



Open Access Repository

[www.ssoar.info](http://www.ssoar.info)

## The Jews of Vienna from the "Anschluß" to the Holocaust

Botz, Gerhard

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Botz, G. (2016). The Jews of Vienna from the "Anschluß" to the Holocaust. *Historical Social Research, Supplement*, 28, 316-334. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.suppl.28.2016.316-334>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

  
Leibniz-Institut  
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der  
  
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Diese Version ist zitierbar unter / This version is citable under:

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-48414-7>

---

# The Jews of Vienna from the "Anschluß" to the Holocaust [1987]

Gerhard Botz\*

---

**Abstract:** »Wiener Juden zwischen ‚Anschluss‘ und Holocaust«. In this article, the author examines the socio-economic driving forces and political authorities behind the persecution of Jews in Vienna from 1938 to 1943 in order to demonstrate that the anti-Semitic mobilization of substantial sections of the population was directly related to social and economic interests. This becomes clear through the author's analysis of the radical nature of Viennese anti-Semitism from the pogroms of 1938 and the systematic deportation of Jews to extermination camps. This article is structured as follows: 1. Introduction, 2. Exploration of the Perpetrators' Emotional Potential and Demonstration of Jewish Defencelessness, 3. The Conceptual Delineation and Definition of the Enemy Group, 4. Destruction of Economic Means of Subsistence, 5. Forced Emigration, 6. Radicalization and *Reichskristallnacht*, 7. Spatial Segregation (Ghettoization), 8. Realizing the Nazi Stereotype of the 'Jew', 9. Removal and Annihilation.

**Keywords:** Holocaust, Vienna, Jews, National Socialism, Austria, Anschluss 1938, social policy, aryanisation.

---

## 1. Introduction

---

Austria, and particularly Vienna, have managed so far to obscure their participation in the history of the Third Reich. After all, the 1943 Moscow Declaration of the Allied foreign ministers declared Austria the first victim of Hitler's aggression, and the whole self-image of the Second Republic is based on this simplification of history.

In this way their connection with, and responsibility for, the Nazi dictatorship has been completely removed from the historical consciousness of Austrians, who could logically assume that the extinction of independent statehood in 1938 was followed by a seven-year historical vacuum. Virtually none of the existing general histories of modern Austria stresses the considerable contribution to the functioning of the Third Reich of a large part of the population.<sup>1</sup> The major role played in the

---

\* Reprint of: Gerhard Botz. 1987. The Jews of Vienna from the "Anschluß" to the Holocaust. In *Jews, Antisemitism and Culture in Vienna*, ed. Gerhard Botz, Ivar Oxaal and Michael Pollak, 185-204 and 276-82. London and New York.

<sup>1</sup> See for instance the otherwise comprehensive histories of Austria since the First World War: E. Weinzierl and K. Skalnik, eds., 1983, *Österreich 1918-1938: Geschichte der Ersten Republik*.

persecution and annihilation of the Jews by the Viennese – and not just party members or their ‘Reich-German’ superiors – would have to be singled out. I cannot present here an outline of the end of Vienna’s Jews without calling attention to these facts. A change of perspective is required from one which simply regards the Jews as victims of an imported anti-Semitic policy arising from German National Socialism to one which also looks at the identity of persecutors and the nature of their socio-economic motives.<sup>2</sup>

An analysis of the socio-economic forces and the political measures accompanying the persecution of the Jews in Vienna from 1938 to 1945 also allows one to demonstrate that the sharp controversy which has sprung up recently concerning the ‘Final Solution,’ particularly among German historians,<sup>3</sup> is being conducted too narrowly. In this German debate two points of view confront each other: the first argues that Hitler’s personality, his actions and an early pre-determined plan of the *Führer*’s had envisaged the ‘Final Solution,’ which was then consistently put into practice;<sup>4</sup> a second, opposing view stresses the gradual, step-by-step development of the concrete measures of persecution in the Third Reich. According to Hans Mommsen,<sup>5</sup> the most explicit exponent of the second view, the cumulative radicalization of National Socialist anti-Jewish policy arose chiefly from the internal dynamics of the rival power centres of the Third Reich<sup>6</sup> and from the consequences of

