in happier times. Her mother had also ensured that she possessed a German-English *Langenscheidt* dictionary.<sup>127</sup> In August 1938 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* farewelled both Inge-Ruth Herrmann and Gisela Jankelowitz formally and presented them with a colour photograph of the interior of the synagogue. The symbolism of these objects representing both the continuity of family and religion is most profound.

On the day of her departure, Gisela Kent recalled the atmosphere of the breakfast table:

There was no farewell get-together. We had breakfast, as if everything was perfectly normal, like every morning. Then we left and went to the [railway] station. I left my unfinished cocoa on the table.<sup>128</sup>

Both the teenage girls met with their respective families at the railway station on the morning of 21 August 1938. Both interviewees recalled their families trying to retain both dignity and composure as the minutes approached for the train's

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<sup>126</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the emigration of Jewish youth from Nazi Germany, see Walter Laqueur, *Geboren in Deutschland. Der Exodus der jüdischen Jugend nach 1933* Berlin und München: Propyläen Verlag, 2000.

<sup>127</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>128</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

departure to Hannover. Gisela Kent described how her parents, who were never prone to emotions, let alone effusiveness, reacted:

My mother was very, very emotional. They looked sad. My mother was crying and my father trying to keep a stiff upper lip. He had his arm around my mother and it was the last time I saw them. My brother just stared. I don't know; he was just standing there motionless. He was sixteen. He probably didn't quite realise. I mean we got on really well; it wasn't as though he didn't care. And I remember my grandmother saying: "Must you really do this. It's so far away." She couldn't understand why I wanted to go.

They were there and a couple of friends. Then we got on the train, and Inge and I, we started to cry, and the train only went to Hannover. I'm sure the passengers got tired of us crying, and then we had to change trains. And that was it. It was just goodbye at the station.<sup>129</sup>

Inge-Ruth Herrmann's mother reacted in a similar way. The young girl recalled her mother physically collapsing on the railway station as the train pulled out.<sup>130</sup>

This traumatic point of separation at the railway station would later also symbolise the death of the young girls' families and the majority of the remaining Jews of Germany; all deported from railway stations, including that of Magdeburg.

Both very young and inexperienced in life, the two interviewees recalled their mixed emotions of relief and fear when they crossed the German-Dutch border.

Gisela Kent expressed her feelings this way:

I was very apprehensive, not knowing what's coming. I did feel a relief because when we were still in Germany, we didn't know if some Nazi was going to board the train, or not. Once I was in Holland I felt I'm free. We went through Hoek van Holland, got onto a boat, across to England. We landed at Dover.<sup>131</sup>

She also recalled possessing only RM 10 on her entry into the Netherlands and of being given some money on arrival in London. She was later provided with a cheque for the required £50 landing money for her entry into Australia. Her

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<sup>129</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>130</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>131</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

travelling companion recalled the same journey, but also highlighted how vulnerable they were:

We went on the boat to England. Anyhow, we got on a train to go to London, and somebody said: "I help you to change money." And what did he do. He took off with my money. He was an Englishman. I said: "You got my money!" "I got your money." "Yes, you didn't give me my money back." So, he gave me a couple of shillings, and he said: "Here, I give you some because you haven't got any." I [will] never forget that! In London we were sent to Hampstead. We were there for a week before we got onto the boat, the *Oronsay*. And we were handed over to a couple, Franz and Bianca Böhm. They were coming here too; he was Jewish, she was a baroness, a German. They were to keep an eye on us.

You know, I was only fifteen. I turned sixteen in Adelaide. I was very young.....for a girl of this age to go so far away.<sup>132</sup>

The relief of being out of Germany was felt even more greatly by Inge-Ruth Herrmann when she set sail for Australia, as she explained:

Once I was out, across the border, I was singing Hallelujah. But when we came through the Suez Canal towards us was coming a boat, a German boat, and I had a big mouth, and I yelled out, I said, I don't know how it came about: "Where are you going to?" I then said: "We are rid of your country, we are going to Australia!" And I said something very rude, I can't remember what it was, but somebody said something to me saying I shouldn't say that. I said: "What the hell can they do to me? They don't know who I am!" So they couldn't do anything to my parents. I remember that very well.....We went from London to Toulon onto Gibraltar, then we went through the Suez Canal to Aden; then we went to Colombo, and then to Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney.<sup>133</sup>

Both girls disembarked in Adelaide close to the time of *Yom Kippur* 1938. Inge-Ruth Herrmann celebrated her sixteenth birthday there on 12 October. Both young girls only remained in Adelaide for approximately one month before deciding to settle in Sydney.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> The original destination of both girls was, in fact, Sydney. However, owing to the persuasion of a girlhood friend of Gisela Kent's, whose family had settled in Adelaide, they disembarked in Adelaide. This was an unusual occurrence for unaccompanied immigrants.

Both maintained regular correspondence with their families. Prior to the outbreak of World War Two, Gisela Kent received a parcel from her father containing numerous family possessions, including his war medals.<sup>135</sup> All letters from Germany were censored, often with sections blacked-out or even with pieces physically cut out of the letters.<sup>136</sup> Conversely, their families, knowing of the censorship and fearing for their own safety wrote in a guarded manner, often so encoded that the young recipients had no idea of what their families were trying to communicate. Gisela Kent recalled:

Letters were not only censored, but they were cut out. I remember my mother writing that my father was on a holiday, and that he was using a hair restorer. That was to tell me that his hair had been shaved and that he was in a concentration camp. And I picked it up; I knew what she was saying. He would not have gone on a holiday without her, and he certainly didn't need a hair restorer, but normally I didn't know what was in the letters.<sup>137</sup>

Both young girls had unintentionally become a component of the generation of German-Jewish youth who had become the 'children turned into letters.' As Kaplan states, this expression of the time revealed the excruciating pain and despair of both parents and children.<sup>138</sup>

Gisela Kent's maternal grandmother (Margarete Bock née Tobias), who farewelled her at the railway station died of natural causes on 7 November 1942 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Magdeburg.<sup>139</sup> Her mother and brother, Alice and Günther Jankelowitz, were residing at *Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße* 28 until their deportation to the Warsaw ghetto in early 1942. Their address in the Warsaw ghetto was *Garten-Straße* 27. The last correspondence Gisela Kent received from

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<sup>135</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid and Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>137</sup> Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

<sup>138</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 117. The phrase in its original German was: 'Aus Kindern wurden Briefe.'

<sup>139</sup> Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM, op. cit.

her mother was in 1942.<sup>140</sup> This International Red Cross message consisted of approximately fifteen words.<sup>141</sup> It is not known whether or not they perished in the Warsaw ghetto or were deported to an extermination camp. Despite her constant attempts to secure permits for her parents and brother through the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, she was ultimately unsuccessful. All her immediate family members perished.<sup>142</sup>

The last residence in Magdeburg of Otto and Regina Herrmann, the parents of Inge-Ruth, was at *Große Klosterstraße* 10a.<sup>143</sup> In September 1940 the couple left Magdeburg and relocated to Potsdam, where they were working at a Jewish home for the aged.<sup>144</sup> Prior to this Otto Herrmann had been a forced labourer in Magdeburg.<sup>145</sup> Sometime thereafter, they moved to Berlin<sup>146</sup> and were deported from their registered address in the city centre, which was *Große Hamburger Straße* 26.<sup>147</sup>

Otto and Regina Herrmann maintained a regular correspondence with Otto Herrmann's sister, Betty Caspari, who had fled with her husband, Max, to neutral Sweden.<sup>148</sup> Mail was possible via the International Red Cross. Shortly prior to

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<sup>140</sup> Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>141</sup> Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

<sup>142</sup> The lives and fates of the members of the Jankelowitz family have also been discussed in previous chapters, particularly in Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>143</sup> Personal file on the Herrmann family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 20, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> Private correspondence from Otto Herrmann, 25 November 1940, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

<sup>145</sup> Austinat, op. cit., 29 January 2001.

<sup>146</sup> Private correspondence from Otto Herrmann, 29 November 1942, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

<sup>147</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., *Gedenkbuch Berlins der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1995, pp. 484–485.

<sup>148</sup> Betty Caspari geborene Herrmann, *Die Familie der Herrmanns*, 1944 with amendments in 1971 and 2004, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit. pp. 3–4. This

their deportation to Theresienstadt in October 1942, Otto Herrmann wrote to his sister on 29 July 1942. His letter was imbued with hope and relief at having received correspondence from his daughter, Inge, six weeks prior. In her letter, Inge-Ruth, who was already a young nineteen-year-old woman, wrote:

Are you alright? I miss you sadly. My health is good. Looking forward to a happy reunion. Fondest love!<sup>149</sup>

The neatly penned correspondence from both the Herrmanns and their relatives, the Mannebergs, from Theresienstadt continued to be sent to Sweden up until their deportations to Auschwitz in October 1944.<sup>150</sup> The only letter ever to reach the Herrmanns' daughter in Sydney arrived via Sweden, when Betty Caspari forwarded it on.<sup>151</sup> Her recollection of its receipt in Sydney is vivid:

I had a letter from Theresienstadt, only one, and that was it then. But they wrote through the Red Cross to Sweden, to my aunt there, and she sent it on. But you should have seen it – it was all cut out, everywhere. This was in 1944.<sup>152</sup>

Not dissimilar to her travelling companion, Gisela Jankelowitz, Inge-Ruth Herrmann was also unsuccessful in her attempt at facilitating the emigration of her parents and there was no reunion. Her entire immediate family and the majority of her extended family perished.<sup>153</sup>

When Hemmi Freeman left for England prior to the *Reichskristallnacht*, he sailed from Hamburg, later docking at Cherbourg, before disembarking in

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nine-page manuscript was translated from the original German into English by the author of this thesis in 2004.

<sup>149</sup> Private correspondence from Otto and Regina Herrmann, 29 July 1942, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

<sup>150</sup> Private correspondence from the Herrmann and Manneberg families, 8 August 1943 – 17 August 1944, ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> The lives and fates of the members of the Herrmann family have also been discussed in previous chapters, particularly in Chapters Two and Four.

Southampton.<sup>154</sup> His recollection of his feelings upon his departure from Germany corresponded to the same relief experienced by the other interviewees. His feelings were also indicative of his renewed sense of self-confidence, as he recalled:

I came to London and I was met by some English friends of mine. Naturally, you suddenly felt different, feeling that you could walk straight and people didn't stare. I mean nobody looked at me in Germany, but you had the feeling that everybody was looking at the back of your neck. A different story altogether. Within days I think I felt relief, absolute relief.<sup>155</sup>

His relief was even greater when his parents reluctantly left Magdeburg for Palestine in August 1939.<sup>156</sup> With his parents' emigration, his entire immediate family had left Germany. He and his wife, Sigrid Freeman née Schetzer, also from Magdeburg, immigrated from England to Australia in 1949, sailing on the *Largs Bay*. Her parents followed shortly thereafter from England as well.<sup>157</sup>

George Mannings' immigration to England on a *Kindertransport* had been organised prior to the pogrom of November 1938. When the pogrom occurred he was in East Prussia training for farm work. In the wake of the pogrom he returned briefly to Magdeburg. Aged sixteen, his feelings were characterised by an overwhelming sadness and dread. He explained that he felt devastated that he was not with his family and also because there was nothing he could do. When he arrived in Magdeburg his widowed father, Heinrich Manneberg,<sup>158</sup> was already in Buchenwald Concentration Camp. He was never to see his father again. He recalled the feeling of chaos surrounding this period and 'how quickly everything

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<sup>154</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>155</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>158</sup> The lives and fates of the members of the Manneberg family have also been discussed in previous chapters, particularly in Chapters Two and Four.

happened'<sup>159</sup> from the time of the pogrom until his departure. After farewelling his maternal grandmother, Hedwig Wandrow, he returned to his paternal aunt in Berlin. It is not known if he saw his non-Jewish step-grandfather, Max Wandrow, who died on 16 December 1938. George Mannings left Germany toward the end of 1938.

At the time of his arrest, the unemployed Heinrich Manneberg<sup>160</sup> was living with his parents-in-law, the Wandrows, at *Schönebecker Straße 29/30*.<sup>161</sup> Both he and his son had moved from their own family residence at *Hötensleberstraße 4* shortly after the death of his wife, Walli Manneberg née Blumenthal, on 18 June 1934.<sup>162</sup> After Manneberg was released from Buchenwald Concentration Camp he returned to the Wandrows. By the end of 1938, he and his mother-in-law were by themselves. His son had emigrated to England and his mother-in-law's husband had died.

On 20 January 1940, both Manneberg and his mother-in-law were ordered to move to a newly established 'Judenhaus' at *Schöninger Straße 27a* in Sudenburg. They were two of eighteen local Jews who had been allocated four small apartments.<sup>163</sup> It is most likely that Heinrich Manneberg was deported to the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942.<sup>164</sup> It is not known if he perished there or in an

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<sup>159</sup> Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Personal file on the Manneberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 31, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Günter Kuntze, *Unter aufgehobenen Rechten* Magdeburg: Helmuth-Block-Verlag, 1992, pp. 13–14. This work provides a detailed account of the lives and fates of members of the Blumenthal, Manneberg and Wandrow families. However, owing to recently discovered archival material and oral history material from members of these families, some of the interpretations made from empirical data and conversely the conclusions drawn have been proven incorrect.

<sup>164</sup> Personal file on the Manneberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 31, ASGM, op. cit. and correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu

extermination camp. Approximately eight months later on 2 December 1942 his mother-in-law, Hedwig Wandrow, was deported directly from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt. She died there on 15 December 1944, four months short of her eightieth birthday.<sup>165</sup>

George Mannings never received any correspondence from his relatives in Magdeburg and Berlin. Once World War Two commenced, he made repeated inquiries through the International Red Cross, but to no avail. He maintained a correspondence with his cousin, Inge-Ruth, who was already in Sydney. He acknowledged that, owing to the anxiety of his departure and the chaos surrounding that time, the majority of his memories of Germany had evaporated. He recalled arriving in England:

From the coast I was sent to London, where I stayed a short while. I was then sent on to just outside Bristol to a training farm. As a matter of interest, I had sixpence in my pocket and couldn't speak a word of English!<sup>166</sup>

After marrying in 1949 and settling in Bournemouth, he and his family immigrated to Australia in 1960 and settled in Perth.<sup>167</sup> It was not until this time that he was reunited with his cousin, Inge-Ruth, one of his very few remaining relatives from Germany.

Regardless of their destination, the emigration of unaccompanied children and youth was characterised by both a sense of anticipation and relief. Nevertheless, once emigrants had physically left German soil these feelings were soon replaced by anxiety and a fear of the unknown. For both relatives left behind and the young

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Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 211. The conclusion drawn from the combined data from both of these sources would suggest the cited deportation details.

<sup>165</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 765.

<sup>166</sup> Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

<sup>167</sup> Personal file on the Manneberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 31, ASGM, op. cit.

emigrants the emotional and psychological predicament they experienced pushed them to near breaking point, if not to breaking point itself. The large-scale attempt at the evacuation of Jewish children and youth from Magdeburg did not take place until after the calamitous events of the *Reichskristallnacht*.<sup>168</sup> At that point in time the majority of the remaining Jews also sought refuge in foreign lands. For most of the limited number of children and youth who did find refuge in foreign lands before the end of 1938, they were never reunited with their relatives. For the interviewees in this category, this created an open wound which has never healed.

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<sup>168</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

**Chapter Six:  
The Reichskristallnacht and Its Aftermath until September 1939**

**The Prelude to the Pogrom**

The ‘*Polenaktion*’ – the deportation of stateless, Polish Jews from Germany sparked the incident that led to the November pogrom of 1938. Germany expelled between 16,000 and 18,000 Polish Jews between 27 and 29 October 1938,<sup>1</sup> forcibly transporting them to the Polish border. Poland denied them entry. They languished in a no-man’s-land between the two borders, in the cold and without food and shelter, while their families and communities became more and more desperate.<sup>2</sup>

In Magdeburg foreign-born Jews represented approximately 37.9% of the community’s population in 1933.<sup>3</sup> Whilst it is not possible to establish what percentage of Eastern European Jews had left by the time of the so-called ‘*Polenaktion*,’ the figure was definitely high. One report by a local businessman and Nazi Party member in August 1935 claimed that the majority of ‘the immigrant Galician Jews’ had already left the city long ago.<sup>4</sup> The closest statistic of the Jewish population at the time of the deportations is that of 1,256 in June

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<sup>1</sup> Estimates of the number of Jews deported range between these two figures. See Barkai, “Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938,” in Meyer, ed., op. cit., p. 220 and Friedländer, op. cit., p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed account of the ‘*Polenaktion*’ see Sybil Milton, “The Expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany: October 1938 to July 1939 – A documentation,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXIX, 1984, pp. 169–199 and for an account of the events prior, during and after the expulsion see Friedländer, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933, Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich*, Bestand R 3102, BAB, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from the Magdeburg businessman and Nazi Party member, Rellum, to the Reich Minister for the Interior, Dr Frick, 22 August 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band 4, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 321.

1937.<sup>5</sup> From this figure it must be concluded that the deportations would have potentially affected hundreds of Polish Jews in Magdeburg.

Hemmi Freeman's parents, Pinkas Frühman and Sprinec (Sabine) Frühman née Stern, were born in Sedziszow and Rymanow respectively.<sup>6</sup> Both places were Austrian at the time of their births. The married couple settled in Magdeburg shortly before the outbreak of World War One. In the wake of the war their respective birthplaces became Polish territory.<sup>7</sup> At the time of the '*Polenaktion*,' the couple were visited by the Gestapo, as their son recalled:

My parents were naturalised Germans from years back, but lost their naturalisation under the Nazis. So, when they came to our place to ask for their passports, they were stateless, and the Gestapo didn't know what to do with them, and they left them alone. So, they were saved temporarily.<sup>8</sup>

The Frühmans had never held Polish citizenship, only Austrian prior to their taking German citizenship. Clearly, the Gestapo assumed that as 'Polish'-born Jews, they would have held the same citizenship. Their statelessness at the time provided them with a temporary reprieve.

Some interviewees recalled the events of those few days and recalled how a number of members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* responded with assistance. The niece of the owners of the leathershop '*Taschen-Freiberg*' recalled the busy activity at the shop at the time of the deportations:

They had to leave in twenty-four hours – it was really horrible. This uncle had a business with suitcases, handbags and all leather goods. And I remember him all night open to sell suitcases. I remember we knew one of these families and we helped them to pack and we took them to the train.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mitgliederzahl der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Stichtag 1937, Collection D/Ma3, File VIII.8, CAHJP, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>8</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>9</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

The majority of interviewees recalled that it was not until this event that they had had any real connection to the Eastern European Jews in the community at all. A number of them did know some of the children and youth from their association at school. These interviewees recalled their shocked reaction to the deportations.

Gerry Levy recalled the event:

My parents sent me in to the *Hauptbahnhof* [main railway station] with sandwiches, fruit and chocolate for those leaving. I knew some of them. But most of the people I had never had any contact with. It was the first time that I saw people being herded into railway cars. I spent a few hours there. It was probably *Rachmanit* [compassion or pity]; that feeling of being duty-bound.<sup>10</sup>

He further remarked that it was the only real occasion when he had had any interaction with Eastern European Jews as a group in the city.<sup>11</sup> Evidence does not indicate how many groups were deported and over how many days. However, Gerry Levy confirmed that the group he took food to consisted of approximately 150 Polish Jews.<sup>12</sup>

Some Jews did return temporarily after the mass deportations. One of the Polish-Jewish deportees who returned to Magdeburg was twenty-six-year-old Gertruda Litmanowitz née Schindler. She re-entered Germany on 17 February 1939 on a nine-day transit visa and lodged with her father-in-law.<sup>13</sup> On 13 February 1939, the German border police in Neu Bentschen advised the police in Magdeburg of her intention to re-enter the *Reich* and of her imminent immigration to Shanghai. The border police requested that she be placed under surveillance for

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<sup>10</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion on the reactions of German Jews and the reaction of the Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland to the 'Polenaktion' see Yfaat Weiss, *Deutsche und polnische Juden vor dem Holocaust. Jüdische Identität zwischen Staatsbürgerschaft und Ethnizität 1933–1940* München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Telephone interview with Gerry Levy AM, Sydney, 8 July 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Correspondence to and from the Deutsche Grenzdienststelle in Neu Bentschen and das Polizeipräsidium in Magdeburg, 13 February – 22 February 1939, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 105, ASGM, p. 343.

the duration of her stay. Gertruda Litmanowitz left Magdeburg on 20 February 1939 and sailed from Hamburg to Shanghai.<sup>14</sup>

The ‘*Polenaktion*’ confronted the Jews of Magdeburg as it did all Jews throughout the *Reich*. Until that time they had endured ongoing exclusion, humiliation and financial ruin. However, this event marked a transition point in Nazi policy toward the Jews. The physical expulsion of Jews was not something that the Jews of Germany expected, despite the difficulty of their circumstances in Germany. The chain of events that followed cemented this watershed in the history of Magdeburg Jewry, and indeed for German Jewry.

Amongst the deportees who languished in the cold on the border, were the parents and sister of Herschel Grynszpan. Driven to despair over the course of events and as an act of protest, he shot Ernst vom Rath, a diplomat at the German Embassy in Paris. The Nazis then used the death as a convenient excuse to launch their largest pogrom to date. The Nazis presented the *Reichskristallnacht* as a spontaneous upsurge of violence by an enraged population. In reality, this event was a tightly controlled exercise that was government initiated and executed. The first ‘spontaneous demonstration’ of the night occurred in the provinces of Hesse and Magdeburg-Anhalt in the town of Dessau.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Correspondence to and from the Deutsche Grenzdienststelle in Neu Bentschen and das Polizeipräsidium in Magdeburg, 13 February – 22 February 1939, Bestand Z.-Dok.001, Signatur Nr. 105, ASGM, op. cit., p. 343.

<sup>15</sup> The events surrounding the assassination of Ernst vom Rath have been well documented by numerous historians. For detailed accounts of the assassination and its use as a pretext for the carefully planned and well-orchestrated events leading up to the pogrom of 9–10 November 1938, see Walter H. Pehle, ed., *Der Judenpogrom 1938. Von der ‘Reichskristallnacht’ bis zum Völkermord* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988; Hans-Jürgen Döscher, *Reichskristallnacht: Die Novemberpogrome 1938* Frankfurt am Main und Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 1988; and Anthony Read and David Fisher *Kristallnacht: Unleashing the Holocaust* London: Michael Joseph, 1989.

### The Pogrom in Magdeburg

On the night of 9–10 November 1938, the Nazis unleashed the most violent pogrom against the Jews of Germany and Austria since the Middle Ages. Derisively belittling the terrible events that took place, they dubbed it the *Reichskristallnacht*, ‘The Night of Broken Glass.’ This pogrom revealed to the world the savagery and barbarism of the Nazi regime, yet that fateful night also laid bare the hollowness of the world’s indignation. Although German and, later, Austrian Jewry had experienced the intensification of the political disenfranchisement, economic strangulation and social segregation since 1933, no one expected the widespread violence – a pogrom of the sort connected only with Tsarist Russia. The execution of the pogrom in Magdeburg occurred with the same uniformity and in the same manner elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> This included the looting and destruction of the interior of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, initial attacks on a minimum of twenty-six businesses and the incarceration of 120 Jewish males in the early hours of the morning of 10 November.<sup>17</sup> The demolition of synagogues symbolised the end of Jewish public life in Germany and Austria and the image of broken glass symbolised the shattering of German and Austrian Jewry.

In the early hours of the morning of 10 November 1938, Ernst Levy was on his way home from a social evening with some friends and walked through the city centre to his home at *Gustav-Adolf-Straße* 29. On his way home he noticed a large amount of broken windows on shop fronts and that a number of these shops

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<sup>16</sup> Detailed accounts of the *Reichskristallnacht* have been well documented. See Pehle, ed., op. cit.; Barkai, “Exclusion and Persecution: 1933–1938,” in Meyer, ed. op. cit., pp. 216–230; Döscher, op. cit.; Friedländer, op. cit.; Kaplan, op. cit.; and Read and Fisher, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Funkspruch, 10. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band V, LHASA MD, p. 116.

had been plundered. He arrived home safely and thought nothing more of the damage until later that morning.<sup>18</sup> Prior to the mass arrests that morning, Ernst Levy was one of a small number of Jews who was informed by non-Jews that he was in imminent danger. His son, Gerry Levy, recalled this:

This Mr Plettig from the Magdeburg Gestapo was the one who tipped off my father. My father was known to him because of his activities with the *Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten*. One of his staffers contacted my father and informed him that arrests were to take place at six o'clock in the morning [of 10 November] and that he should get out [of the city].<sup>19</sup>

This same information was supplied to three other fathers of the interviewees. Joachim Freiberg received the same telephone call and departed for Berlin. He remained there for approximately two to three weeks, where he was hidden in the Jewish hospital. A personal friend of his, originally from Magdeburg, was a physician there.<sup>20</sup> Likewise Freiberg's brother and brother-in-law, Samuel Freiberg and Jakob Wurmser, were telephoned and told to 'go away as they [the Gestapo] are arresting all the [Jewish] men.'<sup>21</sup> Both men heeded the advice and fled in Freiberg's car. Returning to Magdeburg, both hid in the apartment of the Sorger family, who lived across the street from their respective homes.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst the Freiberg brothers and Jakob Wurmser evaded arrest, the Gestapo was persistent in its pursuit of Ernst Levy. Few Jewish males (aged between twenty-one and sixty-five years) evaded arrest in Magdeburg.

After being informed at approximately six o'clock that morning of the imminent arrests, Ernst Levy went to his parents' home for refuge. Some time later, his sister Hanna arrived at her brother's home to inform Levy's wife,

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<sup>18</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Personal interview with Gerry Levy AM (recorded), Sydney, 1 October 1999.

<sup>20</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>21</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Marianne, and son, Gerhard (Gerry) that all was well, but that the Gestapo was arresting Jewish males between the ages of twenty-one and sixty-five years. They were relieved that at least both grandfathers had been spared. Marianne Levy's elderly father lived with them at that time.

When two men arrived from the Gestapo at the Levys' apartment, they sought 'Ernst Georg Levy.'<sup>23</sup> Marianne Levy replied that only an Ernst Levy lived there. The men left, somewhat confused. When they returned later they simply requested 'Ernst Levy.' Levy's wife replied that she did not know where her husband was. The two men inquired as to who the old man was and Marianne Levy's father proudly introduced himself and informed them that he was a war veteran, awarded the Iron Cross and that he had served three German emperors. They ignored the old man and made a number of derisive remarks, when the Levys' non-Jewish maid appeared. When the Gestapo officers asked her who she was, she declared: '*Ich bin Frau Lackomie und ich bin Arierin!* [My name is Mrs Lackomie and I am an 'Aryan'!]' Stupified as to why she was working there they told her to get out immediately, which she did. Gerry Levy recalled how shocked both he and his mother were at this woman's behaviour as she had been with the family for over twenty years, had always been very warm to them, even bringing them gifts and produce from her vegetable garden.<sup>24</sup>

By this stage the officers were becoming impatient and ordered that if Levy did not report to their offices by the next morning, then they would take Marianne Levy's father. Understandably, the old man became very upset. Fearing the telephone was under surveillance, Gerry Levy was then sent by his mother on his bicycle to his grandparents to inform his father. Gerry Levy then returned home.

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<sup>23</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

The next morning Marianne Levy contacted the Gestapo, indicating that she had no way of contacting her husband. The Gestapo reiterated the threat of taking her father into custody. After Gerry Levy went to his father for the second time to inform him of the situation, his father decided to report, as requested, and his wife contacted the Gestapo and informed them that her husband would, indeed, report to them the next day. At no stage of the process did the Gestapo question her as to why she could not contact her husband previously, but had been successful in contacting him quite suddenly. Nevertheless, the Gestapo accepted her explanation.

Gerry Levy recollected how both he and his mother parted with his father on 12 November 1938:

The three of us met near the *Dom* [cathedral] and we walked from there to the Gestapo headquarters in the *Altstadt* to say goodbye. I think we were fully aware that he would be sent to a [concentration] camp. It was very sad and very emotional for me. My father was very stoical; you know, he maintained a stiff upper lip attitude. And we said goodbye.<sup>25</sup>

As close to three days had elapsed since the actual pogrom, Levy was sent to the nearby political prison of Stendal, where he remained for approximately three weeks and was treated like a regular non-Jewish prisoner.<sup>26</sup> Thanks to the delay in his arrest, he had missed the group deportation with his fellow Jews to Buchenwald Concentration Camp on 11 November 1938.<sup>27</sup>

The Wurmser family lived on the corner of *Königgrätzer Straße* and *Straßburger Straße*. The Schetzers also resided in this corner building at *Königgrätzer Straße* 4. The families knew each other well and their daughters were close friends. Prior to Jakob Wurmser being informed of the imminent

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<sup>25</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 1.

arrests on 10 November, his wife arose very early that morning and standing on her balcony, Betty Wurmser noticed their friend and neighbour, Julius Schetzer, walking with two men. She remarked to her daughter: 'Mr Schetzer, look how he goes already to business at six o'clock!' The Wurmsers later learned that Julius Schetzer was not on his way to his shop, but had been arrested by the Gestapo.<sup>28</sup>

Julius Schetzer's daughter, Sigrid Freeman, recalled her father's arrest that morning:

At six o'clock in the morning two Gestapo men came and they arrested my father. We telephoned my aunt in Switzerland, who sent over a barrister. He went to the Gestapo and was assured that my father was going to Buchenwald and that he would come home on the first *Transport* [group deportation] out.<sup>29</sup>

My mother was completely finished. She was not even able to ring my aunt in Switzerland. I rang my aunt in Switzerland, but Mummy was completely finished!<sup>30</sup>

Sigrid Freeman recalled going to the main railway station that day when her father was sent to Buchenwald Concentration Camp and remembered the orderliness of the event:

People were upset naturally and we were puzzled as to what was going to happen. But the people who were taken, there was nothing else to do, but to be orderly with the Gestapo – there was nothing else.<sup>31</sup>

Sixty-one-year-old Rabbi Dr Wilde, arrested on that morning, provided a highly detailed account of the *Reichskristallnacht*. He, like the majority of the Jewish community, was detained in prison cells and then deported to Buchenwald Concentration Camp on 11 November. After being arrested, the rabbi was

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<sup>28</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>29</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>30</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

detained at the police prison, owing to overcrowding at the Gestapo prison. He described that morning in the following way:<sup>32</sup>

I met there many members of my congregation. One told me: “Our synagogue doesn’t exist anymore. This morning SA men came, took the Holy Scriptures, bibles, prayer books and all other movable things from the synagogue, made a great heap in front of the synagogue, poured on petrol and burnt it. But they took everything with them made of silver, candlesticks, cups and so on. They could not burn the synagogue in the same manner without endangering other houses belonging to ‘Aryans.’ So they laid powder over everything in the synagogue and lit it. The inside blew up.”

I was taken with five other men to a cell which was in normal times only for one man: one bed, one stool, one pail; that was all. But I was not unhappy. I thought this would last some days and then we would be free. We were a very mixed company: a worker, a doctor, a director of a great factory, a young shop assistant, a solicitor and I. At twelve o’clock we had a large cup of soup and in the evening a piece of dry bread. Then the guard threw in some mattresses and shouted: “The eldest of you into the bed, the others on the mattresses!” I was the eldest – sixty-one – and could lay on the bed, two men half under it and the three others covered the rest of the floor. In the morning we were allowed to go into the corridor to wash our faces and hands without soap or towel. We got a cup of coffee and again a large piece of dry bread. Suddenly the rumour spread round: We will be taken to the concentration camp Buchenwald! Five hours later, we thought that the day in this police prison was a peaceful holiday.

About eight o’clock we were taken to the railway station. A number of inquisitive people stood around. Their faces were serious. I saw only one boy grinning. When I stared at him he stopped. Some distance away I recognised a woman of my congregation. I threw a bunch of keys to her. She understood that she should take it to my wife, which she did. On the way to Buchenwald we were not allowed to leave the carriage. So I threw postcards addressed to my wife out of the window at three different stations, hoping someone would put them into post boxes. One of these cards arrived.

At Weimar, once the town of Goethe and Schiller, we had to leave the train...<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit. This five-page manuscript written in English provides a complete account of Rabbi Dr Wilde’s experiences from the time of his arrest up until the time of his return to Magdeburg. This manuscript was also translated into German in 1957 and entitled: *Elf Tage im Konzentrationslager Buchenwald*. This translation is located in the personal file on Rabbi Dr Georg and Mrs Martha Wilde, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 50, ASGM.

Rabbi Dr Wilde along with the majority of the Jews arrested from Magdeburg remained in Buchenwald Concentration Camp for approximately eleven days.<sup>34</sup>

On the morning of 10 November 1938 a radio announcement issued by the police commissioner indicated that as a result of the ‘murderous act’ in Paris, spontaneous demonstrations by the outraged local population in Magdeburg had led to the damage of twenty-six Jewish businesses and the synagogue. Falsely, it declared that neither arson nor plundering had taken place. Both security staff and the owners of businesses were reported to have attempted ‘to protect’ the threatened properties, as police manpower was insufficient. The government declared that no lives had been endangered and that 120 Jews had been arrested.<sup>35</sup>

Later that day when Police Commissioner von Klinckowström further reported to the government, the description of the damage was more comprehensive. Twenty-six Jewish businesses and one office had had their windows smashed, the contents of their premises thrown onto the street fronts and the synagogue’s interior and its windows had been smashed. He remarked, nevertheless, that public law and order had not been disturbed, that there had been no plundering and that all premises affected would be protected against this occurrence.<sup>36</sup>

On the evening of 10–11 November a further three Jewish businesses and a Jewish tavern had their windows smashed and the interiors partially destroyed. The entire interior of the synagogue was destroyed by explosives and the dining room of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, situated in the adjacent building, was also

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<sup>33</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Funkspruch, 10. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band V, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>36</sup> Betrifft: Ereignismeldung. Schäden an jüdischen Geschäften, 10. November 1938, ibid., p. 118.

destroyed. He ended his report by reiterating the order from Berlin that the ‘demonstrations’ had now officially ended.<sup>37</sup> On the same day the Gestapo notified the provincial government that in the administrative region of Magdeburg that a total of ‘237 adult, male, German nationals of the Jewish race had been arrested.’<sup>38</sup> Of this figure, 113 Jews were residents of Magdeburg. The 237 men were sent by train at 11.18 a.m. on 11 November from Magdeburg to Buchenwald Concentration Camp.<sup>39</sup>

It is clear that there were three main aims during the pogrom in Magdeburg: the destruction of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*,<sup>40</sup> attacks on Jewish businesses and the arrest of male Jews. None of the previously discussed property belonging to the Jewish community was destroyed, except for the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. In this sense the act was a very symbolic one. Not only was this synagogue an architectural landmark on the cityscape, but it was the city’s biggest synagogue and was located in the centre of the city itself. In both a symbolic and in every practical sense, Jewish communal and religious life in this city had been demolished.

On the morning of 10 November Gerry Levy viewed the smouldering synagogue and the damaged and looted shops. *Große Schulstraße*, the street where the synagogue was located, was completely cordoned off. He also recalled that there were no demonstrations, but that the public was simply looking on in a passive manner. On his way home, he noticed a non-Jewish German wearing a

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<sup>37</sup> Betrifft: Ereignismeldung. Schäden an jüdischen Geschäften, 10. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1996, Band V, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>38</sup> Correspondence from the Geheime Staatspolizei, Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg, An den Herrn Oberpräsidenten in Magdeburg, 11 November 1938, *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Neither archival material nor oral history material indicates that the Shtiblech were attacked and destroyed during the pogrom.

shawl; when he realised it was in fact a *Tallit*, it made him feel very ill and hurt at this act of desecration.<sup>41</sup> Numerous other interviewees recalled the damaged synagogue and the shops.

By the time the interviewees felt it was safe to venture outdoors the majority of the street carnage had been removed, but shop fronts remained boarded up, awaiting the services of glaziers. Sigrid Freeman recalled the view of what remained of the synagogue's interior after explosives had been used to blow it up. She also recalled her feelings of sadness in the weeks immediately after the pogrom and the difficult process Jews faced in getting out of Germany. With the destruction of the synagogue, religious services were held in the *B'nai B'rith* Lodge next door.<sup>42</sup> A photographic record of the destruction confirms that explosives were used to destroy the interior of the synagogue and that the elegant gallery, which once housed female congregants and the choir, had collapsed. The main structures of the exterior walls remained.<sup>43</sup> However, the entire interior had been reduced to rubble. It had also been plundered and physically destroyed by hand, prior to the use of explosives. The synagogue's offices, conference room, music room and dining room suffered the same fate.<sup>44</sup> In the wake of the

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<sup>41</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>42</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Four undated photographs detailing the interior of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg after its destruction on 9–11 November 1938, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Numbers 136BO3, 136BO7, 136BO8, 136CO1, YVA. Identical photographs from this collection are also located in Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 47a, ASGM and in Collection M96, File 22:18, Sydney Jewish Museum Archives (SJMA). From the images captured it is most likely that these photographs were taken immediately after the events of the pogrom.

<sup>44</sup> Four undated photographs detailing the conference room, the music room, an office and the dining room of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg after their destruction on 9–11 November 1938, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Numbers 136AO7, 136AO8, 136AO9, 136BO5, YVA. Identical photographs from this collection are also located in Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 47a, ASGM. From the

destruction of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* a large crowd gathered in front of the building to view what remained. Amongst numerous Nazi Party officials was *Kreisleiter* Krüger, who appeared amongst the scores of bystanders, some of whom appeared indifferent whilst others were excited.<sup>45</sup>

An extensive photographic record also confirms the reports made about the damage to Jewish businesses. Scores of onlookers and passers-by filled the streets to view the damage. Some ignored what was around them and continued with their business commitments; others congregated around damaged shop fronts, discussing the events.<sup>46</sup> Businesses which had their shop front windows destroyed included 'L. Sperling & Co.'<sup>47</sup> and '*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Karfiol*'.<sup>48</sup> Evidence of the careful planning and co-ordination of the attacks is provided by the fact that only Jewish-owned businesses and property were ransacked. Property and businesses already 'aryanised' or in the process of 'aryanisation' remained untouched. This included Jakob Wurmser's leather and shoe repair business

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images captured, it is most likely that these photographs were taken immediately after the events of the pogrom.

<sup>45</sup> *Kreisleiter* Krüger and others view the destroyed synagogue in Magdeburg, undated photograph, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 47a, ASGM, op. cit. From the image captured it is most likely that this photograph was taken immediately after the events of the pogrom.

<sup>46</sup> Twenty-six undated photographs detailing the exterior damage to the shop fronts of various Jewish businesses caused during the pogrom in Magdeburg, 9–11 November 1938, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Numbers 135FO2-135FO9, 135GO1-135GO4, 135GO6-135GO9, 136AO1-136AO5, 136CO4-136CO8, YVA. Identical photographs from this collection are also located in Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 47a, ASGM and in Collection M96, Files 22:2-7, 9, 11-16, SJMA. From the images captured, it is most likely that these photographs were taken immediately after the events of the pogrom. A further six photographs detailing the same damage, but taken by a different photographer (from the previously cited photographs) are located in Collection AR 120, Files KR-1 F 13379, 13382-13386, LBIA NY.

<sup>47</sup> Photograph detailing the exterior damage to the shop front of 'L. Sperling & Co.' caused during the pogrom in Magdeburg, 9–11 November 1938, undated, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Numbers 136AO1, 135GO6, YVA, op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> Photograph detailing the exterior of the damage to the shop front of '*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Karfiol*' caused during the pogrom in Magdeburg, 9–11 November 1938, undated, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Number 136CO5, YVA, op. cit.

'Elsaß' and a paint and wallpaper shop owned by Samuel Freiberg.<sup>49</sup> All interviewees concurred that the Jewish population was so terrified that Jews avoided being outdoors as they feared for their safety. Many of the errands in the days after the pogrom were undertaken by children, as older community members were still in shock and traumatised by the events. It was generally in the course of such errands that Jewish youth viewed first-hand the damage and the plundering that had taken place.

Whilst community members were attempting to come to terms with the magnitude of what had occurred and of its ramifications, 113 Jewish males experienced the terror of concentration camp life at Buchenwald. Rabbi Dr Wilde recalled their arrival:

At Weimar, once the town of Goethe and Schiller, we had to leave the train. In the tunnel we had to stand facing the wall, one behind the other. "No turning round! Pack tight together." Then we were driven to the concentration camp at Buchenwald. We had to sit bending forward as low as possible. We arrived and stood crammed together with our hats in our hands in a large entrance to a mustering ground. Then we were ordered: "Run to the ground!" An SS man stood on a bank on the one side of the entrance and beat the heads of the running men with a stick. Everyone pressed to the other side. One man running before me fell to the ground. I tried to turn aside: I succeeded but I fell headlong on the ground which was covered with little stones. Blood streamed from a hole in my forehead, covering all of my face. I jumped up and ran further to the mustering ground.<sup>50</sup>

Soon after picking himself up he was beaten in the face by an SS officer. For the next eleven days the rabbi remained resolute and of a positive spirit and continued his pastoral relationship with many of his congregants, particularly with those who became convinced that they would not leave alive.

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<sup>49</sup> Personal interview with H. B. and R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 19 November 1997.

<sup>50</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

He witnessed the constant bestial violence of the guards, the public floggings, the suicides and the incidence of individuals completely losing their minds.<sup>51</sup> He related that behind his barrack was a ‘wash house,’ which was locked and that there ‘were soon more than a hundred Jews in it, who had gone mad.’<sup>52</sup> Like all of the inmates he stood from morning to evening and each morning he assisted in carrying out the corpses of those who had died during the previous night.<sup>53</sup> He vividly described the appalling conditions of the barracks of an evening:

In the evenings we were driven in our huts, which had only one large door. Boards were fixed in three tiers one above the other at a distance of about three feet. Young people climbed to the upper tiers, old people took to the tiers below. About 1,600 men had to lie in this hut like sardines in a tin. I read about a saint who slept on a plank bed with a block of wood for a pillow. I think the Nazis wanted to make us still greater saints: they gave us plank beds without any pillow. They made our life easy, we didn’t need to undress at night or dress in the morning, we were always ready. We didn’t need to wash ourselves: we got no water either for washing or drinking. Not a drop of water touched my body in eleven days.<sup>54</sup>

Surviving a starvation diet and a fainting incident, which could have cost him his life, the rabbi was released on his eleventh day in the camp.

Two hundred men were to have been released in that first contingent. However, there were only 194, as five had died the night before and one man, ‘was still a little mad and not on the spot, when the names were called.’<sup>55</sup> After a ‘medical examination’ certified that he had not suffered ill-treatment, the rabbi was sent to the barber. When the group had arrived from Magdeburg originally, the camp barbers, also Jewish prisoners, were so overwhelmed with the number of prisoners that this group did not have their heads nor beards shaven. However, this

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<sup>51</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 2–3.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

was to be completed prior to their release. The rabbi determined to retain his beard and asked the officer if he could do so.<sup>56</sup> To his surprise, he agreed, much to the horror of the barber, who feared for his life. The officer then telephoned the camp headquarters for approval. Wilde wrote:

All orders from the *Lager-Kommandantur* [office of the Camp Commander] were given by loudspeaker and so two minutes later about 16,000 German Jews in the camp and many other people could hear the decision of the Solomon in the *Kommandantur*: “The Jew, Chief Rabbi Dr Wilde, is allowed to keep his beard; his head has to be shaved.” And so I came home without any hairs on my head but with my beard.<sup>57</sup>

Prior to his release, he and his entire group were instructed that their release was contingent on their emigration. They were threatened with reprisals should they discuss their camp experiences. This fear instilled in the former prisoners was one factor why their experiences were not discussed for a time, if at all.

Sigrid Freeman recalled her father telling her at the time that he was not allowed to discuss what had taken place in the concentration camp. She also recalled her father’s return in the same group as the rabbi. Families of those incarcerated were somehow informed of the details of the forthcoming return of

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<sup>56</sup> Whilst it was standard practice to shave the beards and heads of all prisoners, this was a particularly degrading and humiliating act for a rabbi. Strict guidelines on shaving are set down in the Code of Jewish Law. As such, the majority of Orthodox Jews, and those from other Jewish traditions who choose to adhere to this law, refrain from shaving altogether. This act symbolically constituted a further attack on Judaism and Jewish practice.

<sup>57</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 5. The quoted figure of approximately 16,000 German prisoners cannot be substantiated and Wilde provides no source for this. It was most likely based on anecdotal sources, when the account was written. Marion Kaplan cites the figure of 9,845 Jews incarcerated in Buchenwald Concentration Camp after the pogrom. See Kaplan, op. cit., p. 122. Kaplan’s figure is close to the figure cited by David A. Hackett, ed., *The Buchenwald Report* Boulder, Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995, p. 113. Hackett cites the following figures for November 1938: Admissions – 10,098; departures – 2,181; and camp population at the end of the month – 18,105.

their loved ones, as, at the appointed time, relatives assembled at the railway station. She remembered the scene that day:

The men came off the train like wild beasts. They didn't see us; they pushed us aside, because they had to be straightaway at the Gestapo to report, without talking to any of their relatives. We followed and picked them up from Gestapo headquarters in Magdeburg and then we came home. Daddy came back with a broken rib and a broken arm.<sup>58</sup>

Rabbi Dr Wilde also reported to the Gestapo in Magdeburg that day. The day after his return home he had to report yet again to the Gestapo. However, this time it was to sign an undertaking that he would emigrate 'voluntarily' by 15 April 1939.<sup>59</sup> He complied. Gerry Levy recalled the same requirement of his father, who was released from Stendal prison after he had signed documentation affirming the emigration of him and his family by the end of 1938 and after having signed over his business.<sup>60</sup>

The planned and temporary nature of the detention of the Jews was inadvertently conveyed to the rabbi on his departure from the city on 11 November. On that morning at the railway station the rabbi sighted a Gestapo official whom he knew. He asked the official to request that Walter Heinemann, the agent for Jewish emigration in Magdeburg, prepare his emigration papers. As the train pulled out of the station another Gestapo official advised the rabbi that he could do this himself when he returned in approximately eight days' time. At the time the rabbi thought that he must have misunderstood the official.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>59</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>61</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 4.

The *Reichskristallnacht* was a critical turning point. The pogrom marked a transition in the escalation of persecution. What had occurred up until this point was a steady step-by-step process resulting in political powerlessness, economic strangulation and social segregation. The *Reichskristallnacht* had initiated a heretofore unknown level of violence. The realisation by Jews that such fearful events could have no limits was demonstrated for the first time on the *Reichskristallnacht*. It was also in some respects a blueprint, as concentration camps, which had originally been used to punish criminals and opponents of the regime, were now extended to include Jews, not because they were offenders but simply because they were Jewish. The Nazi leadership also learnt the lesson that public violence in the streets of Germany was difficult to limit. Ordinary Germans may have stood by, but rampaging violence and the destruction of property were offensive to their social norms. The violence had also disturbed on a large scale the administrative processes of official antisemitism. Henceforth, the persecution of the Jews reverted back once more to official decrees. Large-scale displays of public violence and damage to property were avoided.

The *Reichskristallnacht* represented the end of the first stage of the *Shoah*. The demolition of the synagogue and the destruction of Jewish businesses in Magdeburg symbolised the end of Jewish public life in the city. The second stage of ghettoisation began when Jews were excluded from all public venues and herded into '*Judenhäuser*.' After November 1938 most Jews abandoned the notion that they still had some rights as citizens of their German *Heimat*. The old discussions of the alternatives of 'homeland or exile' and the question of 'leaving

or not leaving' faded.<sup>62</sup> Most Jews no longer suffered any delusions about their future in Germany. Along with this, particularly for the older generation, came the brutal and stark realisation that Jewish life in Germany was no longer feasible.

### **Reactions of the Victims and the Perpetrators**

In Magdeburg, as elsewhere in the *Reich*, the situation became life-threatening. Given the events and the ensuing circumstances the majority of the Jews sought emigration at any cost and to almost anywhere. The pogrom had galvanised them into action. For those in concentration camps, the only way out was proof of readiness to emigrate. For those not in camps, the magnitude of the violence influenced their decisions. It was only after the pogrom that Jews were finally convinced that they faced physical danger. The realisation that Jewish life in Germany and Austria, as Jews had once known it, had come to such an end, was uncontested.

Whilst Jews desperately sought refuge in other countries, the Nazis enacted a barrage of new antisemitic legislation. Representatives of the German insurance companies argued that the reputation of the industry depended on paying out claims for damages, whether made by German or Jewish owners. Göring's solution was that all insurance payments on properties owned by Jews were to be made to the state. In addition, a one billion *Reichsmark* fine was imposed on the Jewish community. Other suggestions were put into effect within weeks. Jews

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<sup>62</sup> Konrad Kwiet, "The Second Time Around: Re-Acculturation of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, vol.10, number 1, 2001, p. 35.

were ordered to clean up the destroyed synagogues and swift new regulations increasingly segregated Jews.

Reactions of Jews in the aftermath of the pogrom in Magdeburg were swift. Given the seriousness of the events, Jews quickly adjusted to the grave situation they faced. The priorities became personal safety of loved ones, attending to the release of male relatives arrested and preparation for emigration. Some still hesitated to emigrate, as they remained even more fearful of the unknown than of the situation they faced in Magdeburg. However, for the majority emigration became the priority.<sup>63</sup>

Shortly prior to the pogrom, the families of Jakob Wurmser and Samuel Freiberg had commenced organising their families' emigration and both of their businesses were in the process of being 'aryanised' when the pogrom occurred. Wurmser's daughter recalled the confusion and panic that set in immediately after the destruction and the arrests. However, once the panic had subsided, careful organisation and planning ensued. She also remembered the disbelief of some foreign relatives, when telegraphed for financial assistance:

We were afraid to go out, but the grown-ups were even more afraid. Both our fathers were still in hiding and both our mothers were terrified. My mother had cousins in America and we were sent to the *Hauptpost* [main post office] to send a telegram to these relations. I still recall the long queue! And these relatives, they told us: "To stick it out! *Wer aushält, wird gekrönt!*" A telegram was also sent to my aunt and uncle in Palestine. And he responded and saved our lives. Our 'lift' was ordered; we already had our tickets for the trip via Canada; all that wasn't ready was our landing money. That's how we got to Australia.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> For a comprehensive account of the emigration experiences of Jewish refugees from Magdeburg during the Nazi period see Michael E. Abrahams-Sprod, "Australien! Wo ist denn das? The Migration Experience of Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany," *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 17, 2003, pp. 9–24.

<sup>64</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997 and 19 November 1997.

In addition to the distress and trauma Jews experienced at that time, the experience of these young Jews also highlights to some extent their adaptation to the difficulties and even to having manifested a certain resilience in dealing with their ongoing persecution.

Gerry Levy's experience was similar. Directly after farewelling his father at Gestapo headquarters, he accompanied his mother to the main post office in order to send a telegram to his uncle and aunt, Hans and Hilda Lewin, who had settled in Sydney.<sup>65</sup> The Levys were hopeful of receiving a landing permit for Australia. When the address and the text of the telegram were passed over to the postal clerk, the clerk upon viewing the address, grimaced and uttered to the surprised pair: '*Australien! Wo ist denn das?* [Australia! Where on earth is that?]'<sup>66</sup> Such a comment typified many elements of the migration experience of Jewish refugees. The clerk's facetious comment bore a partial truth, in that for most of the Jews of Magdeburg, and, indeed, Germany, distant Australia was more a part of the imagination than of any reality at that time.<sup>67</sup>

Hilda Lewin acted immediately and secured landing permits for the Levy family. The documentation arrived at the British Embassy in Berlin within one week.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the Levy family was one of the very fortunate few, as the Australian quota for immigrants for 1938 was limited to 5,000. In 1938 alone, the

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<sup>65</sup> Suzanne D. Rutland and Sophie Caplan *With One Voice: A History of The New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies* Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1998, p. 251.

<sup>66</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>67</sup> A comprehensive and highly detailed report of life and conditions in Australia from the viewpoint of a German-Jewish immigrant family was published in January 1939 in the bi-weekly newspaper, the *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt*, of the Berlin-based Jüdischer Kulturbund in Deutschland, *Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt*, 3. Januar 1939, Nr. 1, Jahrgang 1939, Bestand Pr.-030, ASGM. For further personal accounts see Volker Elis Pilgrim, Doris and Herbert Liffman, eds., *Fremde Freiheit: Jüdische Emigration nach Australien, Briefe 1938–1940* Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1992.

<sup>68</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

Australian government had received over 50,000 applications. Consequently, the vast majority of applicants were unsuccessful,<sup>69</sup> including Sigrid Freeman's family, the Schetzers. They later secured landing permits for the United States of America (USA) via London and the family departed four weeks before war's outbreak. Julius Schetzer was still reluctant to leave, but, nevertheless, emigrated.<sup>70</sup> The reaction of the wife of Rabbi Dr Wilde was equally as swift. Whilst her husband was still in Buchenwald Concentration Camp, she sent a telegram to the British Chief Rabbi, Dr Joseph H. Hertz, seeking his assistance.<sup>71</sup>

By the end of 1938, it had become increasingly difficult to secure both tickets and landing permits for countries willing to accept Jewish refugees. Jewish refugees had to accept whatever country offered asylum first and whatever passage was available, often involving unusual routes.<sup>72</sup> This was the exact situation that the family of Dr Max Jeruchem faced.<sup>73</sup> Abandoning his medical practice in the summer of 1938, he and his wife moved to Berlin and were living with Dr Jeruchem's eighty-five-year-old father in Wilmersdorf. His daughter was already in Berlin preparing for her emigration. Meanwhile his son was in Hamburg.

In Berlin, Dr Jeruchem regularly visited travel agencies trying to procure passages to Shanghai. In spite of having met all of the imposed legal and taxation

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<sup>69</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the immigration of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany to Australia see Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* New York: Holmes and Meier, 2001 and Paul R. Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933–45* Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994.

<sup>70</sup> George Wilde, *Eleven Days in the Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 1938–1939*, File ME 687; MM82, LBIA NY, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Strauss, op. cit.

<sup>73</sup> The situation and fate of Dr Jeruchem's medical practice in Schönebeck have been discussed in Chapter Two.

requirements by early December 1938,<sup>74</sup> he was still desperately waiting for landing permits and travel documents. Hans Jensen recollected his feelings at that time after the pogrom:

We wondered what would happen to us; we just lived from one day to the next.<sup>75</sup>

My father went practically every day to a certain travel agency wanting four tickets to Shanghai. That was the only thing left for us. One day my father went and the answer was no. And then, one fellow walked in and said: "I've got four tickets for Shanghai, can you sell them?" My father was in like a shot! That's how we got out of Germany. We got the train from Berlin to Trieste. We got onto the *Conte Rosso*, which was going on to Shanghai. It happened around early January 1939 – it was a miracle! Four tickets – I mean we needed four tickets!<sup>76</sup>

The example of the Jeruchem family highlights the difficulty of securing passage. This example also indicates that even at this point in time some emigrants were still selective in their destination, as the Jeruchems also managed to obtain visas for Siam, but decided against this destination.

On 2 January 1939, Walter Heinemann, the agent for Jewish emigration in Magdeburg, despatched a report on local Jewish emigration to the Magdeburg Gestapa and marked it to the attention of an officer by the surname of Plettig.<sup>77</sup> Heinemann was the agent not only for the city of Magdeburg, but the entire administrative district of Magdeburg, which included the cities of Bleicherode, Halle and Nordhausen amongst others. At the time he was processing 300

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<sup>74</sup> Bescheinigung für Divisenstelle, Finanzamt, Schönebeck (Elbe), 8. Dezember 1938, Private Archive of Hans Jensen, op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 11 July 1999.

<sup>76</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>77</sup> Betr.: Bericht über die Auswanderung der Juden, 2. Januar 1939, Collection 0.51.OSSOBI, File 103, YVA, pp. 20–23. This highly detailed four-page report was divided into four sections, which discussed in a comprehensive manner the following subjects: The state of and possibilities for emigration; Plans for emigration; Financial means currently at Jews' disposal; Difficulties in emigration.

applications for emigration for 1,200 persons.<sup>78</sup> Listed from one to five, possibilities for immigration to the following countries existed: The USA, Palestine, the South American countries, Australia and China. The two main obstacles to mass Jewish emigration were the unwillingness of countries to accept Jews who possessed no capital and the fact that emigration from Germany needed to be executed according to a fully co-ordinated plan and not in the 'irregular' way that was occurring, according to Heinemann.<sup>79</sup> The Gestapa in Magdeburg deemed the report so important that it was sent on to the office of the *Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei* in Berlin, which in turn sent it on to the *Reichsführer-SS, Chef des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* on 24 January 1939.<sup>80</sup>

In anticipation of mass Jewish emigration, the Gestapa in Magdeburg requested that the police commissioner's office report comprehensively on all emigration, particularly that taking place after 31 January 1939.<sup>81</sup> The Gestapa requested the details of all Jews, both *Reich* nationals and stateless Jews. Submitted details included: date of emigration, surname, first name, place and date of birth, profession, last domestic domicile, name of office that issued the emigrant's passport, passport number and the emigrant's temporary and permanent country of destination. The Gestapa further instructed that such lists were to be made up bi-monthly and sent from the police commissioner's office

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<sup>78</sup> Betr.: Bericht über die Auswanderung der Juden, 2. Januar 1939, Collection 0.51.OSSOBI, File 103, YVA, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 23

<sup>80</sup> Betrifft: Auswanderung der Juden, 24. Januar 1939, ibid., p. 18.

<sup>81</sup> Betr.: Auswanderung der Juden, 3. Februar 1939, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., unnumbered page.

directly to the Gestapa in Magdeburg.<sup>82</sup> On 16 March 1939, the provisional government acknowledged receipt of the nationally despatched memorandum from Reinhard Heydrich on 11 February 1939 establishing the *Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung*, with himself as head.<sup>83</sup> In spite of a ban on Jews from operating travel agencies effective from 1 June 1939, exemptions for those operating as agents for Jewish emigration were granted on 8 May 1939.<sup>84</sup> Irrespective of the centrality of the Nazi desire and plan for mass Jewish emigration, the realities of the hurdles Jews faced in achieving this only increased. Jews desperately sought emigration, yet simultaneously faced Nazi bureaucracy; their limitations were due to their own impoverishment, few countries willing to offer asylum and the difficult prospect of securing passage.

Both the families of Samuel Freiberg and Jakob Wurmser left Magdeburg for Australia soon after the pogrom. Wurmser's daughter recalled their departure around the 23–24 November 1938:

Firstly, we said goodbye to our grandfather and to our aunt, who did not survive. That same evening, R.'s [her female cousin] uncle came from Buchenwald, black and blue – beaten, and with a shaved head – that was horrible; that was the same evening that we left. They had picked him up to say goodbye to us.<sup>85</sup>

Whilst their grandfather managed to immigrate to Palestine, their spinster aunt, Lilli Freiberg, remained. She was deported from Magdeburg to Berlin, and then to Auschwitz on 26 February 1943,<sup>86</sup> where she perished, aged fifty-two.

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<sup>82</sup> Betr.: Auswanderung der Juden, 3. Februar 1939, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., unnumbered page.

<sup>83</sup> Betrifft: Reichszentrale für jüdische Auswanderung, 11. Februar, 1939, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, p. 49.

<sup>84</sup> Betr.: Jüdische Reisebüros und Auswanderungsagenten, 8. Mai 1939, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>85</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>86</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., p. 330.

Samuel Freiberg's daughter remembered the fact that her father could not sell his car, nor much else prior to their departure. She recalled a family friend drove the two families in the same car to the main railway station.<sup>87</sup> Both families travelled to France and on to Australia via Canada, as this was the only passage they could procure. Jakob Wurmser's daughter recalled the journey, especially from Montreal to Vancouver.<sup>88</sup> Originally bound for Melbourne, they disembarked in Sydney in January 1939.

Wurmser's daughter also made particular comment on their crossing of the German-French border:

At Kehl, near Strasbourg, the Germans were ready to search us bodily, and then they let us go. Anyway half across the Rhine bridge coming into Strasbourg my father took his Iron Cross and threw it into the [River] Rhine. He was finished with it! And when we came to Strasbourg it was such a feeling of relief. Absolutely! And my father spoke perfect French, and sitting on the train from Strasbourg to Tannes, there were workers and my father started talking. And I could see that relief, that he could say whatever he wanted. From then on as far as I was concerned I felt free!<sup>89</sup>

Her father's act with his Iron Cross reflects both the anger and the loss the older generation felt at their being forced out of their homeland. On a physical level, however, the tension of border crossings was something all interviewees experienced. Their fear was only equal to their sense of relief once they had left German soil, as demonstrated by Wurmser. His daughter further remarked on how courageous her father was to facilitate their emigration.<sup>90</sup> Her father's actions were the same actions that others were compelled to take. In the wake of the pogrom there remained little choice. As maintained by Susanne Heim, many Jews

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<sup>87</sup> R. Z., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>88</sup> H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

developed an astonishing ability to adjust to a situation they did not choose and to retain sovereignty over their own lives.<sup>91</sup>

The Levys' experience of departure resembles those of the Freiberg and Wurmser families. Gerry Levy recalled his father's return from Stendal prison. Whilst his father had returned without any signs of serious physical abuse and trauma, the opposite was the case for his uncle, who had returned from a concentration camp 'shorn, terribly quiet and quite traumatised.'<sup>92</sup> All furniture and household goods were sold to non-Jews very cheaply. Gerry Levy recalled assisting both his parents and family friends who were making their own preparations for departure. The Levys emigrated at the end of December 1938.<sup>93</sup> Gerry Levy's paternal grandparents, Salomon and Sara Levy, remained in Magdeburg and died of natural causes in 1941 and 1942, aged seventy-two and seventy-five respectively.<sup>94</sup> His father's youngest and unmarried sister, Hanna Levy, chose to remain behind as she did not want to leave her parents. In possession of a visa for England, she decided to remain with her elderly parents.<sup>95</sup> On 26 February 1943, she was deported in the same group as Lilli Freiberg from Magdeburg via Berlin to Auschwitz and perished there. She was aged thirty-three.<sup>96</sup> Gerry Levy's uncle, Herbert Levy, who was married to a non-Jewish

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<sup>91</sup> Susanne Heim, "Emigration and Jewish Identity: 'An Enormous Heartbreak'," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, vol.10, number 1, 2001, p. 32.

<sup>92</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. Interviewee was unsure about the exact date of departure. He felt the family left on either 30 or 31 December 1938.

<sup>94</sup> Personal file on the Levy family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 29, ASGM.

<sup>95</sup> Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

<sup>96</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., p. 741.

woman in Magdeburg, survived the *Shoah*, only to be shot by a Russian sentry guard in a tragic accident on 14 December 1945.<sup>97</sup> He was aged forty-seven.

When the fourteen-year-old Gerry Levy, together with his parents and maternal grandfather, departed Magdeburg, the remaining family members farewelled them at the main railway station. His uncle, who had once caught him smoking cigarettes and was outraged that the young boy would not tell him how he came to possess them, presented him with a gift. After the train's departure the young boy went in to the toilet and opened his gift. To his great astonishment his uncle had given him a packet of cigarettes! The young boy wept, knowing that it was unlikely that he would ever see his uncle or his relatives again.<sup>98</sup>

Gerry Levy recalled the rail journey from Cologne and across the German-Dutch border. All passengers were ordered off the train at the border and passport checks were undertaken by the German border police, who harassed Jewish travellers.<sup>99</sup> He recollected arriving in the Netherlands, remarking that: 'Holland seemed completely different. Psychologically, it was like breathing fresh air.'<sup>100</sup> The Levys arrived in Amsterdam and took a ferry across to England. They sailed from England to Sydney, arriving in February 1939.