---

*lik*, 2 vols., Graz: Styria; E. Weinzierl and K. Skalnik, eds., 1972, *Österreich: Die Zweite Republik*, 2 vols., Graz: Styria; P. Dusek, A. Pelinka and E. Weinzierl, 1981, *Zeitgeschichte im Aufriß: Österreich von 1918 bis in die achtziger Jahre*, Vienna: Jugend und Volk; N. Schausberger, 1980, *Österreich: Der Weg der Republik 1918-1980*, Graz: Leykam. This is true also for scholarly researched specialized studies like H. Rosenkranz, 1978, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung: Die Juden in Österreich 1938-1945*, Vienna: Herold; Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands, ed., 1975, *Widerstand und Verfolgung in Wien 1934-1945: Eine Dokumentation*, 3 vols., Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag (and the subsequent volumes on Upper Austria, Burgenland and Tyrol).

<sup>2</sup> This contribution is based mostly on my own earlier publications: G. Botz, 1975, *Wohnungspolitik und Judendeportation in Wien 1938 bis 1945*, in *Zur Funktion des Antisemitismus als Ersatz nationalsozialistischer Sozialpolitik*, Vienna: Geyer; idem, 1980, *Wien vom 'Anschluß' zum Krieg: Nationalsozialistische Machtübernahme und politisch-soziale Umgestaltung am Beispiel der Stadt Wien 1938/39*, 2nd ed., Vienna: Jugend und Volk.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. Hirschfeld and L. Kettenacker, eds., 1981, *Der 'Führerstaat': Mythos und Realität*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta; I. Kershaw, 1985, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, London: Edward Arnold, 82-105; K. Hildebrand, 1979, *Das Dritte Reich*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 175-80; M. Broszat, 1979, "Holocaust" und die Geschichtswissenschaft, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 27 (2): 285-98; J. Hiden and J. Farquharson, 1983, *Explaining Hitler's Germany: Historians and the Third Reich*, London: Batsford, 43-7.

<sup>4</sup> G. Fleming, 1982, *Hitler und die Endlösung: 'Es ist des Führers Wunsch'*, Munich: Limes; L. Dawidowicz, 1977, *The War Against the Jews 1933-45*, Harmondsworth: Penguin; S. Gordon, 1984, *Hitler, Germans, and the 'Jewish Question'*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 128-45.

<sup>5</sup> H. Mommsen, 1983, *Die Realisierung des Utopischen: Die "Endlösung der Judenfrage" im Dritten Reich*, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (3): 381-420; M. Broszat, 1977, *Hitler und die Genesis der "Endlösung"*: Aus Anlaß der Thesen von David Irving, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 25 (4): 739-75; K. A. Schleunes, 1970, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933-1939*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>6</sup> Mommsen, op. cit., 394-5.

foreign and politico-military developments which moved towards the destruction of the Jews within the German sphere of power without direct initiatives by Hitler.

In my opinion both positions underestimate the significance of the anti-Semitic mobilization of considerable parts of the population in favour of Nazi measures against the Jews; both underestimate the extent to which the persecution and annihilation of the Jews satisfied immediate economic and social requirements of large groups and classes in a very concrete manner – a process of persecution which in fact acted as a surrogate for the social welfare policies the Nazis had promised their followers. The combination of anti-Semitic persecution and the satisfaction of material interests does not appear to me, at least in the Viennese case, to have been simply an attempt by the National Socialist regime to justify the persecution of the Jews – as Mommsen stresses to have been the case in the whole of the Third Reich – rather, material interests were one of antisemitism's most powerful motivating forces. On this factor rested the 'popular unanimity'<sup>7</sup> of Viennese antisemitism since the nineteenth century, which had always been more than an ideological concept of racial values concerning the depravity of the Jews. It was no coincidence that Schönerer's ideological, racial antisemitism had been denied success with Vienna's masses,<sup>8</sup> while Lueger's pragmatic, economic, religio-cultural-based antisemitism could be made into the integrating force of his Catholic lower-middle-class movement.<sup>9</sup> The precondition for this was that the Jewish part of the population was not a tiny minority, but represented a sufficiently large potential economic target, or was perceived as such by the anti-Semites. And this was the case in Vienna, where a pattern of relative Jewish affluence existed until the Nazi takeover. Viennese Jews were rather highly concentrated in middle-class occupations and the learned professions, as well as in capitalist circles.<sup>10</sup> Thus the anti-Semites were of