The Jeruchem family commenced their journey in February 1939. For all interviewees the trauma and emotional burden, which the separation of family members caused, was something which has remained a source of deep personal pain for those who were fortunate to survive. Hans Jensen recalled leaving relatives behind:

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<sup>97</sup> Personal file on the Levy family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 29, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>99</sup> Owing to an initiative of the Swiss government to prevent an influx of Jews into Switzerland, from 5 October 1938 the German government commenced stamping the passports of Jews with a large letter 'J.'

<sup>100</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

The worst thing was to leave my grandfather, who was over eighty then, and my uncle, behind. I didn't go back to Schönebeck before we left, but my father had to; I was told all of this while I was still in Hamburg. When it was all cleared and when we knew we had the chance to get out by ship, I left for Berlin. We left for Trieste around about the tenth of February. We had to leave my grandfather and his eldest son, my uncle, behind. My grandfather was sent in 1942 to Theresienstadt.<sup>101</sup>

The activity prior to their departure is indicative of both the chaos at that time and the rigidity of German bureaucracy. Because Schönebeck was the registered domicile of the family, Dr Jeruchem could only finalise both legal and taxation requirements there, in spite of the fact that they had been living in Berlin since July 1938. Once this was finalised, the family members co-ordinated their arrival in Wilmersdorf, at the home of Dr Jeruchem's father. When the family did depart from Berlin in February, it was the last time they saw their relatives again. The fate of Hans Jensen's uncle, Georg Jeruchem, remains unknown to this day, despite international searches. His grandfather, David, was deported from Berlin to Theresienstadt on 18 August 1942. He died there on 22 November 1942, four months from his ninetieth birthday.<sup>102</sup>

Hans Jensen recalled the unusual situation they faced on the train to Trieste:

We sat down and these two elderly people said to us, please don't talk to us, we are being accompanied by the Gestapo. We got absolutely terrified: "What do you mean? We should not talk to you?" I learned that these two people came from a little place somewhere in southern Germany, where they had been living all their lives. The people there were so friendly with them, that they decided that these people should leave Germany protected, Jewish Germans, protected by the Gestapo – so that they get over the border without any fuss. And that's exactly what happened!

We came to the border, and everybody had to leave this train and the Gestapo officer said: "You stay here!" This applied to us too because we were in the same compartment. So we did not have to go outside and open up all the stuff there. And so that's how we left Germany! We managed to get over the border to Trieste. But in Trieste, where we were all, more or less, herded into a place where we could sleep on stretchers. Then I realised how

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<sup>101</sup> Jensen, *op. cit.*, 14 June 1999.

<sup>102</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

my parents suddenly began to weaken, because that was too much for them. As for being out of Germany, we just looked disappointed.<sup>103</sup>

The Jeruchems did not face the same situation as other interviewees at the border crossing. However, their anxiety was something of a different kind, as their level of insecurity soared upon learning of the presence of the Gestapo, irrespective of the Gestapo's intentions. Hans Jensen noted:

The real situation hit us in Trieste. There we were put into a place where we had to spend a night. I remember my father he was terribly, terribly shaken to live in such conditions, where we had to sleep with huge numbers of people. The interesting thing is that most of these people were definitely on their way to Palestine at that time, some of them did go to Shanghai, but most of them were going to Palestine. That elderly couple in our compartment, they were going to Palestine.<sup>104</sup>

All Jews felt both physical and psychological relief in knowing that they were no longer in danger. However, the realisation that they had left lives, livelihoods and relatives behind was encountered starkly at this point in time. Many found the reality of their refugee status difficult to deal with, given their former lives in Germany. The Jeruchem family arrived in Bombay on 24 February 1939. They did not continue on to Shanghai, but remained in India. By 1947 the entire family had emigrated to Australia.<sup>105</sup>

Rabbi Dr Georg Wilde and his wife Martha emigrated to England on 27 March 1939.<sup>106</sup> Prior to his departure the rabbi had received a letter from the board of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*,<sup>107</sup> confirming that he had been on leave abroad for the period 1 April 1939 until 31 December 1939. It further stated that

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<sup>103</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

<sup>104</sup> Jensen, op. cit., 11 July 1999.

<sup>105</sup> The various stages of the emigration of members of the Jeruchem family have been discussed in Chapter Five.

<sup>106</sup> Personal file on Rabbi Dr Georg and Mrs Martha Wilde, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 50, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>107</sup> Correspondence to Rabbi Dr Wilde, 14 March 1939, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 66, CJA, p. 340.

his retirement would commence on 1 January 1940 and that he would receive an allocated pension for his thirty-eight years of service.<sup>108</sup> The Wildes remained in England and settled in Cambridge.

Sigrid Freeman recalled vividly her family's departure from the railway station in August 1939, farewelled by her paternal uncle and aunt. In possession of a visa for the USA, her uncle refused to leave Magdeburg and thought his brother, Julius Schetzer, 'crazy' for leaving.<sup>109</sup> This was in spite of having spent six months in Dachau Concentration Camp. He and his wife remained in Germany and perished.

As with the other interviewees, Sigrid Freeman recollected the tension of the situation at the German-Dutch border, where her father was taken off the train and subjected to a body search. She remarked: 'We were lucky that he didn't miss the train. At the last minute Daddy got on!'<sup>110</sup> Once over the border she felt a combination of relief and fear of the unknown. She concluded her recollections recounting their immigration to Australia:

We went to England and our things went to Melbourne until after the war. Then we got married and everything came back from Melbourne to London; including rats and mice in that container! And then came the Berlin airlift. In London it looked very much like another war, and that's when my father said: "Come on, let's go to Australia." And this was when we came. It was 1949. We arrived at first *Seder* [Passover] night in Melbourne. The name of the ship was *Largs Bay*, an English ship. There were three ships: *Largs Bay*, *Esperance Bay* and a third one. They were all named after Australian bays. They were originally troop ships. It was a beautiful journey – six weeks!<sup>111</sup>

For the Schetzers and the previously discussed families, along with hundreds of others from Magdeburg, their prime reaction to the pogrom was emigration.

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<sup>108</sup> Correspondence to Rabbi Dr Wilde, 14 March 1939, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 66, CJA, op. cit., p. 340.

<sup>109</sup> S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

The entire community also worked to facilitate the *Kindertransporte* to England<sup>112</sup> and Youth *Aliyah* to Palestine.<sup>113</sup> One interviewee, whose father was involved in the rescue efforts, recalled:

Before war's outbreak many tried to leave the country and get out. Children went away on the *Kindertransport*. That was another section my father worked in. I remember him telling me about trying to get people out at the end of 1938 and early 1939. Many children left.<sup>114</sup>

Hemmi Freeman remembered that some forty children were sent to Palestine, where they remained. The exact number of children brought to safety to England and Palestine is not known.<sup>115</sup>

A number of Jewish families from Magdeburg also made all of the necessary preparations for emigration, but failed owing to the outbreak of World War Two. In June 1937 there were 1,256 Jews in Magdeburg.<sup>116</sup> In May 1939 the number had dropped to 726.<sup>117</sup> These figures would place the number of emigrants at

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<sup>112</sup> See Wolfgang Benz, "Emigration as Rescue and Trauma: The Historical Context of the Kindertransport," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, op. cit., pp. 2–7 and Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Das Exil der kleinen Leute. Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration*, op. cit. For personal accounts of the experiences of the Kindertransport see also Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* New York and London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000.

<sup>113</sup> See Freier, op. cit.

<sup>114</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>115</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

<sup>116</sup> Mitgliederzahl der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Stichtag 1937, Collection D/Ma3, File VIII.8, CAHJP, op. cit.

<sup>117</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189. This figure is also cited in Jutta Dick and Marina Sassenberg, eds., *Wegweiser durch das jüdische Sachsen-Anhalt*. Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1998, p. 125. This statistic refers to membership of the Jewish community in 1939. However, the actual statistics from the census based on the respondent's number of 'racially' Jewish grandparents indicated the following for the city of Magdeburg. All figures are approximates: four Jewish grandparents – 739; three Jewish grandparents – 5; two Jewish grandparents – 320; and one Jewish grandparent – 224. The racial classification of a further 66 individuals could not be established. These figures were defined according to racial classification as dictated by the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and, consequently, converts to Judaism were not included in the statistics. For full details of these statistics, see *Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai*

approximately 530 individuals for the period. This amounted to a further reduction in the city's Jewish population by approximately 42%. It must be assumed that the majority of this emigration occurred between the pogrom and May 1939. Jews from Magdeburg emigrated to other parts of Europe, to Palestine, the British Empire, North and South America and to Africa.<sup>118</sup>

When the figure of 726 Jews for 1939<sup>119</sup> is subtracted from the original June 1933 statistic of 1,973<sup>120</sup> Jews in Magdeburg, the drop in population during that approximately six-year period computes to 1,247 persons. Thus, between 1933 and 1939 the Jewish population dropped by approximately 63%. Clearly, such factors as births, deaths and relocations in Germany cannot be factored into this figure. However, it must be assumed that the majority of the Jews, who comprise this 63%, emigrated as a result of Nazism.

The reactions of the perpetrators in the aftermath of the pogrom were further repressive measures and the desire to re-establish 'law and order.' The Jewish community in Magdeburg, as elsewhere in Germany, was fined for the damage inflicted and further segregation was legally imposed, notably in Jewish businesses and in public schools. Key priorities of the city were the restoration of the damaged cityscape and the confiscation of the insurance payments which normally would have been paid out to the Jewish owners of the damaged

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1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., pp. 3–29.

<sup>118</sup> Correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>119</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>120</sup> Statistisches Reichsamts, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933, Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich*, Bestand R 3102, BAB, op. cit., pp. 15–33.

premises. Expedited economic exclusion designed to further impoverish the Jews also occurred.

On 12 November 1938, following the edict of that date by General Field Marshal Hermann Göring, all Jews who were nationals of Germany were subjected to contributing to the one billion *Reichsmark* fine.<sup>121</sup> On 1 December 1938, the commissioner of the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg requested detailed statistics on monies to be paid by Jews in the administrative district of Magdeburg. The information had to be lodged by 22 December 1938 and included the number of levied Jews, the amount of assets to be levied and the total net value of the levies.<sup>122</sup> Whilst the exact figure that the community paid has not been established, evidence indicates that individuals were levied according to their assets. An example is provided in the case of the Magdeburg dermatologist, Dr Carl Lennhoff, who was levied RM 35,000.<sup>123</sup> On 12 November 1938, in a further measure to increase and amplify economic strangulation and impoverishment, Jews were forbidden from appointing ‘Aryans’ to manage Jewish-owned property, unless this was specifically authorised.

On 15 November 1938, Jewish pupils were expelled from public schools.<sup>124</sup> The *Reich* Minister for Science, Training and National Education issued a memorandum stating that ‘owing to the dastardly, murderous act in Paris that German teachers could no longer be expected to instruct Jewish pupils and that it would be unbearable for German pupils to have to sit in the same classrooms as

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<sup>121</sup> Verordnung über die Sühneleistung der Juden deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit, 12. November 1938, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, pp. 1–4.

<sup>122</sup> Betrifft: Judenvermögensabgabe, 1. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>123</sup> Einiges aus dem Leben des Dr. Carl Lennhoff, undated two-page report, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 15. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

Jews.’ Jewish pupils were henceforth only authorised to attend Jewish schools.<sup>125</sup> All interviewees who had attended public schools recalled being ‘forced out.’ Gerry Levy remembered being collected by his mother from his school on the morning of 10 November 1938. When asked by the teacher why Mrs Levy was taking him home, she replied: ‘At times like this, it is better to be together.’<sup>126</sup>

As the newly established ‘*Judenschule*’ possessed no staff in the wake of the pogrom, classes were officially suspended there on 7 December 1938.<sup>127</sup> One week prior to this, the city mandated that Jewish parents were to attend to the educational needs of their children, should no Jewish school exist in the vicinity.<sup>128</sup> On 17 December 1938, a memorandum from the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for Science, Training and National Education was despatched, concerning future arrangements for the instruction of Jewish pupils and indicated that a revision of the Jewish schools’ system was set to take place shortly.<sup>129</sup> Despite the fact that Jewish pupils were without schooling, it reinforced the view that even segregated classes in public schools had to be dissolved, unless the segregated classes for Jewish pupils were located in a separate building. The execution of lessons to both German and Jewish pupils in the same building was

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<sup>125</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 15. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 69. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Nach der ruchlosen Mordtat von Paris kann es keinem deutschen Lehrer und keiner Lehrerin mehr zugemutet werden, an jüdische Schulkinder Unterricht zu erteilen. Auch versteht es sich von selbst, daß es für deutsche Schüler und Schülerinnen unerträglich ist, mit Juden in einem Klassenraum zu sitzen.’

<sup>126</sup> Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

<sup>127</sup> Correspondence from the office of Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Magdeburg, 7 December 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>128</sup> Correspondence concerning the schooling of Jewish pupils in the administrative district of Magdeburg, 1 December 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>129</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 17. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, p. 72.

out of the question.<sup>130</sup> The minister finally remarked, in a bid to alleviate the situation, that all male Jewish teachers still incarcerated in camps would be released. In Magdeburg the subject of schooling arrangements for Jewish pupils was not raised again until early January 1939. In the meantime, Jewish parents were responsible for the education of their children.

The extent of the political use of the pogrom is evidenced with a further attempt to confirm and/or incite hatred of the Jews endorsed by the Lutheran Church. For example, on 23 November 1938, Bishop Martin Sasse of nearby Eisenach edited a new celebratory edition of the pamphlet *Martin Luther über die Juden: Weg mit ihnen!* [*Martin Luther on the Jews: Be gone with them!*]<sup>131</sup> Sasse included in his antisemitic foreword that on Luther's birthday, 10 November, synagogues were burning and that the Jews had finally been extricated from the financial life of the nation. He further commended the reader to heed the words of Luther, when dealing with the Jews.<sup>132</sup> By the end of November this thirteen-page tract was available for purchase at a cost of RM 0.10 all over the *Reich*, including Magdeburg.

Of concern to the provincial government in the wake of the *Reichskristallnacht* was the restoration of the cityscape. The government lodged an official complaint with the police on 24 November 1938. It noted that as a

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<sup>130</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 17. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 72. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Die in den Schulgebäuden der allgemeinen Volksschulen eingerichteten Sammelklassen sind jedoch, wenn andere Räumlichkeiten nicht zur Verfügung stehen, aufzulösen, da ein Unterricht an deutsche und jüdische Schüler im gleichen Gebäude nicht mehr in Betracht kommen kann.'

<sup>131</sup> Martin Sasse, ed., *Martin Luther über die Juden: Weg mit ihnen!* Freiburg im Breisgau: Sturmhut Verlag, 1938, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, op. cit., pp. 127–135.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

provincial capital it had an image to maintain. The letter reminded the police that the streetscape had not been restored and that shopfronts on *Alter Markt*, *Breiter Weg* and *Jakobstraße* were still shabbily boarded up, which was only meant to be a temporary measure. The complaint requested that the police commissioner respond with a detailed report by 30 November.<sup>133</sup>

In an effort to pacify the government, on 6 December, the police commissioner ordered that the shopfronts of damaged shops be covered with sympathetic timber panelling in order that the damage be at least less visible.<sup>134</sup> On 15 December 1938, he further reported that with the exception of two shopfronts, the display windows of all damaged 'Jewish shops' had been restored. The report bemoaned the difficulties of both delays in freight and procuring the various types and shapes of glass required. Various fixtures associated with doors, shop fittings and windows were also still outstanding for a further four shops. The police commissioner promised to keep the government informed of the completion of the repairs as soon as his office received information from the mayor.<sup>135</sup> Further to the efforts of ensuring the complete restoration of the streetscape, on 14 December 1938 the provincial government sought advice from Berlin as to when the debris and rubble from the ruined synagogues in its administrative district would be cleared away, as this had already occurred in the neighbouring district of Erfurt.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Betr.: Maßnahmen gegen jüdische Geschäfte, 24. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>134</sup> Betr.: Maßnahmen gegen jüdische Geschäfte, 6. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>135</sup> Betr.: Maßnahmen gegen jüdische Geschäfte, 15. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 103–104.

<sup>136</sup> Betrifft: Ruinen und Synagogen, 14. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 335.

In the wake of the pogrom and the release of Jewish males from concentration camps and prisons, Jews preparing for emigration were desperately attempting to salvage and sell whatever assets they still possessed. In the weeks after the pogrom the government responded with more repressive economic measures. On 8 December 1938, the payout figures on all insurance claims made by Jews for the damage caused during the pogrom were confiscated. However, life insurance claims remained unaffected.<sup>137</sup> A fatal blow was dealt when all contracts involving the sale of Jewish property finalised after 9 November 1938 that had received approval were temporarily revoked on 17 December 1938.<sup>138</sup> Henceforth, sale prices of all Jewish property had to be regulated and approved by the government.<sup>139</sup> This measure effectively ruined Jews who still possessed property, should they attempt to sell it prior to emigration. December 1938 marked the beginning of mass confiscation of Jewish assets.

The initial Jewish reaction to the pogrom and arrests of the *Reichskristallnacht* was marked by disbelief and fear. However, the brutality of the events both compelled and propelled Jews to quickly take control of their lives. This was largely undertaken by women, youth and older members of the community. The first reaction was to ensure the safety of those not arrested and to attempt to restore a sense of normality to their shattered lives; the second became the efforts to organise or at the very least to keep informed of the release of male loved ones from concentration camps and prisons; thirdly, the difficult decision on emigration had to be made. However, regardless of the decision, both options met with

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<sup>137</sup> Betrifft: Versicherungsansprüche von Juden deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit, Verordnung vom 12. November 1938 – RGB1. I S. 1581, 8. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>138</sup> Verkauf von jüdischen Grundstücken, 17. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>139</sup> Verkauf von jüdischen Grundstücken, 20. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, p. 23.

painful consequences. For some Jews the fear of the unknown and leaving their family members behind was enough to keep them in Germany; for others, the violence of the events made the decision to emigrate easier. On a communal level, the ethnic, political and religious differences that existed between the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the *Shtiblech* dissolved, as the seriousness of the situation forced the congregations to unify.<sup>140</sup>

The reaction of the perpetrators was to apportion blame onto the victims and then make them accountable. In the weeks leading up to the end of 1938, Jews in the city experienced further exclusion and segregation and the government commenced the complete removal of Jews from the German economy. In Magdeburg whilst this was occurring, both the city and the provincial authorities also prioritised the restoration of the cityscape, the levying of the Jewish community and the exclusion of Jewish children from public schools. The intensification of persecution in all avenues of life represented the commencement of the second phase of the *Shoah*. Complete exclusion and de-facto ghettoisation became policy for the Jews of the *Reich*.

### **The Post-*Reichskristallnacht* and Pre-War Persecutions**

By the beginning of 1939, the only Jewish institutions operating in Magdeburg were the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and its associated welfare organisations. By the outbreak of World War Two, Jews could no longer own or drive cars, whilst theatres, cinemas and sporting stadiums were closed to them. Jews were also moved into '*Judenhäuser*.' They were extricated from the economy and only a

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<sup>140</sup> H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

small number of professionals were still permitted to offer their services to an exclusively Jewish clientele. Jewish children were compelled to attend segregated schools and all Jews were removed from the welfare system. Valuables were also progressively confiscated. Jewish policy henceforth would come under the control of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS). Finally, on 4 July 1939, the Nazis closed down the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* and replaced it with the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*.<sup>141</sup> The main task of the *Reichsvereinigung* was to convey orders. It also maintained social welfare and educational programs from privately raised finance and organised emigration. The Jewish community was reduced to utter compliance.

In the period between the *Reichskristallnacht* and the outbreak of World War Two legislation against the Jewish community intensified and Jewish life continued under increasingly hostile conditions. From 28 November 1938 Jews were banned from certain areas and a curfew was imposed, all at the discretion of the local police authorities in Magdeburg. Jews who breached this ordinance were fined RM 150 or subjected to imprisonment for up to six weeks.<sup>142</sup> On the same day Jews were forbidden from having permits for the possession of or sale of explosives. As far as the government was concerned, Jews had proven their 'enemy' status by the assassination in Paris. Consequently, allowing them to possess such materials was deemed a serious threat to public safety.<sup>143</sup> In

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<sup>141</sup> Raul Hilberg has described the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* as the model for the *Judenräte*, the Jewish Councils, of Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (revised and expanded edition) New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

<sup>142</sup> *Polizeiverordnung über das Auftreten der Juden in der Öffentlichkeit*, 28. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 389.

<sup>143</sup> *Betrifft: Sprengstoff-Erlaubnisscheine/Juden*, 28. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 34, Signatur Nr. 130, LHASA MD, p. 149.

Magdeburg this process was conducted meticulously.<sup>144</sup> Such measures as this were entirely symbolic and more for propagandistic value in presenting to the public the image of the Jew as the enemy and as a threat to public safety.

On 4 December 1938, the *Magdeburgische Zeitung* announced that all Jews had to surrender their drivers' licences by 31 December 1938.<sup>145</sup> On 25 February 1939, the Gestapa in Magdeburg revoked, once again, hunting licences possessed by Jews. As with the explosives permits, this was largely a symbolic act. The reason for the action was the same. Jews should not under any circumstances possess any items which could inflict harm.<sup>146</sup> In March 1939 Jews in Berlin and Munich started to be evicted from their homes and forced into designated apartment buildings, or '*Judenhäuser*,'<sup>147</sup> and this was introduced some months later in Magdeburg. At the time of the national census conducted on 17 May 1939,<sup>148</sup> Jews were still living at addresses of their choice. However, a number were already living by choice in apartment buildings which would later become designated '*Judenhäuser*.'<sup>149</sup> By the time of the outbreak of World War Two, the

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<sup>144</sup> Betrifft: Sprengstoff-Erlaubnisscheine/Juden, 28 November 1938-8. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. C 34, Signatur Nr. 130, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 149–157.

<sup>145</sup> "Juden in Deutschland wird der Führerschein entzogen," in *Die Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 4. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>146</sup> Betrifft: Ausstellung von Jagdscheinen an Juden, 20. Februar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>147</sup> Betrifft: Neubesetzung von Wohnungen jüdische Mieter, 2. März 1939, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>148</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., pp. 3–29.

<sup>149</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on '*Judenhäuser*' see Konrad Kwiet, "Nach dem Pogrom. Stufen der Ausgrenzung," in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Die Juden in Deutschland: Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft* München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1989, pp. 545–659; Barkai, "In a Ghetto Without Walls," in Meyer, ed. op. cit., pp. 343–346; and Kaplan, op. cit. The subject of '*Judenhäuser*' shall be fully explored in Chapter Seven.

majority of Jews in Magdeburg had been evicted and herded together in ‘*Judenhäuser*.’<sup>150</sup>

On 20 March 1939, the *Reich* Minister for the Interior issued new guidelines on marriage between ‘*Mischlinge*’<sup>151</sup> and between ‘*Mischlinge*’ and ‘Aryans.’ A prohibition was placed on any liaison or marriage between ‘full Jews’ and ‘*Mischlinge*.’<sup>152</sup> Of continued priority were the health of the ‘national body’ and the protection of ‘Aryan’ blood and lineage. In furtherance of this complete isolation and segregation, a modification governing the choice of first names for Jews was issued in Berlin on 20 March 1939.<sup>153</sup> From 17 August 1938 all Jews were mandated to insert the middle names of ‘Israel’ and ‘Sara’ into their names. This was to become effective from 1 January 1939. However, the aforementioned memorandum included an attached list of Jewish first names for males and females. The names were all of biblical origin. Henceforth, should Jews choose to use names from the list or name their children with names from the list, then they no longer needed to insert the middle names of ‘Israel’ or ‘Sara.’ If they did not choose to use names from the list, then the mandated insertion of the former two names remained in force.<sup>154</sup> On 24 March 1939, the District Court in Magdeburg

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<sup>150</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>151</sup> For comprehensive discussions on the subject of ‘*Mischlinge*’ and ‘*Mischehen*’ see Meyer, op. cit. and Jeremy Noakes, “The Development of Nazi Policy towards the German-Jewish ‘*Mischlinge*’,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXIV, 1989, pp. 291–354. The subject of ‘*Mischlinge*’ and ‘*Mischehen*’ shall be discussed in Chapter Seven.

<sup>152</sup> Betr.: Eheauglichkeitsuntersuchungen, 20. März 1939, Bestand Rep. 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 363, LHASA MD, p. 22.

<sup>153</sup> Betrifft: Jüdische Vornamen, 20. März 1939, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, p. 80.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

ordered the Registrar General's office to insert the names of 'Israel' and 'Sara' into the names of all Jews in the register for births.<sup>155</sup>

On 15 April 1939, the *Reich* Minister for the Interior ordered that all archival material and documentation seized from Jewish institutions during the pogrom be turned over to the Gestapo, if this had not already occurred.<sup>156</sup> The concern was raised that a number of other governmental bodies still had in their possession important and valuable documentation, which the Gestapo wished to assess.<sup>157</sup> On 9 May 1939, the *Reich* Propaganda Office for Magdeburg-Anhalt, located in Dessau, despatched a memorandum announcing the forthcoming nationally acclaimed exhibition of 'The Eternal Jew'. Magdeburg hosted the exhibition from 13 May – 11 June 1939. The memorandum proclaimed the success of the exhibition in other districts and encouraged attendance of this 'great political, educational exhibition.'<sup>158</sup> According to the memorandum the exhibition provided the visitor with an overview of the Jews' pollution and ruination of other peoples, both in the past and the present, and provided evidence of how the Jew was already identified as an enemy of the people centuries prior.<sup>159</sup> The exhibition was open daily from 9.00 a.m. until 8.00 p.m. Tickets were sold at a cost of RM 0.35 for advance bookings or RM 0.50 at the door. In order to advertise and celebrate

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<sup>155</sup> Correspondence from Das Amtsgericht Abt. 13, 24 March 1939, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., unnumbered page.

<sup>156</sup> Betrifft: Jüdisches Archivgut, 15. April 1939, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ausstellung "Der ewige Jude", 9. Mai 1939, Bestand Rep. C 141, Signatur Nr. 2, LHASA MD, p. 20.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Die Ausstellung gibt in übersichtlicher Form einen Einblick in das völkerverderbende Treiben der Juden in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Weiterhin wird anhand von Tatsachenmaterial nachgewiesen, wie der Jude schon vor Jahrhunderten als Volksfeind erkannt worden ist.'

the exhibition, a commemorative cancellation for postage was used in Magdeburg for all mail during the exhibition period.<sup>160</sup>

In May 1939 the commissioner of the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg requested that the racial category of all foreign business contacts be ascertained in order to avoid procuring contracts with foreign Jews.<sup>161</sup> On 28 June 1939, the Gestapa in Magdeburg, in a criticism of the local police constabularies, requested that a complete and detailed list of all Jews resident in the administrative district of Magdeburg be completed and delivered to the Gestapa by 30 July 1939.<sup>162</sup> The Gestapa bemoaned the fact that to date the registration of Jews at the local police level had been conducted in ‘an irregular and incomplete manner.’ It requested that the following details be provided for every Jew: surname; first name; date and place of birth; profession, marital status; nationality; religion; address; passport number and date and place of issue, where applicable; and identification number or ‘*Kennkartennummer*.’ It further requested, to avoid any further confusion or error, that all registrations of Jews settling in or leaving Magdeburg, in addition to the births and deaths of Jews in the administrative district, be included in the police reports to be forwarded on to the Gestapa.<sup>163</sup> Legislation enacted during this period prior to the outbreak of war continued in an intensified manner to demonise and isolate Jews.

In Magdeburg, a small number of professionals remained in practice for an exclusively Jewish clientele. The vast majority had lost their right to practise

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<sup>160</sup> Postage cancellation “Der ewige Jude”, June 1939, Magdeburg, Collection AR 7169, File III, Gemeinde and Organisation Stamps, LBIA NY.

<sup>161</sup> Betrifft; Zahlung von Provision und Vertreterauslagen, 19. Mai 1939, Bestand Rep. I 53, Signatur Nr. 2343, LHASA MD, p. 30.

<sup>162</sup> Betr.: Aufstellung einer Judenkartei, 28. Juni 1939, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., p. 363.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

between July and September 1938. However, prior to the pogrom, some professionals were re-instated to attend to the needs of a specifically Jewish clientele. The general practitioner, Dr Heinz Goldschmidt, was one such example who was re-instated on 19 October 1938.<sup>164</sup> In the column marked 'Remarks' the entry for Dr Goldschmidt read: 'Jew! From 19 October 1938 approval granted again for the treatment of Jews.'<sup>165</sup>

Nevertheless, Jewish professionals were still being deregistered in the months after the pogrom. The physician Dr Otto Schlein lost his right to practise on 23 January 1939.<sup>166</sup> Clearly, in the wake of the deregistrations the government had to respond to the need of Jews requiring professional services. On 17 January 1939, as a result of the *Achte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz*, a limited number of professionals were re-instated for this purpose. Many of these further re-instatements occurred from February 1939. On 16 February 1939, the Magdeburg dentist Dr Martin Reinhold was re-instated as a 'practitioner of the sick' or '*Krankenbehandler*.'<sup>167</sup> Likewise, on 20 February 1939, the Magdeburg dentist Dr Ignaz Kreisky was also listed as registered to practise.<sup>168</sup> Beyond this period the physician Dr Hans Aufrecht was reregistered with the city authorities to treat

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<sup>164</sup> Nachweisung der Veränderungen unter den Ärzten, Zahnärzten und Apothekern des Kreises Magdeburg für den Monat November 1938, 2. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 34, LHASA MD, p. 81.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Jude! Ab 19.10.38 wieder zugelassen zur Behandlung von Juden.'

<sup>166</sup> Erlöschen der Bestallung als Arzt, 23. Januar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 16, Band 5, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>167</sup> Correspondence from the Reich Minister for the Interior, 16 February 1939, ibid., pp. 99–100.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 102–104.

Jewish patients only on 1 April 1939.<sup>169</sup> Evidence does not provide any further information on other reregistrations.

One other group of professionals for whom there was still a demand were those practitioners of law. Solicitors, or '*Konsulenten*,' were subjected to the same measures as their medical colleagues. In Magdeburg, Julius Riese was still serving his community's legal needs in July 1939.<sup>170</sup> This reduction in the number of professionals created much strain on the community. Jews could only be attended to by Jewish professionals, whose numbers were limited. This indirect form of persecution added to the burden of daily life. The professionals themselves counted themselves fortunate to be able to practise, unlike others who were already impoverished. This was in spite of the fact that they had been stripped of their professional dignity, as evidenced in their titles since July 1938, and that their segregated practices operated under highly regulated restrictions and constant monitoring.

The remaining approximately 30% to 40% of Jewish-owned businesses attempted to continue to operate. Owing to the constantly increasing exclusionary measures, the majority of these businesses had been 'aryanised' by September 1939. In the wake of the pogrom, 'aryanisations' occurred at an expedited pace. In a number of cases businesses were simply abandoned and/or eventually confiscated. The compounded effect of lack of employment opportunities, exclusion, 'aryanisations' and confiscations had reduced the remaining approximately 726 Jews to poverty. The task of attempting to sustain Jewish

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<sup>169</sup> Nachweisung der Veränderungen unter den Ärzten, Zahnärzten und Apothekern des Kreises Magdeburg für den Monat März 1939, 1. April 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 34, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>170</sup> Correspondence from Julius Israel Riese, Konsulent, 10 July 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 8, LHASA MD, p. 191.

families both morally and physically fell in its entirety to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and its welfare organisations.

From the period immediately after the pogrom until early January 1939, parents provided schooling arrangements for their children. No formal classes took place. On 9 January 1939, the subject of compulsory schooling for Jewish pupils re-emerged on the mayor's agenda.<sup>171</sup> In his correspondence to the provincial government, he reiterated the decision to dissolve the '*Judenschule*' at its former site. Owing to a shortage of school facilities in general and specifically of the required segregated building and the necessary Jewish staff, the '*Judenschule*' would remain temporarily closed. However, the mayor suggested that until the situation could be resolved that lessons take place in the building adjacent to the gutted *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, which belonged to the Jewish community. Registered private Jewish teachers would be employed and the entire cost born by the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*.<sup>172</sup> The mayor received approval for this from the police commissioner and suggested that a local teacher of English, Lilly Karger, be engaged for the interim period.<sup>173</sup>

On 8 March 1939, the mayor reported that the police commissioner had granted permission for the '*Judenschule*' to be re-established in the building next door to the synagogue. Rooms were made available on the ground floor of this building located at *Große Schulstraße* 2b. This information was conveyed to the board of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, and the mayor requested their participation in

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<sup>171</sup> Betr.: Schulunterricht an Juden, 9. Januar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 27–28.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

the process of procuring the necessary teaching staff.<sup>174</sup> On 28 April 1939, the superintendent of schools wrote to the board of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* requesting an update. On 3 May 1939, Dr Ernst Merzbach replied that the necessary teaching staff had still not been procured and that the board was continuing its efforts to fill the positions.<sup>175</sup>

On 5 July 1939, the superintendent of schools reported to the provincial government that the board of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* informed him that lessons had commenced in the re-established ‘*Judenschule*’ on 6 June 1939.<sup>176</sup> The school consisted of forty-nine male and female pupils and the curriculum was that set down by the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*. The teachers employed were Hermann Spier, formerly of Prenzlau and Max (Meier) Teller, cantor and former teacher of the dissolved *Religionsschule* of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. On 26 June 1939, the Gestapa in Magdeburg approved the re-establishment of the school, as the segregation requirements had been met.<sup>177</sup> On 14 August 1939, the *Reich* Minister for Science, Training and National Education mandated guidelines for all matters relating to the education of Jewish pupils.<sup>178</sup> The desired complete isolation of Jewish children, which the city had striven to achieve as early as September 1935, had now been attained. Ironically, yet not surprisingly, for Jewish pupils, this school experience was entirely positive and fostered a love and value of all things Jewish in a nurturing environment.

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<sup>174</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 8 März 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>175</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 12. Mai 1939, *ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>176</sup> Betrifft: Schulunterricht an Juden, 5. Juli 1939, *ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>177</sup> Betr.: Beschulung der Judenkinder in Magdeburg, 26. Juni 1939, *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>178</sup> Betrifft: Ausführungsanweisung zu Art. II der 10. Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 4. Juli 1939 – RGB1.I S.1079, 14. August 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 78–79.

The confiscation of valuables belonging to Jews was conducted with rigour at an expedited pace after the pogrom. The sale of their remaining possessions now formed the sole source of any income. For those who had emigrated, the situation was the same, as they sought to salvage their assets to finance their emigration costs.

In Magdeburg guidelines for the sale of stocks and shares belonging to Jews were introduced in late December 1938.<sup>179</sup> This was followed by similar measures to be used on transactions of property owned by Jews.<sup>180</sup> On 16 January 1939, further guidelines were issued in Magdeburg stipulating that sales of stocks, shares and property owned by Jews could only be approved once the Jewish vendor had divested him or herself of all valuables, including jewellery and art works.<sup>181</sup> From 25 January 1939 Jews were prohibited from buying, pawning or selling objects containing gold, platinum or silver, in addition to fine gems and pearls.<sup>182</sup> On 9 February 1939, the *Reich* Chamber of Commerce despatched nationally guidelines for the appropriation of all Jewish property.<sup>183</sup> On 21 February 1939, all Jews of German nationality were ordered to deliver all personal

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<sup>179</sup> Betrifft: Erster Teilbetrag der Judenvermögensabgabe; hier Mitwirkung der Devisenbanken bei der Inzahlunggabe von Wertpapieren, 20. Dezember 1938, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>180</sup> Betrifft: Erster Teilbetrag der Judenvermögensabgabe; hier: Inzahlunggabe von Grundstücken, 21. Dezember 1938, *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>181</sup> Betrifft: Inzahlunggabe von Wertpapieren auf die Judenvermögensabgabe; hier Ablehnung der Inzahlunggabe für andere Steuern und Abgaben, 16. Januar 1939, *ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>182</sup> Betr.: Errichtung öffentlicher Ankaufsstellen, 25. Januar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 115–116.

<sup>183</sup> Betrifft: Verordnung über den Einsatz des jüdischen Vermögens, 9. Februar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 110, Signatur Nr. 47, LHASA MD, pp. 216–225.

objects containing gold, platinum, silver, precious stones and pearls to newly established purchase centres, within two weeks of the execution of the order.<sup>184</sup>

Owing to the wave of Jewish emigration, on 15 May 1939 the *Reich* Minister for Science, Training and National Education issued national guidelines to prevent emigrating Jews from transferring ‘items of German cultural significance’ out of the country.<sup>185</sup> The memorandum stated that, whilst the large-scale emigration was highly desired, it also brought with it a number of dangers when it came to the potential transfer of ‘high quality items of German cultural significance.’<sup>186</sup> In Magdeburg, measures to prevent this were introduced. The assumption of the local finance commissioner of the Foreign Exchange office was that all affluent Jews would possess items of historical, artistic and cultural value. Given the ban placed on transferring such items out of Germany, the commissioner compiled a list of 143 affluent Jews in the administrative district of Magdeburg. Each entry bore the individual’s first name, surname, address and estimated net wealth. Of the 143 entries, 29 were residents of the city of Magdeburg, including the father of Hemmi Freeman, Pinkas Frühman.<sup>187</sup> The list was lodged with the State Archive in Magdeburg for use as the need arose with the flow of emigration or in the attempt to sell off assets.

Evidence also indicates at this time that a number of Jews in Magdeburg had applied to exchange local businesses for businesses in the USA owned by

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<sup>184</sup> Dritte Verordnung auf Grund der Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden, 21. Februar 1939, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>185</sup> Betrifft: Schutz des deutschen Kulturgutes gegen Abwanderung (Mitnahme von Umzugsgut bei der Auswanderung von Juden, 15. Mai 1939, Bestand Rep. C 22, Signatur Nr. 245, LHASA MD, pp. 20–22.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Betr.: Mitnahme von Umzugsgut bei der Auswanderer (Schutz des deutschen Kulturgutes gegen Abwanderung); Liste der wohlhabenden Juden, 9. Juni 1939, ibid., pp. 29–32.

expatriate Germans returning to Germany.<sup>188</sup> If successful, such ventures would prevent the sale of their property and/or businesses at deflated and regulated prices. This practice of further devaluation and price regulation became normative in Magdeburg in June 1939.<sup>189</sup>

On 24 August 1939, the *Reich* Minister for Commerce despatched a memorandum nationally concerning the elimination of the Jews from the German economy. The memorandum extolled the success of the removal of the Jews from all areas of influence, but lamented that it was still necessary to permit a limited number of Jews to operate businesses and practices to meet the needs of other Jews. He indicated, however, that in the future that this would not be permitted in the case of businesses and that the needs of the remaining Jews would be met by ‘Aryan’ businesses. The memorandum also advised that henceforth Jewish hairdressers were no longer permitted to work in public, but had to attend to their clientele in their homes or the homes of clients. A further directive was ordered that Jewish burial societies reduce their activities.<sup>190</sup> Four days later, all exclusionary economic measures enacted against Jews of German nationality were extended to Jews of foreign nationalities resident in Germany.<sup>191</sup> The determination to completely eliminate Jews from the economy and from the

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<sup>188</sup> Behandlung von Grundstückstauschverträgen nach der Verordnung über den Einsatz dem jüdischen Vermögens vom 3.12.1938, 15. Juni – 1. September 1939, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 62–64.

<sup>189</sup> Betrifft: Erhebung einer Ausgleichsabgabe bei der Genehmigung des Verkaufs jüdischer Grundstücke, 20. Juni 1939, *ibid.*, pp. 55–57.

<sup>190</sup> Betr.: Verordnung zur Ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben vom 12. November 1938, 24. August 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 16, LHASA MD, p. 17.

<sup>191</sup> Betrifft: Anwendung der Verordnung zur Ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben vom 12. November 1938 auf Juden fremder Staatsangehörigkeit, 28. August 1939, *ibid.*, p. 24.

public eye became policy. Now that Jews had been ostensibly removed from the economy, they would also be removed from the view of the public.

In the period between the *Reichskristallnacht* and September 1939 the Jews of Magdeburg experienced an even greater level of demonisation, exclusion and pauperisation. The majority of employable community members were now unemployed. At the very best they were living off the proceeds of the sale of assets and at worst relying on welfare assistance. Total segregation had commenced and was consolidated by their evictions from homes and allocation of rooms in '*Judenhäuser*.' Jews from Magdeburg were still emigrating when war broke out. For those who remained, in the wake of the vacuum created by the departure of Rabbi Dr Wilde, the teacher Hermann Spier led the community. The first official religious service after the pogrom occurred at Passover 1939, when members of all the former religious communities gathered to worship in unison in the former rooms of the *B'nai B'rith*, located in the community building next door to the destroyed synagogue.<sup>192</sup> Sadly, but importantly, the pogrom and the intensity of the inflicted persecutions had created some sense of unity at this moment of communal fate. For the Jews of Magdeburg, what they had experienced in the previous nine months became a prelude to new levels of persecution yet to come, in the wake of Germany waging war.

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<sup>192</sup> Correspondence from M. F. to the author, 12 July 1999.



## Chapter Seven: The Jewish Community during World War Two

### *Judenhäuser* and Stigmatisation

By the end of 1939 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* was the only Jewish organisation operating in Magdeburg. Under the leadership of Hermann Spier, the various religious congregations had merged into one body and regular religious services continued to be held. With the outbreak of World War Two, even though emigration was still permitted, there were no documented successful attempts. By this time the majority of Jews had been evicted from their homes and herded together into '*Judenhäuser*' in cramped conditions with few facilities for all to share. Stigmatisation reached new levels in autumn 1941 when Jews were ordered to wear a sewn-on, yellow Star of David. All remaining Jewish property was appropriated, completing the process of 'aryanisation.' Life in the public domain further deteriorated and most Jews avoided being outdoors altogether, unless it was absolutely necessary. Jews were subjected to curfews, faced total bans from all public venues and public transportation, and were ordered to surrender the majority of their remaining possessions. Even articles of clothing deemed 'unnecessary' were confiscated. The community's sense of isolation and stigmatisation increased rapidly, but they attempted to maintain their dignity in spite of their daily humiliation. This phase marked the beginning of the physical ghettoisation of the Jews of Magdeburg.

Between the pogrom of November 1938 and the end of 1939, the remaining Jewish organisations in Magdeburg were dissolved or were incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, and their survival was directly linked to the nature of their work. On 19 January 1939, the *Jüdischer Hilfsverein*

was dissolved and deregistered.<sup>1</sup> Documentation concerning the activities of its partner organisation, the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*, ended in May 1938.<sup>2</sup> Given the nature of its work and the general co-ordination of such work from Berlin, it is most likely that it continued to operate until it too was incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. On 29 September 1939, the *Israelitisches Altersheim* was incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* by order of § 5 der Zehnten Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz from 4 July 1939,<sup>3</sup> as was the *Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft* on 3 October 1939,<sup>4</sup> followed in succession by the *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse* on 5 December 1939,<sup>5</sup> which was subsequently forced into liquidation. Thus, by the beginning of 1940 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* was the only remaining Jewish organisation operating in Magdeburg.

When World War Two broke out, numerous Jews were in possession of tickets and visas and were desperate to emigrate. However, no record has been located indicating any successful attempts after September 1939, despite the fact that the government still permitted emigration up to the autumn of 1941. With the outbreak of war, routes of passage became very limited. Walter Heinemann was

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<sup>1</sup> Jüdischer Hilfsverein zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2305, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> No documentation concerning any of its roles or activities beyond May 1938 has been located.

<sup>3</sup> Correspondence from the Reich Minister for the Interior to the Israelitisches Altersheim in Magdeburg, 29 September 1939, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2481, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from the Head of the SS and the SD, Berlin to the Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft, 3 October 1939, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2235, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 50.

the agent for Jewish emigration in Magdeburg and as such was the registered agent for the entire province of Saxony-Anhalt for the Hamburg-based 'Red Star Line'. His approval as an agent dated back to 14 September 1937.<sup>6</sup> The company offered passage from Antwerp to the United States of America (USA) and Heinemann was authorised to book all passages for 'non-Aryans.'<sup>7</sup> He continued to book passages for Jewish emigrants via this route until the shipping line went into liquidation in November 1939.<sup>8</sup> In the first quarter of 1940, 10,312 Jews from German-occupied territory emigrated. The emigration figure from the *Altreich* was that of 4,755 Jews.<sup>9</sup>

Another documented route was that from Lisbon to the USA. However, despite some travel routes remaining open, the obstacle continued to be the acquisition of the necessary visas, as the story of the Zadek family illustrates. The Zadek family had moved from Magdeburg to Berlin in July 1937 and settled in Neukölln. The family consisted of Siegfried and Hulda and their twin daughters Hanna and Ruth, aged thirteen years at the time. Hulda Zadek's sister lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and, through family sponsorship, the Zadeks were hopeful of emigrating to the USA. On 31 October 1939, both her brother-in-law,

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<sup>6</sup> Correspondence from the Red Star Linie G.M.B.H. to Walter Heinemann, Magdeburg, 14 September 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 227, Band 3, LHASA MD, pp. 146–149.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>8</sup> Betr.: Auswanderer-Erlaubnis für Herrn Walter Heinemann, Magdeburg, 24. November 1939, *ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> Die jüdische Auswanderung aus dem Altreich, der Ostmark und dem Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren im ersten Vierteljahr 1940, 12. April 1940, Collection 0.51.OSSOBI, File 103, YVA, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–3. Of the total figure the destinations of emigrants were as follows: North America – 4,500; Central and South America – 2,398; Australia – 6; Africa – 137; Asia – 1,675; Palestine – 394; and Europe (excluding 'enemy nations') – 1,202.

Nathan Kann, and her cousin, Silas Adelsheim, dispatched affidavits to the American Consulate in Berlin in support of the immigration of the Zadek family.<sup>10</sup>

On 25 February 1941, the Zadeks received confirmation from ‘Palestine and Orient Lloyd’ of their third-class passage aboard the *Serpa Pinto* departing Lisbon 24 May 1941 and bound for New York.<sup>11</sup> On 10 March 1941, Siegfried Zadek forwarded on the booking confirmation, together with further affidavits from his wife’s American relatives, to the American Consulate in Berlin. Zadek sought their urgent attention to his family’s case.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the family did not receive the necessary visas. Subsequently, the family of four remained in Berlin, up until the time of their deportation on 2 April 1942 to Trawniki, where they all perished.<sup>13</sup> With the commencement of war and the continued reluctance of countries to accept Jewish immigrants, there was little chance of escaping Germany. One interviewee recalled his feelings and that of his family when war was declared:

I remember when the war started. I think it was a rather gloomy time for us. We then realised that we were going to be stuck there for a long time. I remember Dad became very worried about our future and because he felt there was no escape for us anymore.<sup>14</sup>

This family, however, was one of the very fortunate few to survive in Magdeburg and eventually emigrated to Australia in 1947.

By the end of 1939 the majority of the Jewish population had been evicted from their homes and were allocated rooms or apartments in designated

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<sup>10</sup> Correspondence and affidavits from Nathan Kann and Silas Adelsheim to the American Consulate, Berlin, 31 October 1939 – 2 November 1939, Bestand 1, 75E, Signatur Nr. 631, CJA, pp. 94, 160.

<sup>11</sup> Buchungsbescheinigung, 25. Februar 1941, *ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> Betr.: Reg. No. 43170-71-72-73 Deutsche Warteliste, 10. März 1941, *ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>13</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 1385.

<sup>14</sup> Name withheld, *op. cit.*, 18 June 1999.

‘*Judenhäuser*.’<sup>15</sup> Prior to this, however, all of the buildings which became ‘*Judenhäuser*’ already possessed a number of Jewish tenants and the actual buildings were owned by Jews. Some buildings were premises formerly owned by the community. The relocations were mandatory. However, initially in some cases, Jews were offered a choice. Living in overcrowded conditions with poor facilities, quality of life deteriorated further. Jews not only had to deal with impoverishment, humiliation and segregation, but had also lost the privacy and sanctity which their own homes had afforded them.

In Magdeburg there existed at least nine ‘*Judenhäuser*.’ They were located at the following addresses: *Arndtstraße 5*, which was the former *Israelitisches Altersheim*; *Brandenburger Straße 2a*, located within walking distance to the main railway station and which had formerly been a hotel owned and operated by businessman Bernhard Brustawitzki;<sup>16</sup> *Fermersleber Weg 40–46*, which was the caretaker’s house at the Jewish cemetery; *Große Mühlenstraße 11/12*; *Große Schulstraße 2b*, the Jewish community building located next door to the destroyed synagogue, which housed the community’s offices, the re-established religious congregation, the ‘*Judenschule*’ and a number of apartments; *Johannesberg 15a*; *Lübecker Straße 30a*; *Schöninger Straße 27a*; and *Westendstraße 9*.<sup>17</sup> With successive deportations, these buildings became vacant and were appropriated by the city and the province.

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<sup>15</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on ‘*Judenhäuser*’ see Konrad Kwiet, “Nach dem Pogrom. Stufen der Ausgrenzung,” in Wolfgang Benz, ed., op. cit., pp. 545–659; Barkai, “In a Ghetto Without Walls,” in Meyer, ed. op. cit., pp. 343–346; and Kaplan, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Four deportation lists of Jews deported from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/1, 18 November 1942; Transport XX/2, 25 November 1942; Transport XX/3, 2 December 1942; and Transport XX/4, 11 January 1944, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, pp. 45–59. These lists confirm the personal particulars of deportees, including their addresses at the time of their deportation.

The Freiberg family, consisting of Joachim and Elli Freiberg and their two sons, had moved into the city centre in 1937. The building in which their apartment was located, at *Große Mühlenstraße* 11/12, later became a ‘*Judenhaus*.’ Consequently, they retained their apartment in the building, whilst non-Jews were relocated from this designated ‘*Judenhaus*.’<sup>18</sup> Designated ‘*Judenhäuser*’ became exclusively Jewish, as ‘Aryans’ were moved out. Jewish inhabitants did not necessarily remain at the same address for any given period and could be ordered to move into another ‘*Judenhaus*’ at any time. When the Freibergs had moved into the apartment building in *Große Mühlenstraße*, the only other Jewish family living there was the Weinberg family. The Freiberg family remained in their old apartment and continued their former restricted lifestyle, but at least they were still living in familiar surroundings in their regular-sized apartment. By the time they were ordered to move out in early 1940, however, there were already several Jewish families living in the apartment building.<sup>19</sup>

The Freibergs were deeply shocked when they were ordered by the Gestapo to move into another ‘*Judenhaus*,’ located at *Brandenburger Straße* 2a. The Freibergs’ youngest son recalled his feelings when they moved:<sup>20</sup>

We didn’t want to go there. That was the first relocation. It was a fourth-rate hotel. It was run by a Jewish family who came from the east and it had a reputation for being pretty dirty. We hated the idea of moving there, but we had to. There was something like thirty or forty people living there. We had only one room or we might have had two small rooms. I know it was way up the stairs and the toilet was one level below, to be shared with lots of other people.

There were the usual squabbles between neighbours. People of different backgrounds looking down on each other – there was everything there – Polish

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<sup>18</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Jews, German Jews. There were also quite a number of children and we had a small yard.<sup>21</sup>

Jews from all backgrounds, often unknown to one another, were forced to share limited facilities. Pre-existing divisions and differences between Jews only exacerbated the already prevailing tensions in daily life. In this particular ‘*Judenhaus*,’ social contact on the adult level seldom occurred and relations between Jews were poor. Arguments and complaints were normal, owing to so many people living in such a confined space. The greatest source of aggravation surrounded the use of the communal toilet. In forcing Jews to live under these new dehumanising conditions, tensions reached new heights, as Jews attempted to adapt to this new repressive measure.

Adding to their humiliation and stigmatisation, all Jews were ordered, in March 1942, to display a Star of David on the front door of their apartments, as recalled by an interviewee:

You had to put a ‘star’ on the door of where you lived. The same star [as the sewn-on, yellow Star of David], but in white. They were on white paper with black print, same size, everything – the exact copy of the yellow star.<sup>22</sup>

Coupled with this, was the tension created by regular contact with the Gestapo:

The Gestapo came around every now and then. Usually, there was some sort of reason, like when my aunt got the orders to go [that is, when she received notification of her imminent deportation]. The early morning door knock. It happened like that.<sup>23</sup>

Sometime after February 1943 the Freiberg family were ordered again to relocate to another ‘*Judenhaus*’ located at *Große Schulstraße 2b*. Comparatively, their new ‘home’ was an improvement, as one of their sons recalled:

Things were a lot better. There were quite a few families there. We had two rooms; I think we had a small apartment there, because I don’t remember

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<sup>21</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>22</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

sharing anything with anyone. There were three or four levels and there were at least seven or eight families. There was a fair bit of land with that one, by Magdeburg standards. It had a big yard and it had another little yard on the side which was not paved and we started to grow vegies there and one of the guys didn't like it. So when it never succeeded he made us take it out – Mr Heinemann – he wasn't a very friendly person. And we kept a couple of rabbits in cages. We used to gather grass and leaves for them as food. Well, we stayed there until it was bombed out.<sup>24</sup>

From this point onwards relations between Jews in the '*Judenhäuser*,' where the Freiberg family lived until liberation, were much improved. Neighbours interacted with one another as they each shared the same problems and burdens together.

Whilst the situation between residents appears to have been better, the anxiety caused by the prevailing conditions, the inability to make choices governing one's life and the looming threat of deportation still maintained a constant tension. One ongoing difficulty of home life which all Jews faced, and which interviewees recalled sharply, was the food situation:

We received ration cards, but much less than anybody else. It was very little. It was just enough to stop us from starving. They were stamped either with a big 'J' or the word *Jude* [Jew], so that the shopkeeper knew that he was serving a Jew. I mean, they would have known us anyway!<sup>25</sup>

The rations received were augmented by vegetables, grown seasonally, in particular, in a communal vegetable garden located in the field belonging to the Jewish cemetery. There were also certain times when Jews could obtain vegetables without producing ration cards. By 1944, however, obtaining sufficient food had become a serious problem.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004. From 15 May 1942, Jews were forbidden from owning household pets, including dogs, cats and birds and this became a punishable offence. Rabbits may not have been classified as regular household pets or alternatively the interviewee's family permitted this breach.

<sup>25</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Interviewees also recalled that home life continued and that ‘life in general, as peculiar as it might sound, always went on.’<sup>27</sup> For adults, reading became a popular activity as Jews were banned from owning radios.<sup>28</sup> Both Freiberg brothers also recalled the birth of their sister, on 14 March 1944, and that their mother was attended to by another member of the community.<sup>29</sup>

During an allied air raid of the city on 16 January 1945 the ‘*Judenhaus*’ at *Große Schulstraße*, in which the Freiberg family lived, was destroyed.<sup>30</sup> Fearful of air raids and of imminent deportation, as rumour had spread that ‘the Gestapo was rounding up anyone, whoever they could find for deportation,’<sup>31</sup> the family fled for a short time to a village near Stendal. When they returned to Magdeburg, they installed themselves at the ‘*Judenhaus*’ at *Westendstraße*: ‘There were not many families there; it was only a house. There was hardly anyone left. There wouldn’t have been more than four or five families there.’<sup>32</sup>

Jews herded together in ‘*Judenhäuser*’ experienced isolation and exclusion from society. This stripped them further of dignity and inflicted appalling living conditions on them, which only compounded their emotional and physical degradation and torment. This also allowed the Gestapo to both monitor the population and to convey directives, primarily notices for forced labour and pending deportation. After the establishment of the ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ the physical and spiritual needs of the Jews of Magdeburg were attended to solely by the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.

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<sup>27</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>28</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

By the beginning of 1940 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* had assumed responsibility for all matters relating to the administration of the Jewish community as well attending to religious and welfare matters. The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* officially became known as the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg)* on 5 January 1940.<sup>33</sup> This organisation was also later dissolved and the community was officially incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* on 27 May 1941. The deregistration was recorded on 8 August 1941.<sup>34</sup> Henceforth the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde* became known as the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*.<sup>35</sup> This remained so until the actual dissolution of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* itself on 10 June 1943. Until this time the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, in its altered state, continued to function in its various capacities.<sup>36</sup>

All matters relating to the Jewish community were administered through the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg)*. This included the issuing of financial assistance to the needy and attending to the general welfare of the community; the collection of financial contributions by

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<sup>33</sup> Registration and dissolution of the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung Synagogen-Gemeinde Magdeburg*, 5 January 1940 – 9 August 1941, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 20504, Band 7, LHASA MD, p. 189.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Correspondence from Dr Max Israel Kaufmann to the Amtsgericht Abtlg. 8 in Magdeburg, 8 October 1941 indicates this change of name for the community and the correspondence uses both the old and the new letterheads, Collection JM, File 11266.7, YVA, p. 297. In addition to this, numerous other documents from as early as 5 November 1941 bear the new name on the community's official letterhead as, for example, correspondence bearing the abovementioned new letterhead to the Gerichtskasse Magdeburg, 5 November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, p. 298.

<sup>36</sup> No archival material has survived indicating any imposed name changes or changes of status of the Shtiblech for the period. It is most likely that that they were not operational beyond the middle of 1939 at the very latest.

members to the community; the management of religious affairs; the conveying of all information from the government via the Berlin office of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, particularly further edicts restricting the lives of Jews, as well as the management of the ‘*Judenschule*.’

In November and December 1940 the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung* provided financial assistance to six individuals. This assistance included rental assistance to senior citizens and, in the case of eighty-five-year-old Adelland Zadek, it also included a supplement for the services of a cleaner.<sup>37</sup> However, such welfare assistance was only provided to Jews who were German nationals. When a stateless Jewess by the name of Gitla Buchhalter moved to Magdeburg from Leipzig in March 1941 and requested financial assistance, she was refused. On 8 March 1941, in a clinically worded letter, Leo Hirsch advised her of the rejection of her request on the grounds of her being stateless and of having relocated without official permission.<sup>38</sup>

Attending to the general welfare of community members also included acting on their behalf in legal matters, as the unusual case of Kurt Berendsohn illustrates. Berendsohn was a casual worker and was employed in the community for odd jobs, including assisting with housework and washing. He was also employed by the Jewish community at the Jewish cemetery, where he transported corpses to the cemetery, prepared them for burial and dug the graves. In May 1940, Berendsohn was charged by the city’s health department for violation of the city’s health regulations. The crime was for not having prepared a grave deep enough for a

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<sup>37</sup> List of recipients of financial assistance to members of the Jewish community of Magdeburg, November–December 1940, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 47, ASGM, p. 62.

<sup>38</sup> Correspondence to Gitla Buchhalter from the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung* (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg), 8 March 1941, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 2814, CJA, p. 3.

burial, which occurred on 17 November 1939.<sup>39</sup> Owing to the unusual size of the casket, the late arrival of the corpse and the onset of the Sabbath, Berendsohn had not dug the grave deep enough. The end result was that after the burial of Moses Lewin, the ground settled in the ensuing days and the casket moved upwards, creating a hillock. Through the intercession of the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung*, which pleaded Berendsohn's case, he was neither charged nor imprisoned. At the time of Berendsohn's arrest, he was the sole carer of five children. His wife, the widow Hertha Zander née Basch, was in Waldheim prison, serving a sentence of two years and three months for aborting their child and was not due to be released until July 1941.<sup>40</sup> On 6 August 1940, the mayor's office issued a written warning to Berendsohn that such an occurrence was not to be repeated.<sup>41</sup>

For the period up until October 1941 the Jewish community was also responsible for the collection of community levies from those members still in a financial position to contribute. For the accounting year of 1940 sixty-five individuals were levied on their remaining assets. The total value of those assets listed was RM 3,889,674.40 and the total levies received amounted to RM

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<sup>39</sup> For the complete and comprehensive police reports and all correspondence between the relevant parties concerning this matter see Bestand Rep. 38, Signatur Nr. 2501 R1, STAM, pp. 14–22. For a comprehensive personal file on the Berendsohn family see Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 06, ASGM.

<sup>40</sup> Betr.: Jude Kurt Israel Berendsohn, geb. 14.4.89 in Hamburg, 14. Juni 1940, Bestand Rep. 38, Signatur Nr. 2501 R1, STAM, p. 16 R. Hertha Zander née Basch was eventually released from prison, but later sent to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, where she perished on 12 May 1942. Her husband Kurt Berendsohn, together with their five children, four whom were from his wife's previous marriage, were deported to the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942. It is unknown whether or not they perished in the ghetto or in an extermination camp. For complete details on the Berendsohn and Zander children see Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 06, ASGM.

<sup>41</sup> Verwarnung an Herrn Kurt Israel Berendsohn, Magdeburg, Fermersleberweg Nr. 40/46, 6. August 1940, *ibid.*, p. 22.

41,434.95.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, twenty individuals were levied on their income and the total levies received equalled RM 4,980.20.<sup>43</sup> Of the individuals levied, seven paid both types of levy. The total gross amount levied for 1940 from both sources amounted to RM 46,415.15.

When the renamed *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung*, the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*, issued its October 1941 newsletter, it advised all members that communal levies were now being collected by the Leipzig office of the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, provided members with the banking details of the Leipzig office, and requested that payments be made directly.<sup>44</sup>

Financial management of the community also extended to dealing with the local authorities. An example of this occurred when Dr Max Kaufmann received an invoice on 28 October 1941 for fees payable for the dissolutions of all Jewish organisations in Magdeburg. Kaufmann responded to the office of the Court Cashier with a reminder that the Jewish community was exempt from such charges and quoted the relevant legislation.<sup>45</sup> Administratively and financially the community had adapted yet again and managed its affairs to the best of its resources.

For the duration of the existence of the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*, community members were kept informed by regular newsletters. The most

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<sup>42</sup> Beitragserhebung nach dem Vermögen 1940, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 47, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 63–66.

<sup>43</sup> Beitragserhebung nach der veranlagten Einkommensteuer, ibid., p. 67.

<sup>44</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

<sup>45</sup> Betrifft: Kassenseichen I 4294, 5. November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 298.

important information conveyed concerned further repressive measures against Jews and reminders of legal obligations and of the consequences of breaches. In this respect the newsletters confirm the role of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* – namely that of acting as an intermediary between the government and the Jewish communities.

The remainder of the information reflected everyday concerns. Religious services were advertised. Complaints were made that community members were seeking advice from staff from the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*, outside office hours, and the request was made that members make the necessary appointments. Members were informed that due to the financial situation of the community, fees would have to be charged for all communal services, including advice on matters relating to accommodation, general advice and access to the clothing pool. Members were also reminded to lodge their requests for ration cards on the appropriate day each month in order to avoid delays in receiving their food coupons. Distribution of fruit and vegetables such as apples and potatoes also took place and professional services were advertised.<sup>46</sup> The *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* administered communal affairs and liaised with its members on all matters. It continued to perform these roles until it was dissolved. Simultaneously, the religious duties and responsibilities of the community were attended to by Hermann Spier and later by lay community members as numbers reduced due to deportations.

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<sup>46</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter. Further newsletters informing community members of further repressions and antisemitic laws were issued on 14 January 1942, 17 June 1942, 19 June 1942, 14 August 1942 and 3 October 1942. These are located in the cited file.

By the end of 1939 all of the former staff who held religious responsibilities at the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* had left. The cantor and teacher Max (Meier) Teller was the last to leave the community. He left Magdeburg some time after July 1939 bound for Belgium. Whilst details of his exact fate remain unknown, it is known that he was arrested in Belgium and did not survive the *Shoah*.<sup>47</sup> When Hermann Spier was appointed to the position of teacher at the re-opened ‘*Judenschule*,’ the religious community also benefited by virtue of his training and former position as a cantor. However, most importantly, as a highly competent and diligent individual, he became the community’s religious leader and a source of inspiration and moral courage.

Spier was born on 22 April 1885 in Schrecksbach in the Prussian province of Hesse-Nassau. He completed his teacher training in Jewish education at the Jewish seminary in Kassel in 1906.<sup>48</sup> He was married to Frieda Kaufmann and they had three children, Hans, Ruth and Siegbert.<sup>49</sup> Prior to the commencement of his teaching duties in Magdeburg in June 1939, he had held the position of cantor and teacher at the *Synagogengemeinde Prenzlau* in Brandenburg since 15 January 1934.<sup>50</sup> Previously, he had occupied the same post at the *Synagogengemeinde Braunsberg* in East Prussia.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>48</sup> Correspondence from Der Vorstand der Synagogengemeinde Prenzlau, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 5 February 1934, Bestand Rep. 2A I Pol, Signatur Nr. 2010, Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Potsdam (BLHA), unnumbered page.