---

<sup>7</sup> P. G. J. Pulzer, 1964, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, New York: Wiley, 144-7, 279-87; idem, 1967, The Development of Political Antisemitism in Austria, in *The Jews of Austria: Essays on their Life, History and Destruction*, ed. J. Fraenkel, 429-43, London: Vallentine Mitchell; D. von Arkel, 1966, *Antisemitism in Austria*, PhD Diss., University of Leiden, 67-185; A. Pelinka, 1972, *Stand oder Klasse? Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung Österreichs 1933 bis 1938*, Vienna: Europa-Verlag, 213 et seq.; K. Stuhlpfarrer, 1974, *Antisemitismus, Rassenpolitik und Judenverfolgung in Österreich nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg, Das österreichische Judentum: Voraussetzungen und Geschichte*, Vienna: Jugend und Volk, 141-64; E. Weinzierl, 1969, *Zu wenig Gerechte: Österreicher und Judenverfolgung, 1938-1945*, Graz: Styria.

<sup>8</sup> A. G. Whiteside, 1975, *The Socialism of Fools: Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Austrian Pan-Germanism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, esp. 107-40.

<sup>9</sup> J. W. Boyer, 1981, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: The Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848-1897*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 184 et seq.; idem, 1982, Karl Lueger and the Viennese Jews, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 26: 125-44; K. Skalnik, 1954, *Dr Karl Lueger: Der Mann zwischen den Zeiten*, Vienna: Herold.

<sup>10</sup> I. Oxaal and W. R. Weitzmann, 1985, The Jews of Pre-1914 Vienna: An Exploration of Basic Sociological Dimensions, *Leo Baeck-Institute Year Book* 30: 395-432; cf. also: W. von Weisl, 1979, *Die Juden in der Armee Österreich-Ungarns*, Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1-22; W. Häusler, Toleranz, Emanzipation und Antisemitismus: Das österreichische Judentum des bürgerlichen Zeitalters (1782-1918), *Das österreichische Judentum*, op. cit., 83-140; Leo Goldhammer, 1927, *Die Juden Wiens: Eine statistische Studie*, Vienna; G. Glockemeyer, 1937, *Zur Wiener Judenfrage*, Leipzig.

the opinion, and not without some justification, that harassing the Jews could bring them collective benefits. In fact, antisemitism was to a great extent also a substitute for social policy in favour of the non-Jewish population at the cost of Jews and other persecuted minorities in Vienna and other central and east European cities.<sup>11</sup> It was this high economic and social status of Jews which became the theme of the Nazi persecution in Vienna after the *Anschluss*.

It was therefore not just pure demagoguery and propaganda in preparation for the persecution of the Jews when the *Völkischer Beobachter*, in its Vienna edition of 26 April 1938, wrote about the popular mood six weeks after the *Anschluss*:

By the year 1942 the Jewish element in Vienna will have to have been wiped out and made to disappear. No shop, no business will be permitted by that time to be under Jewish management, no Jew may find anywhere any opportunity to earn a living and with the exception of those streets where the old Jews and Jewesses are using up their money, the export of which is prohibited, while they wait for death, nothing of it may show itself in the city. (...) No one who knows Viennese opinion regarding the Jewish question will be surprised that the four years in which the economic death sentence on the Jews is to be executed seems much too long a time to them. They are puzzled by all the fuss, by the pedantic attention to the maintenance and protection of Jewish property; after all it is very simple: 'The Jew must go – and his cash must remain' (...)

While in many instances National Socialism drew the attention of North-Germans to the private, almost unpolitical danger of the Jews, in Vienna, on the contrary, the Nazis professed a commitment to responsible education of the public. This posture was intended to demonstrate the blamelessness and purity of the movement – and thus to stem the exuberant local anti-Semitic radicalism, steering the understandably violent reactions to the Jewish excesses of a whole century into orderly channels.

This means, and let everyone take note, because Germany is a state based on the law: nothing happens in our state except by due process of law. (...) Here there will be no pogroms, certainly not through Mrs Hinterhuber wanting to get at Sarah Cohen, in the third courtyard, on the half-landing, by the watertap.<sup>12</sup>

These were the problems and perspectives of the Vienna Nazis immediately after the *Anschluss*. The measures of anti-Jewish persecution until the 'Final Solution' – 'eradication' from the economy was the metaphor used in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of April 1938 – followed by and large these basic themes. But the persecution of the Jews in Vienna presented itself in a variety of forms, depending on particular circumstances: as a groundswell of spontaneous protest, or as a response to either an attachment of traditional elites to a bureaucratic concept of 'law and order,' or to the assertion of the anti-institutional radicalism of the activists of the Nazi movement, or even to the requirements of the foreign policies of the Greater

---

<sup>11</sup> Botz, *Wohnungspolitik*, op. cit., 117–24; idem, 1974, "Arisierungen" und nationalsozialistische Mittelstandspolitik in Wien (1938–1940), *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 29 (1): 122–36.