<sup>49</sup> Personal file on the Spier family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 44, ASGM.

<sup>50</sup> Correspondence from Der Vorstand der Synagogengemeinde Prenzlau, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 5 February 1934, Bestand Rep. 2A I Pol, Signatur Nr. 2010, BLHA, op. cit., unnumbered page.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

Spier arrived in Magdeburg in the spring of 1939 and celebrated Passover with the community. From that point up until his deportation in April 1942, he led the religious services. As a religious leader he was regarded as inspirational:

He was a real professional. He was a first-class teacher, a first-class cantor and a very good *Ba'al Koreh* [reader of the *Torah*]. He had such knowledge! He was really an outstanding personality. He taught me Hebrew and *Nusach* [the rite or custom of Jewish prayer]. He was just unbelievable!

In these smaller congregations you have one man who can do everything. He was one of those. He taught school, he led services and he also gave Hebrew lessons to adults every Sunday morning – they were still preparing to go to Palestine. And with children he was outstanding. If there was a need for anything in the community, then he did it. He was a friend of everyone. He was a unique personality!<sup>52</sup>

Spier's energy in his numerous roles and responsibilities continued throughout his tenure.

Religious services were conducted in the Orthodox tradition. Morning and evening services were held each day and all three Sabbath services were conducted. Often after evening services on the Sabbath, an explanation and discussion on the text from the *Torah* set for that week was offered.<sup>53</sup> During the entire war period, interviewees did not recall the public celebration of anyone's *Bar Mitzvah* nor any circumcisions.<sup>54</sup> However, interviewees recalled the wedding of Hermann Spier's daughter, Ruth. Whilst a regular wedding ceremony took place, there were no traditional festivities to celebrate the event.<sup>55</sup>

Not considered useful to the war effort, Spier and his wife were included on the first deportation from Magdeburg in April 1942. His departure deeply shocked the community, as he had provided such moral resistance in addition to his

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<sup>52</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>53</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

<sup>54</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid and M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

outstanding communal work.<sup>56</sup> The deportation coincided with Passover, and interviewees recalled Spier giving an inspiring and uplifting sermon just prior to the festival and his deportation. Correspondence was received from him from Warsaw for a period of time and then it ceased. It is not known whether Hermann and Frieda Spier perished in the Warsaw ghetto or were deported to an extermination camp. Spier's son Hans emigrated to Palestine in 1933 and his daughter Ruth survived the *Shoah* and immigrated to the USA.<sup>57</sup> His second son Siegbert, who had married a Jewess from Magdeburg, Eva Bruck, was an agricultural specialist and lived in Thomasdorf in Brandenburg. On 15 August 1942, both he and his wife were deported from Berlin to Riga, where they perished. They were aged twenty-seven years old and twenty years old respectively.<sup>58</sup>

With Spier's departure, the community lost its religious leader. For the remaining official existence of the Jewish community, lay individuals led the religious services. Given the strong influence of his personality and his dynamic and varied role in the community, his departure only increased the despondency of the community. Spier had displayed and imparted a sense of hope. For some, Spier also embodied the resilience of the Jewish spirit, in celebrating and cherishing Jewishness at this calamitous time. His deportation left a significant vacuum which was not filled as the situation continued to deteriorate. Despite the void, religious practices and services continued, often conducted by those whom Spier had taught so dedicatedly.

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<sup>56</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>57</sup> Personal file on the Spier family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 44, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., p. 1229.

In the wake of the declaration of war, simultaneous to the establishment of ‘*Judenhäuser*’ and the reduction of communities to absolute compliance, the Nazis stepped up their repression in both the economic and public domains. They commenced the finalisation of expropriation of Jewish property, including the remaining ‘aryanisations’ of businesses and dramatically expanded repressive measures against the lives of Jews in public. This also included a new level of stigmatisation, which destroyed any hope of anonymity for Jews.

In October<sup>59</sup> and November 1939<sup>60</sup> the financial obligations of emigrating Jews were further increased in Magdeburg. On 21 October, banks were instructed to call in all outstanding loans and debts owed by Jewish communities.<sup>61</sup> Strict guidelines were also imposed on how Jewish vendors of real estate were to be ‘compensated’ for property sold.<sup>62</sup> This chiefly involved price-fixing for ‘Aryan’ purchasers. On 23 February 1940, the provincial government banned ‘Aryan’ tailoresses and seamstresses who manufactured and sold female undergarments, particularly corsets and brassieres, from coming into physical contact with Jewesses. Henceforth, permission would be granted to a limited number of Jewesses to attend to such needs.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Betrifft: Erweiterung der Zahlungspflicht bei der Judenvermögensabgabe, 14. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>60</sup> Betrifft: Erweiterung der Zahlungspflicht bei der Judenvermögensabgabe, 2. November 1939, *ibid.*, pp. 107–108.

<sup>61</sup> Die Forderungen von deutschen Banken sowie der deutschen öffentlich-rechtlichen Sparkassen und der Girozentralen gegen jüdische Kultusvereinigungen, 21. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 202–209.

<sup>62</sup> Betrifft: Erhebung von Ausgleichszahlungen bei der Entjudung nicht land- oder forstwirtschaftlich genutzten Grundbesitzes, 23. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 67–69.

<sup>63</sup> Betr.: Verordnung zur ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben vom 12. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 16, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 30.

In attempting to expedite the compulsory acquisition of Jewish property by ‘Aryan’ purchasers, the provincial government posted further guidelines on 27 February 1940 on how such contracts of sale and purchases were to be conducted.<sup>64</sup> In May 1940, sales were expedited after a further amendment to the edict on the compulsory registration of Jewish assets and property.<sup>65</sup> On 21 September 1940, the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce notified the provincial government that there were no longer any Jews of foreign nationality operating businesses in the city.<sup>66</sup>

On 24 October 1940, the provincial government declared that the removal of the Jews from the local economy had been achieved. Only two businesses remained to be dealt with administratively, as their former major Jewish shareholders had emigrated to England.<sup>67</sup> These businesses were ‘Max Brandus Pty. Ltd.’, located at *Gröperstraße* 2, and the pump factory ‘Hannach & Co.’, located at *Stolzestraße* 2-5. On 1 April 1941, a list of fifty-five recently ‘aryanised’ businesses in the administrative district of Magdeburg was despatched to the provincial government. Fifteen of those listed were in the city of Magdeburg itself, including the abovementioned two businesses.<sup>68</sup> Attached to this list was a further incomplete list of thirty ‘aryanised’ Jewish businesses in Magdeburg with the dates of the registrations of the new owners. The earliest

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<sup>64</sup> Betrifft: Einsatz des jüdischen Vermögens, 27. Februar 1940, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 83–85.

<sup>65</sup> Vierte Anordnung auf Grund der Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden, 4. Mai 1940, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>66</sup> Betreff: Behandlung fremder Staatsangehöriger bei der Ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben, 21. September 1940, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 16, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 38–40.

<sup>67</sup> Betrifft: Entjudung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft, 24. Oktober 1940, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>68</sup> Anlage zum Schreiben vom 1.4.1941 an den Herrn Regierungs-Präsident, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 934, Band 1, LHASA MD, pp. 12–13.

registration date was that of 13 May 1933 and the most recent was that of 7 February 1941.<sup>69</sup>

In December 1941 the mayor's office confirmed that all businesses owned by Jews had been 'aryanised.' In their investigations, however, they discovered that at least eight businesses that had been 'aryanised' prior to 1938 had not been given official approval and this required rectification. The mayor's office further indicated that the final twelve businesses to undergo an audit had been duly conducted and had met all requirements. This confirmed that the required processes governing 'aryanisations' had been duly conducted.<sup>70</sup> Once again, a list of all Jewish businesses and properties 'aryanised' to date was appended.<sup>71</sup> Finally, on 16 April 1943, the *Gauwirtschaftsberater* for the district of Magdeburg-Anhalt advised the Magdeburg-Anhalt District Chamber of Commerce that, with regard to the auditing of 'aryanisations' of former Jewish businesses and property, there existed no pressing cases worthy of investigation.<sup>72</sup> From the end of 1939, the only Jews operating businesses were those attending to the needs of an exclusively Jewish clientele. In Magdeburg, the Jews had now been completely removed from the economy of the city and from their former homes. Now housed in '*Judenhäuser*,' this pauperised and degraded community was left with one communal venue – the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.

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<sup>69</sup> Anlage zum Schreiben vom 1.4.1941 an den Herrn Regierungs-Präsident, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 934, Band 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 30–32.

<sup>70</sup> Betrifft: Durchführung der Verordnung über die Nachprüfung von Entjudungsgeschäften, 8. Dezember 1941, *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> Aufstellung der zur Arisierung gekommenen Geschäfte und Grundstücke zur Errechnung der Ausgleichsabgabe, Kreis Magdeburg, *ibid.*, pp. 37–40. This list provides the addresses of such businesses and properties, the names of the Jewish vendors, the names of the 'Aryan' purchasers and the month and year when the 'aryanisations' occurred. The list is incomplete and numbers seventy-seven businesses and properties.

<sup>72</sup> Betrifft: Nachprüfung der Entjudungsgeschäfte, 16. April 1943, Bestand Rep. C 110, Signatur Nr. 47, LHASA MD, p. 36.

In consort with those measures, they also experienced the radicalisation of their stigmatisation in the public domain. This marked the prelude to the third phase of the *Shoah*, culminating in deportation and extermination. In June 1941 the Nazi Party for the *Gau* Magdeburg-Anhalt requested that the provincial government legislate to ban Jews from attending ‘German cultural events.’<sup>73</sup> The argument raised was that despite Jews not being permitted to attend theatres, cinemas, concerts, public lectures, art shows, dances and all cultural events, the onus of not permitting entry to Jews was still placed on the organiser of the event or the proprietor. According to the complaint, Jews were using this perceived legal ambiguity to their advantage and attending such venues. The complainant felt that this was further evidence of the ‘typical impudence’ of the Jews. In order to cease this alleged practice, the suggestion was made to legislate and thus legally prevent all Jews from attending any venues where ‘Aryans’ would also be in attendance.<sup>74</sup> On 16 June 1941, the provincial government replied to the complaint and complied with the request.<sup>75</sup>

On 22 July 1941, the provincial government issued a police ordinance banning all Jews from attending any cultural venue, including theatres, concerts and cinemas. The ban further specified that cabarets, variety shows, taverns, dances, markets, parks and amusement parks were banned to Jews. Breaches of the ordinance attracted a fine of RM 150 or two weeks’ imprisonment.<sup>76</sup> On 9 September 1941, the *Reich* Office for Propaganda for Magdeburg-Anhalt lauded

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<sup>73</sup> Betrifft: Besuch deutscher Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 12. Juni 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 336–337.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Betrifft: 1. Besuch deutscher Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden. 2. Einkaufszeiten für Juden, 16. Juni 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 430–432.

<sup>76</sup> Polizeiverordnung über das Verbot des Besuchs kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 22. Juli 1941, *ibid.*, p. 346.

the initiative of the provincial government for having effectively removed Jews from any public space in Magdeburg.<sup>77</sup> Henceforth, Jews would only be in public when attending to their own affairs. However, in spite of this measure, the subject of Jews allegedly attending ‘Aryan’ venues remained a constant annoyance to the local authorities.

Owing to complaints that in judicial matters Jews were still being identified as *Reich* Germans, in June 1941 the *Reich* Minister for Justice ruled that Jews were to be identified as ‘subjects of the state’ or ‘*Staatsangehörige*,’ reconfirming their status. He further requested that the word ‘German’ not be used in any form in any reference to matters pertaining to Jews.<sup>78</sup> In September 1941, female Jewish students of nursing in Magdeburg were notified that they were no longer insured, owing to the cancellation of all insurance policies for Jews from 21 July 1941. The *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, which operated the nursing establishment in Berlin, was advised to make provision for this in the event of the illness of its students.<sup>79</sup> This removal of the Jews in a physical and psychological sense from German society continued in intensity, leading sequentially to their final level of their ostracism. This occurred when Jews were physically labelled, thus making them obvious targets of German scorn and abuse.

The destruction of any anonymity occurred on 1 September 1941, when all Jews above the age of six years were ordered to wear a six-pointed, yellow Star of David from 15 September 1941. One interviewee recalled that up until this point,

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<sup>77</sup> Betr.: Polizeiverordnung über das Verbot des Besuchs kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 9. September 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 351.

<sup>78</sup> Memorandum from the Reich Minister for Justice, 26 June 1941, Bestand Jur.-012, ASGM, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>79</sup> Krankenversicherung jüdischer Lernschwestern (Krankenpflegeschüler), 24. September 1941, Bestand Rep. 10, Signatur Nr. 2497 Tc 6, STAM, p. 166.

he had escaped most abusive situations owing to his physiognomy, recalling: ‘We didn’t look Jewish at all and we were blond. So, we had no incidents up to that point; none whatsoever.’<sup>80</sup> The yellow star with the word ‘Jew’ inscribed in black in the middle was to be stitched on to the left chest of the outer garment. Breaches of the decree attracted a fine of RM 150 or up to six weeks’ imprisonment.<sup>81</sup> The decree also specified the exact size specifications of the star and how it was to be worn. One interviewee recalled:

We were very much shaken by this and were shocked at how big they were. Then Mum set about very carefully sewing them on to jackets. She folded them perfectly over and went right around the six parts. She did a beautiful job, while others only tied them up in the corners. But being kids we used to fold our jacket under our arms; very rarely actually displayed it. When it was displayed, we were targeted, mostly by other kids, very rarely by adults. I only ever remember being abused by an adult once, fairly solidly, but not physically, but just abuse. This was simply because I was Jewish.<sup>82</sup>

However, even for young Jews it was not always possible to conceal the star:

We couldn’t always hide our star, because people would recognise us. Some were abusive, some weren’t – the whole gamut. They were mainly abusive, but not so much the adults, it was mainly younger people. I hated their guts, to tell you the truth.<sup>83</sup>

The seriousness of such breaches was something that was included in the Jewish community’s newsletter for November 1941. Emphasis was placed on the fact that not only was the star to be worn, but that it had to be at all times clearly visible.<sup>84</sup>

In spite of the numerous acts of degradation and humiliation which Jews had endured up until this point, this labelling of them ushered in a new level of

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<sup>80</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>81</sup> Polizeiverordnung über die Kennzeichnung der Juden, 1. September 1941, Collection JM, File 10625, op. cit., pp. 3–21. This file contains the comprehensive details of the entire decree.

<sup>82</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>83</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>84</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

humiliation. Jews were abused physically and verbally in Magdeburg, particularly by the younger Germans. Some Germans spat on Jews; others even kicked them.<sup>85</sup> Fearful of confrontations, most Jews avoided main thoroughfares and used side streets to avoid potential abuse and humiliation.<sup>86</sup> Jewish adults made certain that the star was visible. Younger Jews often concealed the star or in the warmer months simply took their outer garment off.<sup>87</sup> Jews were forbidden from leaving their domicile without written permission from the local police. The decree also mandated the reduction of the use of public transport by Jews.<sup>88</sup> On 23 September 1941, the provincial government received a further memorandum specifically discussing policies on travel by Jews in and beyond their communities. It also indicated that Jews could only travel third class on trains, could only be seated if all 'Aryans' were seated and could not use public transport during peak periods, should there be overcrowding. Jews were permitted to continue using waiting-room facilities, so long as this was included on their travel authorisation, acquired from the local police.<sup>89</sup>

In October 1941, the provincial government refined its ban on Jews attending 'German cultural venues' and henceforth included sporting attractions, cafés and all eating and drinking venues. Jews were still permitted to attend therapeutic bathhouses, providing they possessed authorisation from a registered and authorised physician. All of the subject bans did not include events organised by

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<sup>85</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

<sup>86</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>87</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>88</sup> Polizeiverordnung über die Kennzeichnung der Juden, 1. September 1941, Collection JM, File 10625, op. cit., pp. 3–21.

<sup>89</sup> Betr.: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden, 18. September 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 237–240.

and conducted at the premises of the Jewish community.<sup>90</sup> After the decree concerning the wearing of the star, few Jews in the city ventured outdoors unless they were going about their daily affairs. For this reason, the ongoing issuing of police ordinances and complaints concerning the alleged practice of Jews attending ‘German cultural venues’ was, arguably, largely an act of propagandistic value in furthering the demonisation of the Jews and their complete removal from the German consciousness. After September 1941, the majority of Jews in the city were fearful of being in the public domain, let alone attending venues where they placed themselves at even greater risk. Other than the offices of the Jewish community, the only other venue where Jews met as a group was the field next to the Jewish cemetery. Owing to its location, it became the only venue where Jews met in public. Jews met there socially on Sundays, without fear of verbal and/or physical abuse.

As with all matters of excluding Jews, the subject of Jews using public transport continued. On 23 October 1941, strict guidelines concerning Jews’ use of public transport operated by the German postal authority were received in Magdeburg.<sup>91</sup> However, with the large-scale increase in the use of Jewish forced labour, the *Reich* Minister for Transport modified the restrictions for the use of public transport by Jews on 31 October 1941. The concern had arisen that the measures in place could affect the production of war materials provided by Jewish forced labour. Further guidelines concerning new measures were received in

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<sup>90</sup> Polizeiverordnung über das Verbot des Besuches von Veranstaltungen und Gaststätten durch die Juden, (undated) October 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 373–376.

<sup>91</sup> Betrifft: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel der Deutschen Reichspost durch Juden, 16. Oktober 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 241–243.

Magdeburg on 21 November 1941.<sup>92</sup> One of the new provisions was for a limited seating allocation in railway carriages marked for Jews only.<sup>93</sup> These measures continued to remove Jews from the physical consciousness of the population, whilst simultaneously consolidating their demonisation.

With the commencement of deportations from Germany, the confiscation of the remaining possessions of Jews ensued. On 19 November 1941, the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified all members of the Jewish community in its newsletter that on 20–21 November a mandatory registration of the following goods owned by Jews would take place at the community's offices: typewriters, adding machines and duplicating machines; bicycles, together with their accessories; cameras, film projectors, enlargement machines and light meters; and binoculars.<sup>94</sup> Owners of the goods also had to provide all of the particulars of such goods and signed declarations that such goods in their possession had been registered. Breaches or false information were punishable by the Gestapo. Those in privileged '*Mischehen*' were exempted.<sup>95</sup> Registration became a ritualised practice. After registration, confiscation followed. The deportation of the former owners of the goods completed the process with the removal of the Jews themselves.

The subject of Jews in Magdeburg attending 'German cultural venues' re-emerged in November 1941 when the local Gestapa lodged another complaint. It

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<sup>92</sup> Betrifft: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden – Erlaß des Reichsverkehrsministers 15 VPA 21 – vom 18. September 1941; hier: Erlaß weiterer Bestimmungen, 18. November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>94</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 19. November 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

bemoaned that breaches of the police ordinance could not be pursued as criminal acts, and that in Magdeburg only nominated venues by name had been banned to Jews. Consequently, in the case of cinemas in the city, only three had been nominated in the previous ban. Schooled in such devious ways, the impudent Jews were allegedly sighted at other cinemas, not nominated in the ban – much to the outcry of the ‘Aryan’ cinema-goers.<sup>96</sup> In December 1941, the Gestapa confronted the president of the Jewish community over the matter and ordered the practice to cease in order to pacify the ‘Aryan’ population.<sup>97</sup> When the matter reached the *Reich* Minister for the Interior in Berlin it was referred back to the associated governmental bureaucracies in Magdeburg to be resolved legally.<sup>98</sup> By the time the matter was resolved in February 1942, the organisation for the first mass deportation of Jews from Magdeburg was already underway. On 27 February 1942, the provincial government deemed the request for the legislation by the

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<sup>96</sup> Betr.: Besuch von Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 25. November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 381. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘In der Stadt Magdeburg sind für die Juden nur die drei führenden Lichtspieltheater: Deulig-Palast, Fülü, Kammerlichtspiele verboten. Wie die Praxis gezeigt hat, sind die Juden über diese Tatsache wohl unterrichtet. Ihrer frechen Art entsprechend, besuchen sie daher nach wie vor Veranstaltungen der Kinos, die ihnen bisher nicht ausdrücklich verboten sind. Es ist daher dringend notwendig, dass ehestens dieser unhaltbare Zustand beseitigt wird. Es ist nämlich damit zu rechnen, dass die arische Bevölkerung in begreiflicher Erbitterung über diese jüdische Frechheit zu Selbsthilfemassnahmen greift.’

<sup>97</sup> Betr.: Besuch von Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 12. Dezember 1941, *ibid.*, p. 383. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Um Ausschreitungen der deutschblütigen Bevölkerung gegen Juden zu verhindern, habe ich heute den Juden in Magdeburg durch den Vorsitzenden der Jüdischen Gemeinde die Auflage erteilen lassen, daß ihnen mit sofortiger Wirkung jeder Besuch von Lichtspieltheatern und sonstigen Kinoveranstaltungen verboten ist.’

<sup>98</sup> Betrifft: Polizeiverordnung über den Besuch kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 19. Februar 1942, *ibid.*, p. 387.

police commissioner as unnecessary.<sup>99</sup> Despite this resolution, the Gestapo in Magdeburg continued in its quest. This degradation of the Jewish population by the Gestapo conforms to the pattern of a mythological agitation and pressure from the grassroots level of German society to deal with the Jews. In essence, the Gestapo was simultaneously justifying and preparing the local population for the physical removal of the Jews from the city.

As further preparations for deportations commenced, so too did the legislation required to expropriate Jewish property. On 25 November 1941, legislation was enacted which allowed for the revoking of German nationality of expatriate Jews and the confiscation of all property when Jews left Germany. This decree permitted access to all Jewish property, whether the owners had emigrated or been deported.<sup>100</sup> In cases of exception, Jews signed over their assets prior to deportation, as for example in the cases of those deported to Theresienstadt. In a further measure stripping Jews of dignity, from 10 January 1942, Jews were ordered not use the titles of *Herr* (Mr) or *Frau* (Mrs/Ms).<sup>101</sup>

On 14 January 1942, Dr Max Kaufmann of the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified all members to surrender the following goods at the community's offices on 15–16 January 1942: all products made from wool and animal skins, skis and climbing boots. Extended hours on the evening of 16 January were provided to allow forced labourers to surrender their goods. Jews had to remove all identifying signs that indicated ownership and had to submit a signed declaration in

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<sup>99</sup> Beschränkungen für das Auftreten der Juden in der Öffentlichkeit (Judenbann), 27. Februar 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 390–391.

<sup>100</sup> Elfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz, 25. November 1941, G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>101</sup> Memorandum from the Reich Minister for Justice, 10 January 1942, Bestand Jur.-012, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 99–100. This ordinance also applied to Poles.

quadruplicate with the owner's first name, surname, complete address, identification card for Jews (indicating their place of registration and their identification number) and their signature. One copy of the completed declaration was retained by the individual submitting the goods. Community members were warned that breaches of the ordinance would be severely punished.<sup>102</sup>

A further ordinance concerning Jews using public transport was announced on 24 March 1942.<sup>103</sup> Jews travelling in their place of residence still required written authority from the local police, but special conditions were created for forced labourers, school pupils and legal and health-care professionals.<sup>104</sup> Owing to the hostility of the environment, Jews in Magdeburg avoided the use of public transport altogether. The ongoing hostility and agitation of the Magdeburg Gestapo with regard to Jews allegedly attending 'German cultural venues' continued simultaneously. Despite the provincial government's earlier resolution on the matter and not legislating against this supposed practice, on 11 May 1942 the Magdeburg Gestapa informed the government of its own measures.<sup>105</sup> It advised the government that the Jewish community had been informed that Jews breaching the ordinance would be arrested and escorted to a concentration camp.<sup>106</sup> Despite this policy, legislation was not enacted and the provincial government deemed the matter closed on 9 April 1942,<sup>107</sup> five days prior to the

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<sup>102</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 14. Januar 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

<sup>103</sup> Betrifft: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden, 24. März 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 256–259.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Betrifft: Besuch von Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 11. Mai 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 396.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Betrifft: Polizeiverordnung über den Besuch kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 9. April 1942, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, op. cit., p. 53a.

first mass deportation. However, the consistent and persistent pursuit of ongoing measures against the Jews provides evidence of the diligence and degree of thoroughness of antisemitic activities and policies at the local level. The Magdeburg Gestapo was unrelenting in its pursuit of Jews.

Jews who possessed dual nationality were stripped of their German nationality from 14 May 1942 and hence their assets were confiscated.<sup>108</sup> As deportations increased, so too, did the desire to remove the remaining Jews in Germany from public space. On 6 June 1942, Jews were banned from using waiting-room facilities at all public transport stations.<sup>109</sup>

Approximately one month prior to the second mass deportation of Jews from Magdeburg on 11 July 1942, further confiscations of their property took place in June 1942.<sup>110</sup> On 17 June 1942, Dr Julius Riese of the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* informed members of the Jewish community that the following goods were to be surrendered to the community's offices by 21 June: electrical equipment, including heaters, electric fires, sunray lamps, electric heat pads, saucepans, hotplates, vacuum cleaners, hairdryers and irons; and gramophones, including electrical gramophones and records. Items used in medical consultations by medical and dental practitioners were exempted, as were such items belonging to homes for the aged, for the infirm and for children.<sup>111</sup> As in the past,

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<sup>108</sup> Betr.: Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz (Anwendung auf Juden mit doppelter Staatsangehörigkeit), 14. Mai 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, p. 70.

<sup>109</sup> Betr.: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden, 6. Juni 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 262.

<sup>110</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 17. Juni 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

community members were reminded of the penalties, should they breach the ordinance.

Two days later, on 19 June 1942, Dr Riese notified the community of a list of further goods to be surrendered. All of the requirements listed in the previous newsletters concerning surrendering goods remained the same, including the completion of a declaration in quadruplicate. Goods to be surrendered were all items of manufactured clothing which the owner considered ‘were absolutely no longer necessary for a simple or modest lifestyle.’<sup>112</sup> This included both new and old men’s and women’s outer garments: suits, coats, hats, caps, gloves, machine-made clothing and blouses, dresses, skirts and jackets, aprons and work dresses; and all old manufactured goods: linen, underwear, tights and stockings, ties, towels, scarves, as well as cotton rags and anything manufactured from cotton, wool and string remnants. Jews had until 23 June to surrender the goods in the cleanest possible condition.<sup>113</sup> Dr Riese also reminded those individuals who were leaving on the forthcoming shipment or ‘*Transport*’ that they were permitted to complete their packing arrangements first, before surrendering their remaining goods. They were also instructed to deposit their packed suitcases at the community’s offices and to ensure that their personal particulars were visible on the outside of the suitcase.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 19. Juni 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Bekleidungsstücke, soweit sie zum eigenen Gebrauch (oder bei Einrichtungen zum Heimgebrauch) bei bescheidener Lebensführung nicht mehr unbedingt notwendig sind.’

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Den zum Transport vorgesehenen Gemeindemitgliedern ist es gestattet, das für den Transport vorgesehene Gepäck vor der Spinnstoff-Abgabe zu packen und

On 25 July 1942, all confiscated goods were advertised for sale to public servants within the Ministry of Finance.<sup>115</sup> All interested parties were advised to lodge their personal details and a list of desired goods by 20 July. The expectation was that demand would exceed supply and those expressing an interest in a bicycle were further instructed to justify their request in writing.<sup>116</sup>

In August 1942, Jews were reminded not to use their former titles or professional titles in any correspondence. They were also advised that no Jew should have any female 'Aryan' providing any form of household assistance to them. Jews in this position were to cease the practice by 1 September 1942 or alternatively provide written details to the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* by 2 September 1942 as to why the relationship had not ceased.<sup>117</sup> On 1 October 1942, 'racial' Jews who were not members of the Jewish community of Magdeburg or who had subsequently left the community but still resided in the city were instructed by Police Headquarters to use the term 'without religious belief,' *glaubenslos*, when completing forms. Jews were further instructed to refrain from using the term 'non-denominational,' *gottgläubig*.<sup>118</sup> In the same newsletter, Dr Riese reminded all members of the curfew from 8.00 p.m. until 6.00 a.m. from and including 1 October 1942 up until and including 31 March 1943.<sup>119</sup> By the time the curfew had been lifted on 1 April 1943, both Dr Riese and his wife Else

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die Koffer mit vollständigen Namen und Anschrift versehen bei der Gemeinde abzugeben.'

<sup>115</sup> Betrifft: Anfall und Verkauf von Fahrrädern, Fotoapparaten, Operngläsern usw., 25. Juli 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 15, LHASA MD, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 14. August 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

<sup>118</sup> Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 3. Oktober 1942, ibid., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

Riese née Kochmann had already perished in Auschwitz, having been sent on the last mass deportation from Magdeburg in February 1943. They were aged fifty-eight years old and fifty-six years old respectively.<sup>120</sup>

On 20 February 1943, the *Reich* Minister for Transport sanctioned a reduction in public transport fares for Jews in particular categories, mainly for school children and the disabled.<sup>121</sup> This was approximately the same date that the third and final mass deportation of Jews from Magdeburg took place. By March 1943 Magdeburg had rid itself of all but a small number of elderly Jews and those in mixed marriages and their children.

In the two-year period between the commencement of World War Two in September 1939 and the introduction of the Star of David in September 1941, the completion of the pre-war policies against the Jews ensued. Emigration had reached its final phase; Jews had been evicted from their homes and allocated housing in ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ and further stigmatised by the allocation of identification numbers; all Jewish organisations, with the exception of the religious community, had been dissolved; Jewish communities in consort with the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* managed and were responsible for all Jewish matters; and Jews had been completely ousted from the economy and all property confiscated. This period was chiefly characterised by a de-facto ghettoisation, both physically and psychologically. When the ultimate act of stigmatisation occurred with the wearing of the star, the preparatory steps for deportation followed. Edicts and ordinances steadily dehumanised the Jews,

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<sup>120</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., pp. 1033–1034.

<sup>121</sup> Betr.: Bewährung von Fahrpreisermäßigungen an Juden, 20. Februar 1943, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 263.

stripping them of all vestiges of human traits and dignity. Forced labour followed and segregated schooling continued. With curfews and bans from public space, coupled with fear, Jews physically began to disappear from the cityscape. This became symbolic of the actual physical removal of the Jews from the city, which occurred in a perfectly organised and well-executed manner. As early as March 1942, the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified community members of the forthcoming *Transport* to the east. For some of the Jews of Magdeburg the phase of ghettoisation was approaching its end, as they unknowingly and methodically prepared their suitcases for what became their final journey. Deportation and extermination had reached the remnant of the community.

### ***Die Judenschule and the Daily Lives of Children***

On 1 September 1939, when news of the declaration of war became known to Hermann Spier, the sole teacher at the '*Judenschule*' in Magdeburg, he dismissed his pupils mid-morning. Indicative of his own sense of pastoral responsibility, he advised his pupils to use only the side streets in returning to their homes, lest they attract unwanted attention.<sup>122</sup> This important role was one which Spier held with much conviction until his departure on 14 April 1942 on the first mass deportation from Magdeburg. For the duration of his tenure, he was also assisted by registered and approved teaching assistants. Owing to the combination of Spier's ability and character, the segregated learning environment and a broad and inclusive general and Jewish curriculum, Jewish pupils developed identities and their own intellectualism in a positive and nurturing learning environment. They also

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<sup>122</sup> Correspondence from M. F. to the author, 12 July 1999.

developed a positive attitude to their own Jewishness and to their religion.<sup>123</sup> Once deportations had commenced, the numbers of pupils at the school steadily declined, causing much sadness to this small group of learners. From the time of Spier's deportation until the dissolution of the school on 30 June 1942, the remaining pupils were taught by lay members of the community, who attempted to continue Spier's legacy. Given its pervading positive environment, the school provided Jewish children with a respite from the harsh reality of the outside world. For Jewish children in Magdeburg, their daily lives were fraught with potential abuse and humiliation in the public domain, particularly after the introduction of the wearing of the star. Nevertheless, at home, at school and when they were afforded the opportunity to meet other Jews in public, they attempted to lead what they thought were normal lives in highly abnormal times.

In the wake of the declaration of war, the city of Magdeburg was relieved of its administration of the '*Judenschule*.' By order of the *Zehnte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* of 4 July 1939, on 1 October 1939 the administration of the '*Judenschule*' was taken over by the Education Department of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*.<sup>124</sup> In Magdeburg the teaching staff remained the same, despite this change. However, one noticeable change did take place. On 16 November 1939, the *Reich* Minister for Science, Training and National Education ordered that all small classes of Jewish children, some even numbering between three and six pupils, in small villages and some towns were to be dissolved and the pupils ordered to attend nominated larger Jewish schools in designated areas. The '*Judenschule*' in Magdeburg was made one of those

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<sup>123</sup> Joseph Walk, *Jüdische Schule und Erziehung im Dritten Reich* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Anton Hain, 1991.

<sup>124</sup> Betr.: Übernahme der jüdischen Schulen, 19. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 88.

designated schools and Jewish children from neighbouring areas were instructed to enrol there by 14 October 1939.<sup>125</sup>

In February 1940, the ‘*Judenschule*’ consisted of twenty-eight pupils; twelve males and sixteen females.<sup>126</sup> Of this figure, seven pupils travelled to Magdeburg daily from nearby villages and towns, including from Calbe, Burg and Köthen.<sup>127</sup> The profile of the pupils corresponded to eight different school grades. As such they were divided into three composite classes. The first class consisted of Grades One and Two; the second of Grades Three through to Five; and the third of Grades Six through to Eight. Lessons were conducted in the same two classrooms as previously occurred in the Jewish community’s offices in *Große Schulstraße*.<sup>128</sup> The school’s staff consisted of one teacher, Hermann Spier, and three teaching assistants, including Dr Erwin Lehmann and Joachim Freiberg.<sup>129</sup> Dr Lehmann specifically taught English and History and Freiberg taught Music and Sport.<sup>130</sup> The third teaching assistant was a female who attended to the needs of the youngest class.<sup>131</sup> All pupils learned the same subjects from the same curriculum. When this information was conveyed from the superintendent of schools for the city to the provincial government, he also reported that the curriculum was particularly designed toward the preparation for emigration and that the city

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<sup>125</sup> Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 16. November 1939, Betr.: Übernahme der jüdischen Schulen, 19. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>126</sup> Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, *ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>127</sup> Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

<sup>128</sup> Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>129</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999. The exact details of this woman’s identity remain unknown.

should not expect the school to grow, but in fact to expect a steady reduction in its number of pupils.<sup>132</sup>

Pupils attended the school Monday to Friday and attended Bible and Hebrew lessons and an explanation on the weekly portion of the *Torah* on Saturday evenings. Pupils participated in the following subjects, listed in the order in which they appeared on the pupils' weekly timetable: Hebrew, Religion, German, English, Geography, Writing, History, Arithmetic, Natural History, Drawing, Gymnastics, Handicraft and Singing.<sup>133</sup>

Whilst the three teaching assistants were not trained teachers, they were well educated and performed their duties in a professional manner. The gymnastics and sporting events were conducted in the vacant field, adjacent to the Jewish cemetery in Sudenburg.<sup>134</sup> Some pupils also had private tuition from the teaching staff. In particular, Dr Lehmann gave private tuition in English to a number of pupils.<sup>135</sup> The positive recollections of this school are testimony to the dedication of the staff in a time of great adversity. Despite the pervasive bleak and hostile external environment, this school celebrated life:

We learnt all the things we had to. It was a happy time. It was a good place to go. The teachers were very professional. They were trying very hard to do the right thing. We had competitions to win prizes. I won a prize – a big book. It was a fairly happy thing, you know. It was much better doing that than if we had been permitted to keep on going to the public school, I'm sure.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 86. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Der Unterricht ist besonders auf die Vorbereitung der Auswanderung eingestellt. Ein Anwachsen der jüdischen Schule ist nicht zu erwarten. Es ist vielmehr mit einer ständigen Abnahme der Schülerzahl zu rechnen.'

<sup>133</sup> Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, *ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>134</sup> Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

Spier was particularly remembered for ‘picking children who were inclined in certain ways and developing their talents.’<sup>137</sup> In this respect he fostered a love of learning and of celebrating Jewishness in his learning community. One interviewee concluded his remarks on Spier in this powerful way:

He was such a grand person, such a unique personality. I know he was just unbelievable! He was a teacher with such conviction. You know, everyone remembers one teacher, and I remember him!<sup>138</sup>

The learning experience at this school consequently left an indelible imprint on the lives of all of its pupils, including the small number who survived.

In March 1941 all Jewish schools, including that in Magdeburg, were still in the process of enrolling pupils from the dissolved smaller, outlying schools.<sup>139</sup> In cases where children were unable to attend a designated school, private tuition was permitted, and the cost born by the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. This practice was further clarified in April 1942, when Jewish boarding schools were established to meet the needs of children, who were still not attending segregated schools. Schooling remained mandatory. The only remaining exemptions for private tuition in homes were for those children too ill to attend. Such exemptions were regulated by the Education Department of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*.<sup>140</sup>

An unknown number of ‘*Mischlinge*’ also attended the ‘*Judenschule*’ in Magdeburg. In a number of cases parents in mixed marriages sought exemptions and applied to the provincial government for a re-assessment of the racial classification of their children and/or permission for their children to attend a

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<sup>137</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Privatunterricht für jüdische Schulkinder, 3. März 1941, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>140</sup> Schulpflicht und Privatunterricht jüdischer Schulkinder, 14. April 1942, ibid., p. 91.

‘German school.’ One such example was the case of the Friedländer family. Max Friedländer was married to a non-Jewish woman (by the name of Fynni Mroka). They had one daughter, Margot, born in 1931.<sup>141</sup> On 5 March 1940, Fynni Friedländer requested that her daughter be permitted to attend a ‘German school.’ On 22 December 1941, the provincial government rejected her application.<sup>142</sup> The majority of ‘*Mischlinge*’ in the city attended the ‘*Judenschule*.’ On 15 July 1942, the provincial government received a memorandum which clarified which ‘*Mischlinge*’ were to attend which schools and under what conditions this should occur. Six classifications were articulated.<sup>143</sup>

Spier, his wife Frieda, and all the teaching assistants and their families, with the exception of Joachim Freiberg<sup>144</sup> were deported on 14 April 1942.<sup>145</sup> Freiberg had been conscripted as a forced labourer in the city some time earlier. With Spier’s departure, Joachim Freiberg and lay members of the community continued to teach the remaining pupils, of whom there were very few left. Most of those selected in the first deportation were families.<sup>146</sup>

On 22 June 1942, Dr Fritz Grunsfeld of the Leipzig office of the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* informed parents of all pupils attending Jewish schools in Chemnitz, Erfurt and Magdeburg

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<sup>141</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>142</sup> Correspondence from Der Regierungspräsident, An Frau Fynni Friedländer, 22 December 1941, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 33–39.

<sup>143</sup> Betrifft: Zulassung jüdischer Mischlinge zum Schulbesuch, 2. Juli 1942, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>144</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

<sup>145</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

in a typed memorandum that the schools would be closed effective 1 July 1942.<sup>147</sup> Beyond this date private tuition of Jewish children was not permitted. However, parents were allowed to provide instruction in the home. Children above the age of fourteen years could henceforth be used in forced labour and were instructed to register with local authorities. All pupils in possession of travel passes were ordered to surrender them to the issuing authority.<sup>148</sup> On 10 July 1942, the provincial government received a memorandum which indicated the closure of the schools 'in view of the recent development in the 'resettlement' of the Jews.'<sup>149</sup> The second mass deportation from Magdeburg occurred the following day. Henceforth, until capitulation of the Nazis, the remaining children received home schooling.

Whilst school life formed a large component of their lives, the children in the Jewish community occupied themselves in a routine, much the same way as their adult counterpart did. Despite their living conditions and the hostility of the outside world, they participated in family life and sought leisure activities. Prior to the introduction of the wearing of the star, abuse and violence toward them existed, but not on the same scale as occurred after this edict. Jewish children became serious targets, with non-Jewish children regularly abusing them verbally, throwing objects at them and performing other acts of violence.<sup>150</sup> Whilst in the majority of cases the acts were performed by younger Germans, there were such cases where adults behaved toward Jewish children in exactly the same manner.

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<sup>147</sup> Betr.: Auflösung des jüdischen Schulwesens, 22. Juni 1942, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Schließung jüdischer Schulen, 7. Juli 1942, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>150</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

Owing to the pervasive hostile and threatening environment Jewish children did not spend a great deal of time outdoors as a group. When outdoor group social activities took place, they generally occurred in the relative safety of the courtyards of any of the '*Judenhäuser*,' in the field adjacent to the cemetery and in the cemetery itself. Jewish children tended to visit each other at each other's homes 'where parents could try to shelter them.'<sup>151</sup> One interviewee recalled:

I mean we had incidents where we got abused in the streets and spat at and once or twice punched in the nose by other children. All I could do was run away as quickly as possible. It wasn't terribly bad; I mean kids fight each other under any circumstances. It was just that they had a better reason to attack us – they didn't need any other reason. Simply call us 'Jews!' and have a go at us!<sup>152</sup>

Jewish children adapted very quickly to the hostile environment and applied certain strategies to reduce the possibility of abuse. A common strategy was simply to move around by one's self, as this attracted far less attention.

In spite of bans, some children rode on public transport, particularly trams, as a novelty. This was a risky exercise, as their star would either have to be covered or removed and the child not identified by commuters.<sup>153</sup> Walking through the city was another form of leisure. As an important errand, children were also sent out to view the newspaper headlines posted on billboards in order to report back on what was occurring with regard to the war. During the day some children visited their fathers who were on forced labour detail. One interviewee recalled when his father was working with two other Jews on forced labour detail on the River Elbe, he was taught to swim in the river.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>152</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>153</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

<sup>154</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

Family life at home continued and parents attempted to shield their children from the reality of many of the situations that befell them. Children recalled reading voraciously, particularly in the winter months. In one household, there were fond memories of being able to participate in their father's work as a forced labourer for a company making military equipment. Their father regularly brought work home.<sup>155</sup> There was also a recollection of pride in this work. Like all children, they were happy at being able to assist their father. No doubt, they were also pleased at having the opportunity of performing constructive and useful tasks.

Given the intensity of the persecutions and the size of the small community of children, all knew one another and formed close relationships. The majority of these ended in sad farewells. Once deportations commenced in April 1942, the number of children steadily dwindled. One interviewee recalled: 'I met all these wonderful kids and formed friendships, but then they started disappearing.'<sup>156</sup> At that time children discussed what was taking place, irrespective of their comprehension of the real situation:

With the deportation of my school friends it was very obvious. It was obvious to me and to my brother that this was happening, despite that our parents were shielding this from us or not. Because we did discuss it. When the teacher, Spier, was deported and my father took over, this was a major thing happening in a child's life. Suddenly the teacher goes and your own father becomes the teacher. By that time there weren't many left. I think by the time my father took over there were between ten and fifteen.<sup>157</sup>

After the commencement of deportations and the dissolution of the '*Judenschule*' in June 1942, for the majority of the few remaining children, life eventually became centred on activities within Jewish space:

We weren't allowed to go on the trams; we weren't allowed to go to the movies; we obviously weren't allowed to go to school; we didn't belong to

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<sup>155</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

any organisation.....I still managed to roam all over Magdeburg on foot. We didn't have any bicycles. Once we lived in the '*Judenhaus*' next to the burnt-out synagogue, there was a bit of a community thing there. I mean people didn't go out unless they had to and they stayed within that little complex. It had a garden and we sort of interacted with our neighbours. Everybody had the same problems.<sup>158</sup>

With the continued reduction in community numbers up until the last mass deportation in February 1943, Jewish children continued to live as they had previously done. The majority of these children had only known a life under Nazism.

The lives of Jewish children in the community continued to be fully enriched educationally and in terms of their Jewish identities, even once deportations commenced and the '*Judenschule*' was dissolved. In spite of the pervading sadness, which occurred when friends and/or relatives were deported, children continued to attempt to live as normally as possible. Simultaneously, parents attempted to buffer the reality. As the situation in the public domain increased in danger, Jewish children were constantly forced to adapt and ultimately, not dissimilar to their adult counterparts, avoid being in public altogether. For the majority of the children who remained in the community from October 1939, their limited experience of life had only been one of love and protection afforded by family and community in the private domain and one of hate and ostracism and ultimately dehumanisation in the public domain. Sadly, the children had adapted to these abnormal conditions. They had known no other life.

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<sup>158</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

### *Mischehen and Mischlinge*

In September 1935 with the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, the *Reichsbürgergesetz* and the *Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* commenced the definition process of who was a Jew according to Nazi racial ideology,<sup>159</sup> prohibiting intermarriage and sexual relations between Jews and individuals of ‘German blood.’ The laws also defined and classified ‘*Mischehen*’ and ‘*Mischlinge*.’<sup>160</sup>

Classification was dependent on Nazi racial theory and on the number of Jewish grandparents one had. As a process it was continually refined, but it was administered arbitrarily. The religious affiliations of those affected also reflected the levels of both acculturation and assimilation, and Magdeburg was no exception. Couples in ‘*Mischehen*’ and likewise children from such unions were represented in the Christian communities, the Jewish community and there can be

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<sup>159</sup> Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheit, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und Das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. November 1935*, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 460, Band 3, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 33–44.

<sup>160</sup> The *Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* defined ‘full or racial’ Jews as people with at least three Jewish grandparents, or, if fewer than three, a person belonging to the Jewish community or married to a Jew. ‘First-degree Mischlinge’ were defined as people who did not belong to the Jewish religion and were not married to a Jewish spouse, but had two Jewish grandparents; ‘second-degree Mischlinge’ were people with one Jewish grandparent; and those of ‘German blood’ were people with no Jewish grandparents. The Nuremberg Laws permitted ‘full or racial’ Jews to marry other Jews, as well as ‘first-degree Mischlinge,’ but forbade individuals of ‘German blood’ from marrying Jews or ‘first-degree Mischlinge.’ They permitted ‘second-degree Mischlinge’ to marry individuals of ‘German blood,’ but forbade them from marrying ‘full or racial Jews’ or even others like themselves, but permitted special exemptions for them to marry ‘first-degree Mischlinge.’ The Nuremberg Laws effectively split ‘non-Aryans’ of racial Jewish pedigree into two groups: ‘Mischlinge’ and Jews. Both groups had to observe strict marriage restrictions, but in general ‘Mischlinge’ were spared the expropriation, ghettoisation, deportation and extermination reserved for Jews. See also Kaplan, op. cit., p. 77.

little doubt that there were those who were unaffiliated. The persecutions and experiences of those individuals of 'mixed race' were not uniform. Discrimination depended on the racial classification the individual was allocated and eventually on whether a mixed marriage was 'privileged' or 'non-privileged.'<sup>161</sup> The refinement of definitions and their applications continued for the duration of the war, affecting the families of anyone connected to a racially mixed pedigree. Children of unions between Jews and individuals of 'German blood' were labelled '*Mischlinge*,' meaning of mixed blood or hybrid, but with a derogatory connotation as in mongrel, mixed breed or cross-breed.<sup>162</sup> In the 1930s only approximately 11% of such children had remained religiously Jewish. These children, as well as '*Mischlinge*' who had married Jews, were called '*Geltungsjuden*' and were treated as 'full or racial' Jews.<sup>163</sup>

In Magdeburg, of the few documented cases of members of the Jewish community who were in a '*Mischehe*,' the majority were subjected to the same persecutions as all Jews, as were their children who were counted as '*Geltungsjuden*' or 'those individuals who counted as Jews.' However, the situation for their non-Jewish spouses varied.<sup>164</sup> Such couples and their children were also, as a rule, not subjected to deportation. Consequently, by April 1945, with the exception of Jews living in hiding, the overwhelming majority of Jews

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<sup>161</sup> See Meyer, op. cit.

<sup>162</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the treatment of non-Jewish spouses and on the divisive classification of '*Mischehen*' into 'privileged' and 'non-privileged' marriages, see Victor Klemperer, *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1933–41* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998 and Victor Klemperer, *To The Bitter End: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1942–45* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1999.

still resident in Magdeburg and known to the local Gestapo were of mixed marriage and the children of such marriages.

According to the census of 1939, approximately 739 individuals in Magdeburg had four Jewish grandparents; five had three Jewish grandparents, 320 had two Jewish grandparents and approximately a further 224 had one Jewish grandparent.<sup>165</sup> Converts to Judaism were not included in any statistic, owing to their non-Jewish racial pedigree. Of these statistics, the respondents would have been members of both the Christian and Jewish communities, in addition to those individuals who were unaffiliated. Whilst the figures of those belonging to Christian communities and those unaffiliated with either the Christian or the Jewish communities remain unknown, the Lutheran Church in Magdeburg received memoranda from both the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* and the Gestapo on how to treat members of the Lutheran community who were of Jewish lineage.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, it received counsel on a diverse range of matters relating to Jewish Christians.<sup>167</sup> Jews married to non-Jews also sought baptism in the vain hope of protecting themselves. As late as May 1942, the head office of the Lutheran Church for the church province of Saxony, based in Magdeburg, sought counsel on such a matter from its head office in Berlin.<sup>168</sup> In a blistering

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<sup>165</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., pp. 3–29. The statistics from the census were based on the respondent's number of 'racially' Jewish grandparents. All figures are approximates. The racial classification of a further 66 individuals could not be established. These figures were defined according to racial classification, as dictated by the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, and, consequently, converts to Judaism were not included in the statistics.

<sup>166</sup> Behandlung evangelischer Gemeindeglieder jüdischer Abstammung, 23. April 1940 Bestand Rep. A, Generalia, Signatur Nr. 429b, AKPS, unnumbered page, one page.

<sup>167</sup> For a highly comprehensive and detailed account on the persecution and treatment of Jewish Christians, see James F. Tent, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Nazi Persecution of Jewish-Christian Germans*, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003.

<sup>168</sup> Correspondence to the head of office of the Lutheran Church for the province of

reply, on 3 July 1942, the Magdeburg office was reminded that such activities had ceased almost one year earlier at the request of the Gestapo.<sup>169</sup> The Berlin office also ruled that the baptisms of ‘full or racial’ Jews, who were members of the Jewish community were in any event out of the question. From 25 March 1942 Jews who wished to leave their registered community had to be granted special permission from the *Reich* Minister for the Interior. The reply further articulated that baptism was permitted for ‘first-degree *Mischlinge*,’ who had never been members of any Jewish community, as according to the Nuremberg Laws, they were citizens of the *Reich*.<sup>170</sup>

Some insight into how those individuals connected to the Jewish community of Magdeburg were persecuted and treated is provided by a limited number of documented cases. Of the known cases, the persecution and treatment of individuals and their families varied. However, from the limited picture provided a number of observations can be made.

Prior to the Nuremberg Laws coming into effect, Herbert Levy married his non-Jewish partner.<sup>171</sup> In May 1939, the couple, together with their daughter, were living in an apartment building located at *Lübecker Straße* 30a.<sup>172</sup> This building eventually became a ‘*Judenhaus*,’ but it remains unknown whether the family remained there. Although Levy’s relatives were all closely affiliated to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, he was largely unaffiliated. For the duration of the war he

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Saxony, 18 May 1942, Bestand Rep. A, Specialia K, Signatur Nr. 2430, AKPS, unnumbered page, one page.

<sup>169</sup> Betr.: Judentaufen, 3. Juli 1942, *ibid.*, unnumbered pages, two pages.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Levy, *op. cit.*, 7 November 1996.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

remained in and around Magdeburg. There were no recorded persecutions of Levy and his daughter and the family of three survived the war years.<sup>173</sup>

The situation of the Klemm family provides further insight into the unusual course of events which could and did occur in families of mixed marriages. In May 1939 the Klemm family lived at *Breiter Weg* 82.<sup>174</sup> There exists no record indicating any family religious affiliation with the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. Klara Klemm née Heil was married to a non-Jew and had two sons, Manfred and Wolfgang, aged seven and two years respectively in 1939.<sup>175</sup> Not dissimilar to the situation of the family of Herbert Levy, by the end of 1939 the Klemms had not been evicted from their home and were not forced to move into a ‘*Judenhaus*.’ However, unlike the Levys’ daughter, the two boys were compelled to attend the ‘*Judenschule*.’<sup>176</sup> With the deportation of Klara Klemm in 1942, a series of events unfolded, which quite possibly saved the boys’ lives. A school friend of Manfred Klemm recalled:

Klemm lived about twenty metres from the *Katharinenkirche* [St Catherine’s Church]. His mother was Jewish, but his father was half-Jewish, but had Jewish as his religion. The mother quite early in the piece was deported and never heard of again.

Now in that same building one floor above them was a German family who had something like four children and after Mrs Klemm had to go, the oldest of those children was a girl and she started helping to look after the boys. This went on for quite some time. Eventually, the father, Klemm, went undercover and this family looked after these two boys. The boys remained in the apartment. Then came the big bombing in January 1945.

Shortly before that the father had returned and was living with them and of course by that time you could get away with things like that. The Gestapo wasn’t chasing us around that much anymore. By this time, the young lady,

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<sup>173</sup> Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

<sup>174</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

whose name was Ilse, and Klemm had formed a relationship and they stuck together through all this. The Klemms found some house in a suburb called Werder. So, they just moved in for the period of January 1945 until April when the Americans arrived. Nobody bothered them; they probably didn't advertise the fact that they were living there and got away with it.<sup>177</sup>

Whilst records do not indicate that the boys' father had any Jewish grandparents, it remains unknown as to why he fled the city and left the boys in the charge of this non-Jewish family. The family's care of these two children possibly saved their lives.

From the examples of the Levy and the Klemm families it is clear that the lack of religious affiliation did not guarantee safety or lack of persecution. However, it did create ambiguity in the application of antisemitic measures. The family of Herbert Levy was not subjected to the same persecution as the Klemms. Even so, the Klemms were not subjected to the full range of the persecution which other religiously affiliated Jews in mixed marriages experienced. The classification of the marriages of both couples as either 'privileged' or 'non-privileged' could not be established. Yet, these two examples indicate the level of arbitrariness which existed in the application of persecutions against those in mixed marriages and the children from such marriages, be they either loosely affiliated or unaffiliated to the Jewish community.

The situation of active members of the Jewish community who were living in mixed marriages was unequivocally precise. Such individuals were subjected to the same level of persecutions as was inflicted on all Jews, with the exception of deportation. Of the two documented cases, the marriages were clearly classified as 'non-privileged' and the children treated as '*Geltungsjuden*.'

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<sup>177</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner<sup>178</sup> was an active member of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. His wife, Lisbeth née Leidenroth, whom he had married in 1927, was Lutheran. They had one son, Werner, who was born in 1929<sup>179</sup> and who had been raised Jewish.<sup>180</sup> Despite pressure from the local Gestapo, Karliner's wife would not divorce him and the family of three remained intact until liberation. However, both Karliner and his son were subjected to the same discrimination as other Jews in the city. This included segregated housing, the wearing of the star and forced labour.<sup>181</sup> Whilst Karliner's wife was not officially subjected to these persecutions, in remaining with her husband and son, she endured the daily spectacle of the degradation and humiliation of her loved ones and the community of which she felt a part.

The same situation existed for the Freiberg family. Joachim Freiberg and Elli Freiberg née Langwagen were very active members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the Jewish community as a whole. Elli Freiberg had converted to Judaism under the instruction of Rabbi Dr Wilde.<sup>182</sup> The couple had three young children by war's end. As with the example of the Karliners, Freiberg and his children were subjected to the same discrimination as other Jews. They lived in a 'Judenhaus,' they wore the star, the children attended the 'Judenschule' and Freiberg was a forced labourer. Not dissimilar to Lisbeth Karliner, Elli Freiberg

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<sup>178</sup> Lebenslauf des Vorsitzenden der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto Horst Karliner, genannt Ismar Karliner, 22. Januar 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 252–253.

<sup>179</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>180</sup> Lebenslauf des Vorsitzenden der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto Horst Karliner, genannt Ismar Karliner, 22. Januar 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM, op. cit.

was not restricted in her movements, nor subjected to the same level of persecution, technically. However, the reality for such spouses was different. In remaining devout in her adopted Judaism and a loyal wife and caring mother, she was subjected to the same measures by default. However, as one of the Freibergs' sons recalled, his mother's access to areas off limits to Jews slightly improved the quality of their wretched life, as revealed in the following quotation:

I was a fantastically fast reader and Mum used to get me books from the library. Mum was free to move around wherever she wanted to. I remember she used to get me two books and by the time it got dark I had finished them, and I would ask if she would get me another two and she would say: "No, not today, I'll get you another two tomorrow." So reading was one big thing.

I remember one day I happened to be walking past this shop and there was a queue and I just covered my Star of David and joined the queue and they had vegetables and when I got home my mother said: "I'll go down too!" And she joined the queue for some more. But it was a rare event.<sup>183</sup>

Whilst Elli Freiberg endured the humiliating conditions under which both she and her family were forced to live, she, nevertheless, used her position to the family's advantage. No doubt, some of the staff at any of the venues where she went would have known of her situation. However, she did remain free to move about the city and through this attempted to improve the difficult lives of her family.

The examples of the situations of the Karliner and the Freiberg families demonstrate the clear distinction when it came to their persecution. As active members of the Jewish community, both men and their children were subjected to the same persecutions as other Jews, whilst the persecution of their spouses occurred indirectly owing to their marital situation.

The Gestapo in Magdeburg consistently monitored and acted on any anomalies in the pedigrees of the city's population. In August 1944, the case of forty-five-year-old, Rudolf August came to its attention. Originally from Berlin,

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<sup>183</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

August had settled in Magdeburg and had been employed as a clerk at a local savings bank since 31 December 1943.<sup>184</sup> The Gestapo in Magdeburg, having investigated his 'racial status,' notified the provincial government and confronted the bank, informing it that it had a Jew in its employ. The bank reacted immediately, claiming ignorance, owing to the fact that August had been sent to them by the city's employment agency. He was dismissed immediately.<sup>185</sup> What took place in the aftermath remains unclear and his fate is unknown. Importantly, however, the incident testifies to the degree of seriousness with which local authorities took racial politics in their quest to declare their city '*judenfrei*.' All persons of any Jewish lineage were to be identified, registered, classified and then subjected to discrimination based on their racial classification.

Once deportations commenced in April 1942, all Jews in '*Mischehen*' and '*Mischlinge*' constantly lived in the shadow of 'resettlement to the east.' Regardless of the level of persecution to which they had been subjected, there remained the constant fear that exemptions granted would be revoked. Whilst the exact number of individuals affected by the Nuremberg Laws and their applications in Magdeburg has not been established, those of mixed marriage or lineage who were directly affiliated to the Jewish community were subjected to the full extent of persecutions reserved for all Jews. However, there were no recorded cases whereby such individuals were included in the mass deportations. Of the 185 Jews remaining in Magdeburg in July 1944, the vast majority were Jews living in mixed marriages and their children. Of this figure, the majority

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<sup>184</sup> Betr.: Juden Rudolf Israel August, geb. 22.11.98 Berlin, wohnhaft Magdeburg, Baenschstr. 5, 5. August – 2. September 1944, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 399–400.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

were to lose their lives in the remaining months of the war during the aerial bombardment of the city by the Allies.

### **Forced Labour and Deportations**

The forced labour deployment of Jews in Magdeburg commenced as early as the winter of 1939–1940. Jews were involved in bridge construction on the River Elbe, in the production of goods in war-related industries and in garbage removal. Both men and women were conscripted. Forced labour also continued beyond the aerial destruction of the city by Allied bombers on 16 January 1945. With the commencement of the mass deportation of Jews in April 1942, possessing a position as an ‘essential worker’ in a war-related enterprise delayed and sometimes even assisted in evading ‘resettlement to the east.’ Between 14 April 1942 and 11 January 1944, a minimum of three deportations from Magdeburg to the east and four to Theresienstadt took place.<sup>186</sup> A considerable number of Jews, originally from Magdeburg, who had relocated to other communities were also deported. With the occurrence of the first deportation, the community was shocked, but unsure as to what ‘resettlement’ involved and what it actually meant. Fears were allayed when correspondence was received in Magdeburg from deportees. However, with successive deportations and no correspondence, by the time the last deportation took place some Jews attempted, unsuccessfully, to flee. Deportees were notified in advance and the deportations were well organised and orchestrated without violent round-ups. The third and final phase of the destruction process of the Jewish community had commenced. This phase marked

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<sup>186</sup> Both archival sources and oral history confirm this figure of a total of seven mass deportations from Magdeburg.

the physical destruction of the Jews and the disappearance of not only their community but the Jews themselves from the landscape of the city they had so patriotically called home.

With the outbreak of war and a severe labour shortage, a demand for Jewish labour became apparent.<sup>187</sup> It is not known exactly when the labour deployment of Jews occurred, however, it is most likely that it had commenced by the winter of 1939–1940. Prior to Otto Herrmann relocating to Potsdam from Magdeburg at the end of August 1940,<sup>188</sup> he had been forced to work as a labourer on a bridge being constructed on the River Elbe. A non-Jewish girlhood friend of Herrmann's daughter, who visited the Herrmanns with food parcels from her mother, recalled seeing Herrmann working in the middle of winter in freezing conditions. Without protective clothing Herrmann laboured in the River Elbe, with water right up to his waist.<sup>189</sup> The Klemm brothers also recalled a bridge under construction, which was never completed. Located in the suburb of Werder, they knew of its existence because they used its thick pylons as a shelter during air raids in 1945.<sup>190</sup>

In May 1940 in Berlin, all Jewish men aged between eighteen and fifty-five and all Jewish women aged between eighteen and fifty had to register with the Jewish community for forced labour. Forced labour, itself, commenced in Magdeburg either after its introduction in Berlin or shortly thereafter. Furthermore, in March 1941, all Jews in the *Reich* between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five were formally drafted into forced labour. In the initial years of forced

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<sup>187</sup> Konrad Kwiet, "Forced Labour of German Jews in Nazi Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXVI, 1991, pp. 389–410 and Wolf Gruner, "Poverty and Persecution: The Reichsvereinigung, the Jewish Population and Anti-Jewish Policy in the Nazi State, 1939–1945," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XXVII, 1999, pp. 23–60.

<sup>188</sup> Private correspondence from Otto Herrmann, 25 November 1940, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

<sup>189</sup> Austinat, op. cit., 29 January 2001.

<sup>190</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

labour in the city the majority of Jews, both male and female, were involved in war-related industry. One of Joachim Freiberg's sons recalled his father's work:

He was obliged to work in one of the factories, which in the main made tarpaulins, tents and so on for the Africa army. That factory later established a branch in the Warsaw ghetto – it was called 'Röhricht'. The factory might have been close because on the weekend they used to send stuff home. With the tarpaulins, the ropes had to be treated and we would be sitting at home doing this.<sup>191</sup>

Joachim Freiberg worked as a forced labourer at 'Röhricht & Company' from 1941 until 1942.<sup>192</sup> Freiberg's sister, Lilli, was also employed by the same company until her deportation in February 1943.<sup>193</sup> Freiberg's youngest son also recalled his father's work and that his father was so valued by his employer that when he was ordered to work elsewhere, his employer intervened.<sup>194</sup>

Between April and July 1942, Freiberg attended to the needs of the 'Judenschule,' in the wake of the deportation of all of its staff. When the school was officially dissolved at the end of June 1942, he was ordered to work as a garbage collector for the company 'Franz Kühne' in a Jewish work detail. Otto Horst Karliner and his son Werner were also a part of this work detail,<sup>195</sup> as were the brothers Bernhard and Leo Augenreich.<sup>196</sup> Karliner had worked as the caretaker at the Jewish cemetery until the dissolution of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* in June 1943. When this occurred he was inducted into the Jewish labour detail.

One of Freiberg's sons recalled the exact details of this unpleasant work:

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<sup>191</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>192</sup> Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM, op. cit.

<sup>193</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

<sup>194</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>195</sup> Lebenslauf des Vorsitzenden der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto Horst Karliner, genannt Ismar Karliner, 22. Januar 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>196</sup> Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM, op. cit.

He had to climb down a ladder two or three metres into these dugouts, shovel the rubbish into a basket, which had a rope attached and return up the ladder to a horse-drawn wagon. He and three other Jewish fellows were doing this. That was the second job.<sup>197</sup>

Other than the details of his father's long and arduous working day, Freiberg's son also recalled the kindness of his father's non-Jewish employer:

He was mainly working in Cracau<sup>198</sup> and their shift was from very early in the morning until the afternoon. So, in the summer days M. and I used to go and visit him at work and then when they finished work we used to all go down to the Elbe and have a swim. But this Kühne was actually a farmer. I'm not sure where his farm was. But it was pretty close to Magdeburg and he used his horse-drawn wagons on his farm and as a sideline he picked up the rubbish on contract. But every day he had food for us. And there was always extra for us to take home. That was one of the reasons we went to see Dad because we got something to eat. That's why after the war we saw Kühne quite frequently to make sure he was not being hassled.<sup>199</sup>

Jews deemed 'non-essential' to the war effort were deported first. Unlike the majority of Jews who had all been deported by March 1943, Joachim Freiberg was still working for Franz Kühne when Magdeburg suffered its near complete destruction in January 1945. He continued in this position until liberation. Of the documented cases of forced labourers, the only ones to remain in Magdeburg after the last mass deportation were those Jews in mixed marriages and '*Mischlinge*.'

In the last phase of the war, the situation of labour reached crisis point and, in the winter of 1944–1945, most people defined by the Nuremberg Laws as 'first-degree *Mischlinge*,' Jews married to 'Aryans,' and even 'Aryan men married to Jewish women were also inducted into forced labour.'<sup>200</sup> Those not inducted into forced labour faced deportation at any time.

On 4 November 1941, the provincial government in Magdeburg received a nationally-despatched memorandum from the *Reich* Minister for Finance detailing

<sup>197</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>198</sup> Cracau is a south-eastern suburb of Magdeburg.

<sup>199</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

<sup>200</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., p. 174.

the exact procedures to be followed with the forthcoming deportation of its Jews.<sup>201</sup> Deportations had already commenced in other major centres. Jews who were not employed in industries essential to the war effort were to be deported in the forthcoming months to a city in the eastern region of the *Reich*. The possessions and property of all deportees were to be confiscated by the *Reich*. Deportees were permitted to take luggage of no more than fifty kilograms per person in addition to RM 100. All deportations were administered and executed by the local Gestapo, which also attended to the registration of all goods.<sup>202</sup> In Magdeburg, one of those officers actively involved in the deportations, and later imprisoned for his war crimes whilst in Magdeburg, was *SS-Untersturmführer* Errlich.<sup>203</sup>

Strict and comprehensive guidelines for the registration and valuation of the confiscated possessions were administered. This included all household goods, works of art, objects made of precious metals, stamp collections and stocks and shares. Vacated apartments and rooms were returned to the city's administration.<sup>204</sup> In the ensuing months between November 1941 and April 1942 relevant bureaucracies in the city prepared themselves for their administrative tasks ahead.

Final arrangements for the first deportation from Magdeburg were completed on 23 March 1942.<sup>205</sup> 465 Jews from the administrative district of Magdeburg, including 153 Jews from the city itself, were to be deported to the

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<sup>201</sup> Betr.: Abschiebung von Juden, 4. November 1941, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 8–11.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>203</sup> Betr.: SS-Untersturmführer Errlich, 16. September – 20. Oktober 1949, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 66, CJA, pp. 67–72.

<sup>204</sup> Betr.: Abschiebung von Juden, 4. November 1941, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 8–11.

<sup>205</sup> Betrifft: Evakuierung von Juden, 23. März 1942, *ibid.*, p. 16.

*Generalgouvernement*.<sup>206</sup> All Jews were to complete a signed declaration attesting to goods surrendered and keys to their former ‘Jew apartments’ or ‘*Judenwohnungen*’ were to be surrendered and receipts signed attesting to such. All Jews would automatically forfeit any claim to their properties in Germany, once they had entered the territory of the *Generalgouvernement* in occupied Poland.<sup>207</sup>

With this first deportation, Jewish community leaders were ordered to draw up the list of deportees, which added to the emotional burden of the situation:

At some early stages the lists were unfortunately made up by the Jewish congregation. It was a terrible job. The Gestapo said that so many will be going and you supply the list. Whether they were the final arbiters or not, I don’t know. But, I remember that Dad, who wasn’t working for them, but assisting them, was very upset about this and obviously didn’t want anything to do with it. I think, obviously, that single people went first, hence my aunt, who was a spinster. The other criteria was what kind of occupation people were doing.<sup>208</sup>

Although the community was suspicious, the general feeling was that ‘resettlement’ meant exactly that. According to the information Jews received, they were being ‘resettled’ to various eastern areas. One interviewee attested: ‘I’m sure at the beginning that “resettlement” was accepted as the truth.’<sup>209</sup> We had no knowledge that deportation meant probable death.’<sup>210</sup>

One of Joachim Freiberg’s sons recalled that his aunt had been nominated for the first deportation, but because other people volunteered, she was taken off the list. In order to avoid splitting up families, those family members not nominated for deportation volunteered, in order to be with their loved ones. This was a

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<sup>206</sup> Betrifft: Evakuierung von Juden, 23. März 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 15–16.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

<sup>209</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

normal practice and as many as between twelve and fifteen people ‘exchanged places.’<sup>211</sup> Those nominated were informed in writing and this was personally delivered early in the morning by the Gestapo.<sup>212</sup> Interviewees recalled that later on ‘the early morning door-knock’ was dreaded in the knowledge that it only brought with it even more misery. The same son recalled the process from notification to actual deportation:

People don’t believe this, but people used to get a notice that they should be ready in four weeks and that they could take so much luggage with them and they just disappeared. They weren’t rounded up. There was some sort of a hall, a dance hall; it was called ‘*Freundschaft*’ [‘Friendship’], funnily enough. It was a hall for hire for weddings and things like that.<sup>213</sup>

On 14 April 1942, in the first deportation, 153 Jews from Magdeburg were deported to the *Generalgouvernement*.<sup>214</sup> The destination of this first deportation was the Warsaw ghetto. The arrival and registration of a group of the deportees were recorded on film,<sup>215</sup> including that of the thirty-eighty-year-old Margarete Katz née Waldbaum.<sup>216</sup> Members of this group corresponded with relatives and friends back in Magdeburg. The addresses of all of the deportees in Warsaw were various building numbers in *Gartenstraße*. This correspondence calmed some fears in Magdeburg as they knew that their relatives and friends had arrived and welcomed their news. However, it did not take long before correspondence began to cease.

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<sup>211</sup> Telephone interview with M. F., Sydney, 18 February 2002.

<sup>212</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>213</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>214</sup> Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>215</sup> Film footage of the arrival of a group of the Jews from this first deportation from Magdeburg and their registration at the Warsaw Ghetto Reception Camp is located in the “Warsaw Ghetto Compilation”, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Number 5501, YVA and at: [http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/Katz/katz\\_first.htm](http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/Katz/katz_first.htm).

<sup>216</sup> Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 13.

By 23 April 1942, the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg had received all of the associated files concerning both the Jews deported and the arrangements for the confiscation of their remaining property.<sup>217</sup> Throughout the course of the remaining weeks in April, further guidelines on the processes and procedures for confiscation were despatched to Magdeburg,<sup>218</sup> including that of pensions and superannuation policies.<sup>219</sup> Examples and case studies were provided for the bureaucrats to assist them. On 8–9 June 1942, a senior civil servant from Magdeburg, Dr Schillst, attended a two-day seminar in Berlin organised by the *Reich* Ministry of Finance. The two days were spent exchanging experiences and information on the processes of confiscating property owned by deported Jews, particularly real estate.<sup>220</sup> In June 1942, owing to a shortage of housing in the city and complaints from the mayor's office, *Reich* civil servants in Magdeburg were reminded that 'Aryan' families with large numbers of children had preference in being allocated vacated '*Judenwohnungen*.'<sup>221</sup>

The second deportation of an unknown number of Jews from the city occurred on 11 July 1942.<sup>222</sup> Unlike the previous group who were technically 'deported' this group was 'resettled,' as they were sent to an unknown eastern ghetto within

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<sup>217</sup> Betr.: Evakuierung von Juden, 23. April 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>218</sup> Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich verfallenen oder zu Gunsten des Reichs eingezogenen Vermögens, Regelung der Zuständigkeit, 25. April 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 15, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

<sup>219</sup> Betr.: Behandlung der Ruhegehaltsansprüche abgeschobener Juden, 29. April 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>220</sup> Bericht über die Dienstreise am 8. und 9.6.1942 nach Berlin zum Oberfinanzpräsidenten Berlin-Brandenburg und Reichsfinanzministerium, 14. Juni 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 51–54.

<sup>221</sup> Betrifft: Wohnungsfürsorge; hier: Besetzung der Judenwohnungen in reichseigenen, ehemals jüdischen Grundstücken, 18. Juni 1942, *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>222</sup> Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, *ibid.*, p. 101. It is most likely that the destination of this group of deportees was the Lodz/Litzmannstadt Ghetto in the annexed Warthegau.

the now enlarged *Reich*. Unlike the first group who were technically ‘deported’ and not ‘resettled’,<sup>223</sup> this group of deportees did not leave German territory. Thus the authorities declared them enemies of the state in order to confiscate their remaining property in Germany, once ‘resettlement’ had taken place. The third category under which property of deported Jews was confiscated was that of those Jews who had lost their German citizenship.<sup>224</sup> Subsequently, all property owned by Jews was appropriated by the *Reich* under one of the three categories. On 3 August 1942, the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg had received all of the associated files on the Jews deported, including the signed receipts for the keys to their former apartments, and confirmation that they had been deported to the east.<sup>225</sup>

In the wake of the second mass deportation, the anxiety, fear and suspicion of Jews in the city increased when no correspondence from the deportees was received, as recalled by one interviewee:

When people didn’t write and there was no feedback whatsoever, then I think it would only have been a matter of a few months before people started to wonder. I know my parents were talking about some dreadful things happening and were really upset about it. But they deliberately excluded the children from this discussion. So we had very little inkling. This threat of deportation was always over us too. I remember talking to M. about this a few times as a child. You know what kids are like. It might be an interesting change, that sort of attitude. You see we didn’t know what was at the end. I

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<sup>223</sup> Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 101. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘I ... die am 14. April 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg in das Generalgouvernement (Ausland) abgeschobenen Juden; IV ... die am 11. Juli 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg umgesiedelten Juden (in Inland verblieben).

<sup>224</sup> Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, *ibid.*, p. 101. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘I ... die am 14. April 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg in das Generalgouvernement (Ausland) abgeschobenen Juden; IV ... die am 11. Juli 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg umgesiedelten Juden (in Inland verblieben).

<sup>225</sup> Betr.: Abschiebung von Juden, 3. August 1942, *ibid.*, p. 76.

remember when I made the suggestion that it might be an adventure [to be deported], he said: “No, I don’t think that it would be that good.” I think being two years older he might have had more of an idea than I had.<sup>226</sup>

With this doubt in the minds of all Jews, parents only ever discussed the subject in hushed tones and attempted to exclude children from any such discussion.<sup>227</sup> The situation with the ongoing deportations in 1942, coupled with the resulting serious reduction in the community’s numbers, exacerbated the already desperate and despairing lives of those remaining Jews. However, as interviewees recalled, there was nothing that they could do to alter anything. Life continued in its altered form and Jews, yet again, attempted to adjust.

With the deportation of Jews and the evacuation of entire apartment buildings, measures followed governing the refurbishment of such buildings and their leasing arrangements. In Magdeburg in August 1942, orders from the *Reich* Minister for Finance were issued that no beautification or repairs of former ‘*Judenwohnungen*’ were to be carried out. However, medical officers would organise the disinfection of such premises and investigate whether there were any health-threatening situations in apartments which would require repairs for ‘Aryan’ habitation.<sup>228</sup> An example of this was the ‘*Judenhaus*’ located at *Große Mühlenstraße* 11/12. With the deportation of all of its inhabitants by August 1942, including the owner of the building, the widow Rosa Weinberg née Kohane, the Ministry of Finance for the province of Saxony commenced this process in October 1942.<sup>229</sup> For this and other former ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ it also marked the legal

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<sup>226</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Instandsetzung von Judenwohnungen in reichseigenen, ehemals jüdischen Grundstücken, 1. August 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>229</sup> Betrifft: Judengrundstück in Magdeburg, Große Mühlenstraße 11/12, 29. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 3296, Band 2, LHASA MD, p. 93.

commencement of transferring title deeds and often led to disputes as to which authority would appropriate the real estate. City, provincial and *Reich* governmental bodies competed for booty.

By the time the deportation of the aged and war veterans to Theresienstadt commenced in November 1942, deportation had become a component of daily life. In spite of growing suspicions and uncertainty, Jews retained hope. However, a certain fatalistic inevitability evolved, as expressed in the following recollection:

Terezin was a completely separate situation. Terezin – they only sent people over sixty-five and some survived – not only over sixty-five, but also people who had been injured in the First World War. Everybody else went east. Terezin was the exception. In this sort of situation people always hope. I think they also understood that they weren't going to come back. My parents did discuss this.<sup>230</sup>

Three mass deportations occurred from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt in 1942. The first deportation of seventy-three Jews left on 18 November 1942.<sup>231</sup> It was followed by a second deportation of seventy-six Jews on 25 November 1942<sup>232</sup> and a third deportation of seventy Jews on 2 December 1942.<sup>233</sup> The same procedure of appropriating vacated '*Judenhäuser*' ensued. With the deportation of Frieda Katzmann and the remaining inhabitants of her property at *Westendstraße* 9, the process began. The same applied to Pauline Lippmann when she and the remaining residents of her property at *Schöninger Straße* 27a were deported,<sup>234</sup> as

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<sup>230</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>231</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/1, 18 November 1942, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., pp. 45–48. All cited statistics for all four deportations to Theresienstadt are also to be found in Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., pp. 762–766.

<sup>232</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/2, 25 November 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 50–53.

<sup>233</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/3, 2 December 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 55–58.

<sup>234</sup> Betrifft: Judengrundstücke in Magdeburg, Westendstraße Nr. 9 und Schöninger Straße Nr. 27a, 4. Februar – 25. November 1943, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 3296, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 166–189.

it did to Aron Litmanowitz, who owned and lived at the ‘*Judenhaus*’ at *Lübecker Straße* 30a.<sup>235</sup> In February 1943, the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg received a memorandum from its counterpart in Berlin indicating that returning soldiers should be given every opportunity of purchasing such real estate.<sup>236</sup>

By the time the last mass deportation (to the east) was organised for February 1943, doubts about what was taking place were enough for a handful of Jews in Magdeburg to attempt escape. Evidence suggests that almost all fugitives were caught. This recollection of the situation of the Natowitz family provides such an example:

Natowitz – he is one who tried to escape. But they got caught at the Swiss border. We were told after the war that somebody came to the *Gemeinde* and said that he had met them at five o’clock in the morning and took them to the railway station and bought them tickets – they couldn’t buy the tickets themselves [as Jews] – and they went to somewhere near the Swiss border, but they got caught.<sup>237</sup>

All of the preceding deportations both to the east and to Theresienstadt had been direct routes. The mass deportation in February 1943 departed Magdeburg sometime around 19–20 February<sup>238</sup> and conveyed deportees to Berlin. Lilli Freiberg, sister of Joachim Freiberg, was deported in this group, as recalled by her nephew:

We were already in *Brandenburger Straße* when she was deported. She was living in the same building. Our reaction? We were all very upset about it! But that was that. We couldn’t go to the station, because all deportations took place from that hall. People went there and they were sent away the next day. There were no roundups, people just went there.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Betrifft: Judengrundstück in Magdeburg, Lübecker Straße 30a , 28. Januar – 4. Februar 1944, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 3296, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 228–231.

<sup>236</sup> Einstellung des Verkaufs von Grundbesitz aus eingezogenem und verfallenem Vermögen, 16. Februar – 27. Februar 1943, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>237</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. The interviewee recalled this owing to his birthday being at this time.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

On 26 February 1943, at least forty-six Jews from Magdeburg were deported directly from Berlin to Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>240</sup> The Natowitz family, consisting of thirty-seven-year-old Leopold and his three daughters, Mia, Doris and Miriam, aged eight, five and two years old respectively, missed this final mass deportation owing to their attempted escape. Once apprehended, they were returned to Magdeburg, transported to Berlin, and on 2 March 1943, they were deported directly to Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>241</sup>

The last mass deportation and the fourth to Theresienstadt left Magdeburg on 11 January 1944, consisting of sixteen Jews.<sup>242</sup> During the entire deportation period an unknown number of Jews from Magdeburg were also deported or imprisoned individually, such as young Rita Vogelhut. This ten-year-old girl was transported from Magdeburg to Berlin and from there deported to Theresienstadt on 29 June 1943. She remained there until 18 May 1944, when she was deported on to Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>243</sup> In addition, 184 Jews born in Magdeburg, whose domicile was elsewhere, were also deported. Of this figure, 153 of them lived in Berlin up until their deportations.<sup>244</sup> Their journeys ended in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Kovno, Lodz, Majdanek, Minsk, Riga, Theresienstadt and Trawniki.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12 March 2001, ASGM, pp. 13–19.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 17. As all of the deportees were deported directly from Berlin, their details are also to be found in Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit.

<sup>242</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/4, 11 January 1944, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>243</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>244</sup> Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12. März 2001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 1–19.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

By July 1944 the overwhelming majority of Magdeburg's Jews had been deported and the city was almost '*judenfrei*.' Most of the 185 remaining Jews were either in mixed marriages, children of such marriages or were protected as 'first-degree *Mischlinge*.' Rumours continued steadily that the Gestapo would round up and deport anyone to bring about the 'Final Solution.' A few Jews fled to the countryside, attempting to find a hiding-place. Others remained in the city and experienced its aerial bombardment as Hitler's *Reich* entered its final months. The remaining Jews felt that their lives would end either by deportation or bombardment. Nevertheless, they hoped they would still be liberated by the advancing Allied troops. Not all celebrated liberation in April 1945. By this stage, the majority of the remaining Jews had fallen victim to bombardment. When the Allied troops entered the city they found not more than twenty Jews alive.

### **The Destruction and Dispersion of a German-Jewish Community**

With the advance of the Allies and the aerial bombardment of the city, the threat of being killed during an air raid was only equalled by the threat of deportation. Sensing the demise of the *Reich* and acting in the knowledge that they had nothing to lose, Jews took more risks in protecting themselves and attempting to ascertain the war's progress. Some Jews stopped wearing the yellow star and a number regularly sought refuge from bombardment in public air-raid shelters forbidden to Jews. It was at this time that Jews who had previously gone in to hiding or had 'disappeared,' re-emerged and met accidentally, some for the first time in years. In the final months of the war, the majority of Magdeburg's remaining Jews were killed during air raids. By the time the city was liberated in April 1945, the Nazis had achieved success in their quest to erase any form of Jewish community from

the city. At that time, of the original community, there remained approximately twenty Jews.<sup>246</sup>

With the changing fortunes of the war, the remaining Jews followed its progress with keen attention, as recalled here:

We weren't allowed or were unable to get newspapers. Everyone was very interested in what was going on. And two or three streets away were the offices of the *Völkischer Beobachter* [National Observer] and they displayed the paper every day in glass windows. I used to go over with my jacket tucked around [to cover my yellow star] and read all the headlines and then report back. That was my job every day. So, I was fully aware of what was going on. It was pretty obvious from about the end of 1943 or in the second half of 1943 that the war was going to go bad. So, with each new defeat we were getting slightly more elated. But on the other hand we were pretty frightened of the bombing. It was hard to work out who was going to get us first – the bombs or the Nazis. It's funny, but it wasn't funny at the time. It was the truth. We were just as likely to get killed in an air raid as getting killed by the Nazis.<sup>247</sup>

However, their fear of being in public was real, and Jews generally avoided being outdoors altogether, even during the day. The general exceptions were those involved in forced labour, those involved in the task of procuring food and unaccompanied children. Curfews were still in place for all Jews of an evening.

For those Jews who did not take flight to the countryside during the air raids, there was no other option but to risk taking shelter in public air-raid shelters. With the absence of shelters in the remaining '*Judenhäuser*,' Jews were faced with little alternative than to risk detection and take refuge:

When we lived in the *Westendstraße*, there was no air-raid shelter there at all. So when the air raid was about to happen we would have to go to a public shelter and this was a time when Dad didn't wear a Star of David either. It was too risky. We just went there and it became a nightly thing. And we got to know the other people there and talk to each other. I think a lot of them knew who we were, but they didn't say anything.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>247</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

This also led to Jews meeting other Jews who had been in hiding. An example of this was when Joachim Freiberg recognised his friend Oscar Eisenstedt:

In the shelter there was this guy wearing dark blue glasses and he was always hanging onto his wife and everybody assumed that he was blind. And my father kept looking at him and he kept looking at my father; although you couldn't tell because of the glasses. And one day they bumped into each other and he was very frightened and they realised that they knew each other quite well – it was Eisenstedt. All that time his wife had kept him hidden.<sup>249</sup>

Shelter was also taken at other venues, including the bombed-out Saint Catherine's Church on *Breiter Weg*.<sup>250</sup> However, the majority of the remaining Jews were to perish during such air raids. One such example was that of the family of Walter Heinemann. During an air raid, Heinemann, together with his non-Jewish wife and one of his sons, Rolf, was killed. His surviving son, Gerd, witnessed liberation and eventually emigrated to Australia.<sup>251</sup>

With the realisation that the fortunes of the war had turned against the Germans, some Jewish children simply stopped wearing the yellow star. The exception to this rule occurred when refuge was sought in public air-raid shelters and Jews had no option but to remove the star, as Jews were prohibited from entry. Such risks were not undertaken by adults, indicating the level of fear still extant even in the last months of the *Reich*.<sup>252</sup> In the final months before liberation, the few Jews remaining did not feel the same level of fear, as the German population was confronted with defeat, as recalled here:

By this time we were getting around a bit more than earlier, because it was less likely that anybody was going to say anything. Most of the Germans knew they were going to lose the war. There were certain fanatics around who still believed way into 1945 that something would happen, but they were very few in numbers. The vast majority knew they were going to cop it. But they kept going. I don't know why they kept going; it's not for me to make an analysis

<sup>249</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

<sup>250</sup> Telephone interview, name withheld on request (recorded), Sydney, 26 April 2001.

<sup>251</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>252</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

of that. They did their best. They worked hard. They certainly no longer showed this strong antisemitism.<sup>253</sup>

By this stage, however, there were very few Jews in the city to experience this, as the organised Jewish community itself had long been erased from the landscape of the city. The exact total number of Jews in Magdeburg at that point in time cannot be calculated.

By May 1939, approximately 726 Jews were living in Magdeburg.<sup>254</sup> When this figure is subtracted from the original June 1933 census statistic of 1,973 Jews,<sup>255</sup> it indicates a population difference of 1,247 persons. The vast majority of this figure emigrated, as did a further unknown figure up until emigration ceased. Emigration destinations included other European countries, Palestine, the British Empire and its dominions, North and South America, Asia and Africa. Of those who emigrated to European countries, it remains unknown how many perished owing to the German occupation of some of those countries and the expansion of the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question.'

Deportation figures for the population which remained in Magdeburg indicate the following statistics:

1. 14 April 1942 – 153 Jews deported to Warsaw<sup>256</sup>
2. 11 July 1942 – unknown number of Jews deported to the annexed region in the east<sup>257</sup>
3. 18 November 1942 – 73 Jews deported to Theresienstadt<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

<sup>254</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>255</sup> Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933, Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich*, Bestand R 3102, BAB, op. cit., pp. 15–33.

<sup>256</sup> Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

4. 25 November 1942 – 76 Jews deported to Theresienstadt<sup>259</sup>
5. 2 December 1942 – 70 Jews deported to Theresienstadt<sup>260</sup>
6. 26 February 1943 – 46 Jews deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau<sup>261</sup>
7. 2 March 1943 – 4 Jews deported individually to Auschwitz-Birkenau<sup>262</sup>
8. 29 June 1943 – 1 Jew deported individually to Theresienstadt<sup>263</sup> and
9. 11 January 1944 – 16 Jews deported to Theresienstadt.<sup>264</sup>

These figures include only two documented cases of individual deportations, but it can be assumed that others took place. Excluding the second deportation, of which the number of Jews remains unknown, the total figure of deportees computes to 423 Jews. It is most probable that the number of Jews on the second deportation either matched or was greater than the first deportation, which consisted of 153 Jews. If approximately the same figure is used for calculating the number of Jews on the second deportation, the total number of Jews whose domicile was Magdeburg at the time of deportation computes to a figure of close to 580 Jews. When this figure is added to the estimated number of 185 Jews remaining in Magdeburg in July 1944,<sup>265</sup> the total figure reached is approximately 765 Jews.

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<sup>258</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/1, 18 November 1942, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., pp. 45–48.

<sup>259</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/2, 25 November 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 50–53.

<sup>260</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/3, 2 December 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 55–58.

<sup>261</sup> Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12. März 2001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 13–19.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. As all of the deportees were deported directly from Berlin their details are also to be found in Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit.

<sup>263</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>264</sup> List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/4, 11 January 1944, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>265</sup> The majority of this figure were Jews in mixed marriages and children of such marriages. Clearly, those individuals in Magdeburg classified as being in

This approximate total figure is close to the statistic of 726 Jews in the city in May 1939.

Deportation figures for Jews who were born in Magdeburg, but whose domicile was elsewhere at their time of deportation, amounted to 184 Jews.<sup>266</sup> The figures for deportees who were not born in Magdeburg but left the city have not been established. In approximate terms, a minimum of some 800 Jews who had a connection with the city were deported and the vast majority perished.<sup>267</sup>

Very few Jews in Magdeburg witnessed liberation with the arrival of the Americans in April 1945. Of the remaining group, the majority had been killed during air raids. One interviewee recalled this period:

There were a few Jewish *Magdeburger* who returned, but not many. There were people who had hidden or so. There were a lot of people who claimed they were Jews and weren't. I don't think there were more than between fifteen or eighteen, maximum twenty Jews. Of this perhaps seven odd were children.<sup>268</sup>

Very few Jews from Magdeburg survived deportation. There were no documented cases of survival of the deportees to the ghettos in the east. Of the total 235

'Mischehen,' or as 'Geltungsjuden' and 'Mischlinge' possessed a far greater chance of survival.

<sup>266</sup> Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12. März 2001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 1–19.

<sup>267</sup> Statistics for the number of Jews from Magdeburg who perished in the *Shoah* have been estimated to be as high as 1,521. See Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189. The first statistic recorded was in 1948 and cited approximately 1,300 Jews. See correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, Berlin detailing the historical development of the Jewish community of Magdeburg and reporting on the post-war situation and future developmental aspirations of the community, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 211. I would argue that both statistics are inaccurate. Documentation supporting such figures has not been located. I would further argue that the figures have been based on the number of Jews who left Magdeburg, that is, both those who relocated elsewhere in Germany and those who emigrated, and not on documented census and deportation statistics. It is most likely that both cited figures have factored in an estimated mortality rate of emigrating Jews in order to reach such total figures.

<sup>268</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

deportees to Theresienstadt, eighteen Jews survived.<sup>269</sup> Two of these survivors, seventy-year-old Heinrich Berg and seventy-two-year-old Josef Sondheimer,<sup>270</sup> returned to Magdeburg in 1945 after their liberation from the camp.<sup>271</sup> Of the 217 who perished, 172 died in Theresienstadt and the remaining forty-five were deported at various intervals on to Auschwitz-Birkenau and perished there.<sup>272</sup> The only other documented survivor to return to Magdeburg after liberation was the thirty-two-year-old civil engineer, Gabriel Weinberger,<sup>273</sup> who was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 26 February 1943.<sup>274</sup> Gravely ill, he was hospitalised in a sanatorium in Thuringia in 1945, following his liberation and return to Magdeburg.<sup>275</sup>

The small number of Jews who witnessed liberation in Magdeburg were simultaneously confronted with the reality of the annihilation and dispersion of their loved ones and friends, coupled with the absence of the community they had known and loved. In their daily lives they often faced their former persecutors. They suffered from their own ill-health and much uncertainty with the arrival of the Soviet forces. All wished to re-establish 'normal' lives, but generally found it too painful to do so in a land which now symbolised unimaginable suffering. Few wished to remain in the city they had once proudly called home. The

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<sup>269</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 766. The statistics for those survivors are as follows. The number of survivors is listed against the date of deportation from Magdeburg: 18.11.1942 – 04; 25.11.1942 – 03; 02.12.1942 – 01; and 11.01.1944 – 10.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

<sup>272</sup> Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., pp. 762-766. The statistics for those deported on to Auschwitz-Birkenau are as follows: 29.01.1943 – 04; 18.12.1943 – 08; 16.05.1944 – 27; 29.09.1944 – 01; 09.10.1944 – 03; 19.10.1944 – 01; and 28.10.1944 – 01.

<sup>273</sup> Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

<sup>274</sup> Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., p. 1325.

<sup>275</sup> Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

approximately one thousand years of Jewish history in Magdeburg, as they had once known it, had ended. Those who managed to reach new and safe shores prior to September 1939 and the majority of the remnant which survived in the city now called either the emerging state of Israel or the Jewish diaspora their new *Heimat*. For many, Magdeburg came to symbolise destruction, dispersion and gaping wounds which would not heal.



## Conclusion

On the eve of the Nazi accession to power in 1933, the Jewish community of Magdeburg and its organisational bodies continued to operate as efficiently and as fully as they had always done. As a German-Jewish community with approximately 1,000 years of history, it had experienced periods of profound civic, cultural and religious achievement, in addition to tragic periods of persecution, massacre and expulsion. From that fateful year of 1933, the community as a structure and its members experienced the most disastrous, and heretofore never experienced, persecutions, which ultimately led to catastrophe – the physical destruction of not only the community as a structure, but the annihilation of the Jews themselves. The events of September 1935, November 1938, September 1939 and April 1942 marked the graded process of persecution and destruction, commencing with exclusion and leading ultimately to extermination. By 1945 the Jews of Magdeburg ceased to exist as a physical component of the cityscape. Their rich legacy as one of the oldest Jewish communities in Germany has, largely, remained a memory of those Jews who survived those years and those in Magdeburg today who wish to reconnect to this important aspect of their city's history.

With the introduction of antisemitic legislation and measures in 1933, the rich and diverse cultural, economic, religious, social and welfare functions of the community adapted and continued to attempt to meet the associated requirements of the Jews. Owing to the well-organised nature of both the religious congregations and the large number of communal organisations, the cultural, economic, religious and social needs of Jews, which only continued to increase, were ably met. Whilst persecution did not alter the religious divisions between the

*Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the *Shtiblech*, they did co-operate on non-religious matters, such as the preparation and emigration of youth. When the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* became the only official religious congregation in early 1939, combined with the gravity of the circumstances, the communities were forced to merge. All communal organisational structures, with the exception of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, were dissolved by the end of 1939.

Jews sought to defend themselves as individuals, whilst simultaneously much of the defence of the community in an official capacity was conducted, albeit with limited success, by the local branch of the *Centralverein* (CV). Communal organisations and the CV occupied central positions in the community in attempting to secure Jewish existence and to represent and defend communal and individual interests. Roles and responsibilities continually increased, particularly after the advent of the Nuremberg Laws. The greatest organisational focus up until the middle of 1937 remained adapting to life under new and difficult circumstances. This is most obvious in the area of employment and retraining. However, the reality and the ramifications of the Nuremberg Laws caught up with the community from the middle of 1937, when a new area of priority became the rescue of children and youth. This marked the period where a number of members in the community began to lose hope and were re-assessing their situation. For a great number of them, one of the key issues that had brought them to this realisation was the perceived lack of a sustainable financial future, as economic strangulation had reduced them to impoverishment.

In the economic sector, the experiences of individuals were absolutely dependant upon which sector of the commercial landscape they occupied. 1933 was a tumultuous year of ongoing boycotts and fear in Magdeburg. However, in

spite of an effective and ongoing campaign of boycott and defamation, the majority of Jewish businesses adjusted. This was to change in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws, when the process of 'aryanisation,' particularly of lucrative and highly coveted businesses, was expedited. This period also marked the effective end of any non-Jewish patronage of Jewish businesses. By 1938, of the remaining 40% of the original businesses in existence in 1933, only a small minority were functioning with any serious business turnover. However, of all the sectors in the commercial landscape, they possessed slightly more autonomy over their financial future. The only other group that could be included in this category were self-employed merchants and business people. Despite the circumstances, all of these individuals still possessed some control over their livelihoods. The majority of Magdeburg's Jews fell into this category.

Salaried employees, professionals and civil servants faced the predicament of immediate collapse. In Magdeburg, given both the support and the efficiency of the Nazi Party, the city's authorities, the province's authorities and the associated professional associations, the situation for the majority of individuals became very grave from the early years. Almost all salaried employees in non-Jewish establishments were dismissed from their positions with the application of the Nuremberg Laws. For high-profile employees, the end of their careers came as early as 1933. The situation of professionals in law and medicine, in which Jews were very well represented, was no less serious than the predicament of salaried employees. The effects of the application of the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* in 1933 and the activities of the *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen* in Magdeburg effectively reduced the number of legal professionals in 1935 to less than one fifth of those in practice in 1933. The situation of medical professionals

was very similar. The city's administrative authorities played the greatest role in reducing the number of Jewish physicians, by refusing them access to clinics. The survival rate of their private practices fared better than their legal cohorts. In 1938, when all legal and medical professionals lost their licences to practise, Magdeburg still possessed just under 50% of its original medical professionals, who were in practice in 1933. Civil servants, including professionals in education, generally enjoyed a period of respite until the Nuremberg Laws. However, by the end of 1935 and at the very latest by early 1936, Jewish civil servants and non-Jewish civil servants with Jewish spouses had been forced into retirement.

With the flurry of legislation in 1938 the community descended into a state of impoverishment, which culminated in the registration of Jewish assets. By the time of the pogrom in November 1938, Jews still holding positions in Magdeburg were, almost without exception, professionals with an exclusively Jewish clientele or Jews working for Jewish employers. A minority were living off the proceeds of liquidated assets. The remainder were unemployed.

Economic strangulation and its effects were diverse. Non-salaried individuals possessed more autonomy over their lives, and 'aryanisations' were not expedited until after the Nuremberg Laws. Dismissals of salaried individuals commenced almost immediately in 1933 and the majority were unemployed and seeking alternatives by the end of 1935. However, financial impoverishment resulted in the same solution – emigration or relocation. In the wake of the *Reichskristallnacht*, the Jews of the city were finally completely removed from the local economy and the remaining businesses and property confiscated.

The implementation and application of Nazi policy toward the Jews affected them in all avenues of their lives. Daily life in the public domain became

increasingly onerous as the years progressed. The phases marking their situation and the reality of their exclusion mirror those previously elaborated on. For Jews, experiences in the public domain in 1933 were marked by shock, confusion, adjustment and a broad range of both supportive and antagonistic behaviours from non-Jews. For the period from 1933 up until the months preceding the Nuremberg Laws, Jewish citizens were either subjected to or witnessed a broad range of antisemitic behaviours in public ranging from the standard antisemitic signage, boycotts, the singing of defamatory songs to occasional street violence. However, during this phase the thrust of the antisemitic behaviours Jews experienced was largely confined to their terrorisation rather than their complete exclusion and isolation. From mid-1935, in the months leading up to the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws through to 1938, in addition to these behaviours, Jews were subjected publicly to exclusionary measures, designed to simultaneously vilify and segregate. Daily life continued, but Jews only ventured into the public domain when it was absolutely necessary, and even when doing so they attempted to remain inconspicuous. By the time of the pogrom of November 1938 their contact with non-Jews was minimal, as Jews were effectively dwelling in their own private island in the city.

Contact with non-Jews continued for a relatively short time after 1933. For the majority of Jews, such relationships had been terminated by the time the Nuremberg Laws were enacted. A minority of Jews maintained some social contact with non-Jewish friends and acquaintances beyond this period until the pogrom of November 1938; some even beyond it. The experiences of adults and children varied, with children generally experiencing greater abuse by their non-Jewish cohort. Particularly after September 1935 through until the pogrom of

November 1938, Jews confined themselves socially to the company of other Jews. This became yet another element of their isolation. The Nuremberg Laws effectively ended any possibility of social intercourse between the two groups. Contact with non-Jews became potentially fraught with serious danger and even with accusations of '*Rassenschande*,' a crime which featured in Magdeburg even before the Nuremberg Laws were promulgated.

The trials of Jews in Magdeburg for '*Rassenschande*' featured as early as June 1935. Owing to the co-operation of the Nazi Party (in *Gau* Magdeburg-Anhalt), the judiciary and the city council, Jews from all avenues of society were publicly humiliated, degraded and in the end incarcerated for this crime, the most notorious being that of the baptised Jew, Albert Hirschland. This crime, complete with its associated demonisation of Jews as racial polluters, exacerbated isolation and exclusion, whilst simultaneously adding further degradation to already difficult daily lives. Further to this, it created a real fear of contact with non-Jews, especially in business relations, as Jews were now unprotected by the law. Given the grotesque and sensationalistic media coverage of the alleged crimes, the impact in the public domain for Jews was immediate and unrelenting. By the very essence of the crime, '*Rassenschande*' could be viewed as perhaps the most humiliating and degrading of all crimes a Jew could be accused of at that time. The creation of this new crime also marked irrevocably the official nullification of what had been the success story of the much loved and proudly nurtured German-Jewish identity.

Regardless of how Jews felt about their identities, after September 1935 the decision had been made for them. As far as the Nazis were concerned there were only Jews in Germany and not Jewish Germans. With the full application of the

Nuremberg Laws, this separation enabled the complete public vilification of Jews, as the apparatus of the state sought to lay bare the 'criminality' of the Jews. In Magdeburg the combined efforts of the judiciary and the press proved highly successful, as evidenced in the '*Rassenschande*' trials. Their effective efforts in many respects symbolised the destruction of the German-Jewish symbiosis in the city. One of the outcomes of this amputation was the creation and nurturing of Jewish identities and Jewish space internal to the community. Jewish education became a priority. Owing to their exclusion in every sphere, by 1938 Jewish lives were centred on the home and the few remaining Jewish institutions still operational.

The situation of Jewish life in public was one of continued and unrelenting degradation, humiliation and ostracism. Jews were subjected to verbal, and sometimes physical, abuse. Social contact with non-Jews declined and with few exceptions had ended, after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws. The few contacts which did remain, however, proved of vital importance to survival. This isolation of Jews fostered a strong sense of Jewish community and a consolidation of Jewish social networks. Conversely, Jewish identities only strengthened. Jewish family life became central to emotional and physical survival and well-being, as eventually Jews were excluded from public space, and their safety when outdoors was always a serious concern. Jews attempted to live full and rich lives, to the best of their ability.

By June 1937 more than one third of the Jewish population had relocated or emigrated. The majority of Jews remained and attempted to navigate their difficult lives under increasingly hostile circumstances. The subject of emigration was one that featured widely in all Jewish households and within the community itself.

Those adults and families who had left Germany by the time of the *Reichskristallnacht* had either much foresight or, in the majority of cases, were forced to, owing to their impoverishment. Some youth in the community prepared themselves for unaccompanied emigration, intending to be re-united later with family members. A majority of the younger generation, having only known Nazism for a large portion of their lives, did not feel the same sense of nostalgia for a German homeland as the older generation still felt in 1938.

The decision to emigrate and the processes and dilemmas Jews faced were varied according to specific circumstances. In the case of Magdeburg, by November 1938 the remaining Jews may have at any time considered emigration, but definitely not acted on it. Both legal restrictions in Germany and abroad acted as great disincentives. Countries offering refuge to Jews were generally not desired destinations. Finally, Jews were reluctant to leave their homes and their country of birth. They felt strongly about their perception of nation, of Germany and of Germanness; their extended families; and their livelihoods. The only way separation of family could be perceived and endured, was if emigrants told themselves that it was only a temporary measure. The reason why emigration prior to the *Reichskristallnacht* could be perceived as a quandary was that the majority of Jews felt that they still had choices and still possessed hope. Both of these illusions were shattered on the evening and morning of 9–10 November 1938.

As no private Jewish day school had ever existed in the city, children attended local public schools, whilst also attending the *Religionsschule* or *Cheder* of the local synagogues. Consequently, Jewish pupils were confronted with their vulnerability from both teaching staff and non-Jewish pupils from the very

inception of the Nazi regime. Not surprisingly, Jewish youth became cognisant of their pariah status very early and some rejected the German component of their identities. The majority of Jewish pupils remained in public schools until the pogrom of November 1938, despite local governmental attempts to force them to attend segregated schooling from April 1938. However, a significant number of pupils did commence attending the segregated school in June 1938.

There is no one pattern characterising the situation of Jewish pupils in public schools. The situation varied from school to school; from teacher to teacher; and from non-Jewish pupil to non-Jewish pupil. Generally, Jewish children loathed attending school. Up until the middle of 1935 the emergence of antisemitism was relatively gradual. However, the deterioration from this point can be linked directly to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws and the ensuing antisemitism of the school authorities in Magdeburg, which sought segregation shortly thereafter. This culminated in the establishment of the '*Judenschule*' in June 1938. After the *Reichskristallnacht* and the wave of emigration, the remaining Jewish pupils did not return to their segregated school until June 1939, when it had been moved to a new location.

After 1933 Jewish youth groups became an increasingly important source of camaraderie, distraction and hope for young people. Despite the comparatively small number of children and youth in Magdeburg, the number and variety of youth groups represented both the organisational quality and diversity of the Jewish community. Both non-Zionist and Zionist groups operated. Apart from family life, youth groups became the focal point of their social and sporting lives, until all groups were dissolved or the members emigrated.

Whilst their ideologies on German and Jewish identities and the role of Palestine and Zionism for German Jewry were at variance, both strands of youth groups filled the social void for Jewish youth, when they were excluded from German society. Jewish youth were provided with a rich cultural, educational, social and sporting life. This led to the development of positive Jewish identities; to broad educational and sporting experiences; and for a majority it also led to an ambivalence toward their German identities and the country of their birth or even an eventual rejection of that identity and Germany. For a number of children and teenagers, the youth groups, together with a number of communal organisations, also prepared them for unaccompanied emigration.

Preparation of youth for unaccompanied emigration was organised by the Zionist movement, the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg* and by the families of the emigrants themselves. For the non-Zionist component of Magdeburg Jewry, it was not until after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws that the emigration of unaccompanied children and youth became a considered option. Unlike those at the *Hachsharah* centres, their preparation came somewhat later because their intention had never been to leave Germany. Whilst vocational preparation did occur, neither Jewish youth nor their families could prepare themselves for the pain of separation. The only means by which Jews were able to bear the reality was by clinging to the belief that it was only a temporary measure.

For those children and youth who departed prior to the pogrom of November 1938, departure was well organised and executed. This was generally not the case for those whose emigration had been organised prior to the pogrom, but delayed by its occurrence. When their departure did take place in the wake of the

*Reichskristallnacht*, it was enveloped by the chaos and panic that ensued. Regardless of their destination, the emigration of unaccompanied children and youth was characterised by both a sense of anticipation and relief. Nevertheless, once emigrants had physically left German soil these feelings were soon replaced by anxiety and a fear of the unknown. For both relatives left behind and the young emigrants, the emotional and psychological predicament they experienced pushed them to near breaking-point, if not to breaking-point itself. The large-scale attempt at the evacuation of Jewish children and youth from Magdeburg did not take place until after the calamitous events of the *Reichskristallnacht*.

Jewish children and youth displayed much resilience in their daily lives. Unlike their adult cohort, the majority of them were not nostalgic toward a German-Jewish identity, particularly as they experienced humiliation and rejection in their school life. In some respects, this made them adapt more readily to each situation they faced. The experiences of segregated schooling, compulsory for all Jewish children after the pogrom of November 1938, were positive and enriching, fostering a love of both Jewish identity and learning. Youth groups of all ideologies offered Jewish children and youth a social life, hope and also prepared a number of them for emigration. Beyond Jewish circles, Jewish children and youth faced only exclusion and rejection.

The ‘*Polenaktion*’ confronted the Jews of Magdeburg as it did all Jews throughout the *Reich*. Up until that time they had endured ongoing exclusion, humiliation and financial ruin. However, this event marked a transition point in Nazi policy. The physical expulsion of Jews was not something that the Jews of Germany expected, despite the difficulty of their circumstances. The chain of events that followed cemented this transition point in the history of Magdeburg

Jewry, and indeed for German Jewry. The prelude of the '*Polenaktion*' became the spark that ignited events that led directly to the *Reichskristallnacht*, an act of unprecedented violence.

The execution of the pogrom in Magdeburg occurred with the same uniformity as it did across the *Reich*. This included the looting and destruction of the interior of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, attacks on businesses owned by Jews and the incarceration of Jewish males. As such, the *Reichskristallnacht* was a critical turning-point in the history of Magdeburg Jewry and represented the end of the first stage of the *Shoah*. The demolition of the synagogue and the destruction of Jewish businesses symbolised the end of Jewish public life in the city. Most Jews abandoned the notion that they still had some sort of right as citizens of their German *Heimat*. The old discussions of the alternatives of 'homeland or exile' and the question of 'leaving or not leaving' faded. Most Jews no longer suffered any delusions about their future in Germany. Along with this, particularly for the older generation, came the brutal and stark realisation that Jewish life in Germany was no longer feasible.

In Magdeburg, as elsewhere in the *Reich*, the situation became life-threatening. Given the events and the ensuing circumstances, the majority of the Jews sought emigration at any cost and to almost anywhere. It was only after the pogrom that Jews were finally convinced that they faced physical danger. The initial reaction on the part of the Jews of Magdeburg to the pogrom and the arrests of the *Reichskristallnacht* was characterised by disbelief and fear, followed closely by chaos and panic. However, the brutality of the events both compelled and propelled Jews to quickly take control of their lives. For many Jews the fear of the unknown and leaving their family members behind was enough to keep

them in Germany; for the others, the violence of the events made the decision on emigration easier. On a communal level, the ethnic, the political and the religious differences which existed between the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the *Shtiblech* dissolved as the absolute gravity of the situation compelled unity.

The immediate reaction of the perpetrators was to apportion blame on the victims and, in the weeks leading up to the end of 1938, Jews experienced further exclusion and segregation and the government commenced the complete removal of Jews from the German economy. This included the levying of the Jewish community and the exclusion of Jewish children from public schools. This intensification of persecution in all avenues of life represented the commencement of the second phase of the *Shoah*. Complete exclusion and de-facto ghettoisation became policy for the Jews. By May 1939 approximately 726 Jews were still living in Magdeburg.

As all over the *Reich*, the *Reichskristallnacht* was the watershed event in this community's history. Up until this point, the majority of the community had adjusted to the exclusion and persecutions in place. The attachment to their country, their families and their livelihoods played a serious role in delaying emigration. The violence of the pogrom shocked and galvanised a large number of Jews and emigration became the only option. Nevertheless, by the middle of 1939, there still remained over 700 Jews. Clearly, a large number of Jews from Magdeburg could not find a country of refuge, in addition those who chose to stay, to those whose plans were stymied by the outbreak of World War Two and those too old and/or too impoverished to leave.

By the end of 1939 the Jews were experiencing an even greater level of demonisation, exclusion and pauperisation. The majority of employable

community members were now unemployed. At the very best they were living off the proceeds of the sale of assets and at worst relying on welfare assistance. Total segregation had commenced and was consolidated by evictions and allocation of rooms in '*Judenhäuser*.' Jews from Magdeburg were still emigrating when war broke out. For those who remained, in the wake of the vacuum created by the departure of Rabbi Dr Wilde, the teacher Hermann Spier led the community until his deportation in April 1942. For the Jews of Magdeburg, what they had experienced in the 1930s prior to Germany waging war became a prelude to new levels of persecution they were yet to endure.

Stigmatisation reached new levels when Jews were ordered to wear the yellow Star of David in 1941. Life in public deteriorated steadily and most Jews avoided being outdoors altogether, unless it was absolutely necessary. The lives of Jewish children in the community continued to be fully enriched educationally and Jewishly even beyond the dissolution of the '*Judenschule*' in July 1942. Despite the degradation they constantly endured, Jews attempted to continue to live their lives as normally as possible. Jews were subjected to curfews, total bans from all public venues, public transportation and were eventually ordered to surrender the majority of their remaining basic possessions. Eventually, even articles of clothing deemed 'unnecessary' were confiscated. The community's sense of isolation and stigmatisation increased rapidly, but Jews attempted to maintain their dignity in spite of their daily humiliation. This third and final phase in the destruction process of the community marked the beginning of the prelude to the physical annihilation of the Jews.

Soon after this ultimate act of stigmatisation occurred with the wearing of the yellow star, the preparatory steps for deportation followed. This physical removal

of the Jews from the city occurred in a perfectly organised and well-executed manner. As early as March 1942, the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified community members of the forthcoming *Transport* to the east. For some Jews the phase of ghettoisation was approaching its end, as they unknowingly and methodically prepared their suitcases for what became their final journey. Deportation and extermination had reached the remnant of this community. This was the first of seven documented mass deportations, which marked the end of the life of this Jewish community.

Following the advent of ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ war and stigmatisation, the Magdeburg Gestapo meticulously organised and executed forced labour and deportations. The level of degradation and humiliation for Jews in public became so increased that Jews avoided being outdoors unnecessarily. Despite the appalling conditions governing their lives, they continued to conduct religious services, maintained schooling for children and celebrated a sense of community until it was officially dissolved in June 1943. Those not deported were subjected to forced labour and eventually the only remaining Jews in the city after the final mass deportation in January 1944 were those Jews in mixed marriages, the children of such marriages and those few Jews in hiding. The loyalty of non-Jewish spouses remained essential to the survival of those Jews in mixed marriages and the children of such marriages. Of the approximately 185 remaining Jews in July 1944, the majority lost their lives in the final months of the war during the aerial bombardment of the city by the Allies. By April 1945 there were fewer than around twenty Jews remaining from the original, now decimated, Jewish community.

In the wake of Nazi Germany's capitulation and the liberation of the remaining Jews, a small Jewish community was re-established. In 1946 there were 119 Jews living in the city.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of these members were former inmates of concentration camps, en route to their homes; followed by a small number of surviving Jews in mixed marriages, their children; and those few Jews who had survived in hiding. The departure of the American forces and the arrival of the Soviets led to further Jewish emigration in this transition period. By March 1948 the Jewish community amounted to eighty-two adults and eight children.<sup>2</sup>

The small community that existed up until the collapse of the German Democratic Republic drew largely from those Jews originally from Eastern Europe, who had settled in Magdeburg after liberation. The original community had ceased to exist. By 1987, the population of the community had dropped to twenty-nine members.<sup>3</sup> In the wake of a renaissance of Jewish life in the united Germany, the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg* is currently approaching 1,000 members. Of this figure, the vast majority of members have come from the republics of the former Soviet Union and no one in the current community is descended from the community annihilated by the Nazis. Thus, the Jewish community is undergoing its third transformation demographically and ethnically since 1945.

Between June 1933 and May 1939, approximately 1,247 Jews, 63% of the originally community, left Magdeburg and/or emigrated. Precise numbers of Jews

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<sup>1</sup> Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> Spector, ed., op. cit., p. 782.

who relocated to elsewhere in Germany remain undocumented, with the exception of those who were born in Magdeburg. Of this group, at the time of their deportations, 184 Jews, whose domicile was elsewhere, were registered as natives of Magdeburg. Of this figure, 153 of them lived in Berlin up until their deportations. These statistics present a possible emigration figure of up to an estimated 1,000 Jews from the original community of 1,973 as at June 1933. However, of this figure, it remains unknown how many of the potential emigrants took refuge in European countries, later occupied by the Nazis and subjected to its genocidal policies. Consequently, it must be assumed that an unknown percentage of these 1,000 Jews were deported from occupied Europe, or perished in those countries. What has been established with certainty from statistics of German Jews deported from Germany is that at the very least a minimum of approximately 800 Jews were deported to their deaths. This figure positions the mortality rate for this community at a minimum of approximately 41%.

Jews from Magdeburg whose emigration saved their lives settled on every continent. Very few returned to the city of their birth to settle. Instead, they took root in their adopted countries and gave birth to the Magdeburg Jewish diaspora – a diaspora currently in its twilight. Of the approximately seventy Jews from Magdeburg who immigrated to Australia between 1933 and 1948,<sup>4</sup> there remain an estimated seven individuals. A minority of those Jews who settled in Australia have at some stage of their lives returned to visit their former home. Attitudes toward their former home and former non-Jewish fellow citizens range from ambivalence, to mild nostalgia, to unveiled contempt.

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<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from Gerry Levy AM to the author, 26 August 2005.

In finalising this documentation of the life and the destruction of this Jewish community a number of observations and conclusions on the experiences of the Jews of Magdeburg during this catastrophic period of their long and illustrious history can be made. The experiences of the community can be divided into four periods, each signalling the commencement of increased demonisation, exclusion and persecution. The period from 1933 up until the immediate period prior to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935 was marked by initial shock, confusion and ultimately adaptation to the new conditions. The period from September 1935 up until the period prior to the November pogrom of 1938 represented the loss of all rights, a serious escalation of antisemitic policies and raised the prospect of emigration in the minds of approximately one third of the Jewish population. The period from November 1938 up until September 1939 represented the realisation that Jewish life in the city, as they had once known it, was no longer feasible, and emigration was the only solution. The final period of the community's history from September 1939 up until the final deportations signalled stigmatisation and extermination. Whilst these periods represent increased levels of persecution, the actual life and the eventual destruction of the Jewish community can also be divided into two distinct phases – that prior to the *Reichskristallnacht* and the phase after. Prior to the pogrom, the Jewish community as a structure functioned under the burden of Nazism, just as Jews attempted to navigate difficult lives. After the pogrom, this altered dramatically, with the final dissolutions of communal organisations, mass emigration and the end of any form of communal life in its previous form. Whilst the first phase represented the exclusion of the Jews and their attempt to adapt to the new conditions imposed on them, the second phase represented the end of Jewish

communal life in Magdeburg and the physical removal of the Jews from the cityscape. These patterns conform to what was happening throughout Germany from 1933.

Whilst the focus of this study has been the experiences of the Jewish community under Nazism, some important conclusions and observations on the actions of the perpetrators must also be made, as these had a profoundly detrimental effect in exacerbating official antisemitism. When examining all facets of Jewish existence in the city, it becomes clear that the exclusion, humiliation, impoverishment and the eventual destruction of the Jews were attended to with much diligence. The administrations of the local and provincial governments, the professional associations and the various arms of the Nazi Party apparatus all worked co-operatively to effectively destroy Jewish life. This is viewed particularly in the general activities of the professional associations and the *Nationalsozialistische Handwerks-, und Gewerbe-Organisation* (NS-HAGO) in the economic sphere; in the various show trials, particularly in the cases of the 'Rassenschande' trials and their obscene reporting in the press; in the persistence of the mayor's office in pursuing, at the national level, the desire for segregated schooling for Jews, three years before it was enacted; and the ongoing exercise of ensuring that every last component of public space was forbidden to Jews. In possessing such virulent antisemites in the personalities of the mayor and the local *Gauleiter*, antisemitic policies in the city were administered and executed with noted ruthlessness. This played an important and devastating role in the journey of this community from boycotts in 1933 to deportations in 1942. There remains little doubt that this contributed to the large number of Jews who relocated

elsewhere in Germany and the high mortality rate of Jews from Magdeburg. This provides a further and revealing perspective on this particular community.

One important and final observation which shaped the lives of Jews for the entire period was their lack of anonymity. In 1933 the Jews of Magdeburg comprised 0.64% of the city's total population. However, they experienced a long and prominent profile in the city's affairs, and this, combined with the smaller size of the population of such a provincial city, meant that Jews were readily identified and known, even prior to the stigmatisations. This compounded their situation and there was simply nowhere in the city centre where Jews did not risk detection.

Despite the prevailing conditions, the Jews of Magdeburg attempted to maintain full and productive lives, even as their exclusion, humiliation, pauperisation and vilification intensified. For those who did not reach safe shores and remained in the city they had once thought was their *Heimat*, their suffering continued until their eventual extermination, their death during the Allied bombardment of the city or for the very few who witnessed liberation. However, while ever Jews remained in the city, Jewish life continued within the confines of the ghettoised lives imposed on the remaining Jews. Whilst Magdeburg was not quite '*judenfrei*' in April 1945, the Nazi regime, with the assistance of diligent and efficient local efforts, had erased the Jewish community from the physical landscape of this city on the River Elbe. Henceforth, the community of Rabbi Dr Wilde and Hermann Spier featured largely only within the confines of nostalgic conversations over coffee and cake by those Jews formerly of Magdeburg now spread across the globe, who visited the city predominantly in their dreams and undoubtedly in their nightmares.



## Bibliography

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All archives, institutions and libraries consulted are listed below. For collections of significant importance, a brief summary is provided indicating the particularity of the material accessed. Comprehensive citations for all such material are to be found in the footnotes of the thesis.

*Archiv der Gedenkstätte Buchenwald, Weimar.*

*Archiv der Stiftung 'Neue Synagoge Berlin – Centrum Judaicum', Berlin.*

This archive contains a modest, however, highly significant collection of material emanating predominantly from Jewish sources and provides important data on the activities of a number of Jewish communal organisations, particularly welfare organisations. It also contains a large collection from the reconstructed post-war *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg*, where data and statistics on the former, destroyed community are to be found in a number of reports.

*Archiv der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Magdeburg.*

Much of the documentation found in this archive has been reproduced from non-Jewish, largely governmental sources from the Nazi period. A collection of local Jewish print media periodicals both prior to and after the Nazi accession also exists. However, unique to this archive are the *Personenakten*, or files on individual Jews and their families, compiled since the *Shoah* and providing detailed data on the lives and fates of members of the former Jewish community for the entire Nazi period.

*Archiv der Zentralen Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen, Ludwigsburg.*

*Archiv des Internationalen Suchdienst des Roten Kreuzes, Bad Arolsen.*

*Archiv des Konsistoriums der Evangelischen Kirche der Kirchenprovinz Sachsen, Magdeburg.*

This archive holds a small collection of files pertaining to its contact with Jews during the Nazi period. For this reason a number of relevant files provide valuable insight into matters ranging from the controversial baptisms of Jews, including Albert Hirschland, to the treatment of Christians of Jewish pedigree, to the interaction between the Lutheran Church and the local Jewish community in the early years of the regime.

*Archiv des Landesverbandes Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg.*

*Beth Hatefutsoth, The Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Tel Aviv.*

*Bibliothek des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, München.*

*B'nai B'rith International, Washington D. C.*

*Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Potsdam.*

This archive is in possession of an important, comprehensive file on Hermann Spier during his tenure in Prenzlau, Brandenburg. This file sheds much light on Spier's history prior to his arrival in Magdeburg.

*Bundesarchiv, Berlin.*

Comprehensive data on all Jews, according to the racial categories of the Nuremberg Laws, is found in the census statistics of 1939 and located in this archive. This data essentially provides an A–Z directory of all persons of Jewish pedigree resident in Magdeburg at the time of the census.

*The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem.*

This archive contains a small, yet highly, important collection containing files salvaged from the offices of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg* and a

number of affiliated communal organisations. Data contained in these files includes fragmented records on births, deaths, communal membership and statistics during the Nazi period, as well as the activities of a small number of welfare organisations.

*Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven.*

*'Germania Judaica', Kölner Bibliothek zur Geschichte des deutschen Judentums, Köln.*

*Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden.*

*Holocaust Resource Centre and Archives, New York.*

*Institute of Contemporary History and Wiener Library, London.*

*Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.*

*Leo Baeck Institute Archives and Library, New York.*

A modest, however, highly important collection of documents, manuscripts, memoirs and artefacts exist in this archive; all emanate from predominantly Jewish sources. Of particular note and relevance are the communal newsletters distributed to members during World War Two and the memoirs in manuscript form of Kurt Sabatzky and Rabbi Dr Georg Wilde.

*Leo Baeck Institute Archives and Library, Jerusalem.*

*Landesarchiv Magdeburg – Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Magdeburg.*

This archive holds an extensive, and by far the most voluminous, collection of documents and was consequently the chief source of documentation from non-Jewish sources utilised for this study. Comprehensive and extensive files from all governmental ministries of the period document the persecution of the Jewish community in varied aspects, ranging from the situation of the majority of Jewish communal organisations, including the religious congregations and

their subsequent dissolutions; the destruction of Jewish business livelihoods and expropriation; the exclusion, vilification and ostracism extant in the public domain; the situation in public schools for Jewish children and the eventual establishment of a segregated school for Jews; the events during and after the *Reichskristallnacht*, including limited material on emigration; to the situation of the Jewish community during World War Two, including segregated housing, stigmatisation, forced labour and deportation.

*Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt – Abteilung Dessau, Dessau.*

*Mediothek der Gedenkstätte Haus der Wannsee-Konferenz, Berlin.*

*The Parkes Library and Archives, Hartley Library, University of Southampton, Southampton.*

*Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Bonn.*

*Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Magdeburg.*

This archive holds a modest, yet highly, important collection of files from various local government authorities and their dealings with Jewish communal organisations and matters concerning Jews. Most importantly, it also holds files concerning the civic registration and the subsequent administrative affairs of a number of Jewish organisations. This material includes documentation relating to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg*, insurance for Jews and some detail on the operations of the Jewish cemetery during the Nazi period.

*Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Archive, Los Angeles.*

*Sydney Jewish Museum Archives and Library, Sydney.*

*United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, D. C.*

The majority of the material from this modest collection emanates from predominantly Jewish sources. A rich and highly comprehensive series of files from the *Landesverband Mitteldeutschland des Centralverein* provides much

detail not only on its roles and affairs, but also of the situations facing the Jewish community of Magdeburg. This material includes files discussing antisemitic measures in the public domain, ‘aryanisations’ and the incidence of show trials.

*Yad Vashem Archives*, Jerusalem.

The majority of the files in this collection have been reproduced from German archives, particularly from the collections held by the *Landesarchiv Magdeburg – Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt*. However, a notable amount of important and original material is also held. This includes video footage of the arrival in the Warsaw ghetto of the first group of deportees from Magdeburg, the manuscript of Fritz Voss, concerning his role in the Albert Hirschland ‘*Rassenschande*’ trial and lists of deportees on the four major deportations to Theresienstadt from Magdeburg.

*Zentralarchiv zur Erforschung der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, Heidelberg.

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Jensen, Hans, Sydney, personal documentation and family correspondence from the Jeruchem and Petzall families.

Kent, Gisela, Sydney, personal documentation and family correspondence from the Jankelowitz family.

Levy AM, Gerry, Sydney, family correspondence from the Levy family.

Poppert, I., Sydney, personal documentation and family correspondence from the Herrmann and the Manneberg families.

Rothberg, Léa, daughter of Rita White née Silbermann, Sydney, personal documentation from the Silbermann family.

### Individual Interviews by the Author

Interviewees have been cited according to their own wishes as indicated below and all interviews were conducted in the cited locations during the below-listed time periods:

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B., H. (born 1923, Magdeburg; died 2005, Sydney), Sydney, 1997.

F., M. (born 1931, Magdeburg), Sydney and Melbourne, 1999–2003.

Freeman, Hemmi (born 1920, Magdeburg; died 2001, Sydney), Sydney, 1998.

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Levy AM, Gerry (born 1924, Magdeburg), Sydney, 1996–2005.

Mannings, George (born 1922, Magdeburg; died 2001, Perth), Sydney, 1999.

Name withheld on request (born 1932, Magdeburg), Sydney, 1999–2004.

Poppert, I. (born 1922, Wolmirstedt), Sydney, 1998–2005.

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