<sup>12</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, Vienna, 26 April 1938, 2, 4.

German Reich.<sup>13</sup> Without intending to claim a teleological progress in a straight line in the 'extirpation' of Jews from Viennese society, I shall nevertheless show that the persecution of the Jews in Vienna from 1938 to 1942 moved forward in phases, with each of the various manifestations of antisemitism in Austria being built on the preceding one or at least complementary to it. One can distinguish eight distinctive stages in the progressive elimination of the Jews from Viennese society between 1938 and 1943; these eight stages were required for the progress of the Holocaust – the ultimate 'elimination' from society in the annihilation industries.

---

## 2. Exploration of the Perpetrators' Emotional Potential and Demonstration of Jewish Defencelessness

---

In Vienna the *Anschluss* was immediately accompanied by events resembling pogroms, such as had not occurred until then in the 'Old Reich,' that is to say in Germany before the *Anschluss* of Austria.<sup>14</sup> This was because the *Anschluss* was not just a transfer of power by a kind of occupation, but was at the same time an internal take-over of power by the Austrian Nazis and a popular rising. The political and social discontent that had accumulated over the years among the middle-class following of National Socialism was discharged with elemental force against the Jewish part of the population. In the foreground were symbolic acts aimed at the destruction of a sense of identity: humiliations and arrests, but also brutal physical assaults and robbery, while 'scrubbing-squads' of Jews were made to clean the streets or the quarters of the storm-troopers. Children had to deface their parents' business premises with abusive words – *Jude* was thought to be one – and strictly orthodox Jews were forced to commit acts of sacrilege. Not only Nazis but also fellow-travellers and people who cared but little about National Socialism took part in week-long raids, with or without the 'authorisation' of the NSDAP.<sup>15</sup> The targets of these raids were the private apartments of Jewish bankers and of members of the intelligentsia, of the Jewish middle classes as well as the tens of thousands of poverty-stricken Jews, the Jewish-owned department stores of the *Mariahilfer-Strasse* as well as the pathetic little shops in the *Leopoldstadt*.<sup>16</sup> Jewellery, cash, clothing, furs, carpets, works of art and furniture were carried off by the plundering mob.

The shock suffered at that time by so many Viennese Jews can still be discerned in the many novels which have attempted to come to terms with that pogrom which until

---

<sup>13</sup> H. Genschel, 1972, *Die Verdrängung der Juden aus der Wirtschaft im Dritten Reich*, Göttingen, 165-6; D. Adam, 1972, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich*, Düsseldorf, 195 et seq.; also K. Drobisch et al., 1973, *Juden unterm Hakenkreuz*, Frankfurt a. M., 50 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> G. E. R. Gedye, 1947, *Die Bastionen fielen: Wie der Faschismus Wien und Prag überrannte*, Vienna, 294-309; D. Wagner and G. Tomkowitz, 1968, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer: Der Anschluß Österreichs 1938*, Munich.

<sup>15</sup> Botz, *Wien*, op. cit., 93-106.

<sup>16</sup> J. Bunzl, 1978, Arbeiterbewegung, "Judenfrage" und Antisemitismus. Am Beispiel des Wiener Bezirks Leopoldstadt, in *Bewegung und Klasse*, ed. G. Botz et al., 743-63, Vienna: Europa-Verlag; R. Beckermann, 1984, *Die Mazzesinsel*, Vienna: Löcker.

then had been altogether unimaginable in a 'civilised' country.<sup>17</sup> The despair drove many Jews, particularly of the upper middle classes, to commit suicide – as many as 220 in March alone.<sup>18</sup> Every other problem aired in the correspondence columns of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* in the beginning of April 1938 appeared under code words, such as 'Question of Life and Death 1938,' 'Kismet,' 'Worried,' 'What is To Be Done?,' 'Desperate Wife and Mother,' 'Distraught,' 'Altogether in Despair,' '1938,' 'Unhappy,' 'Question of Existence.'<sup>19</sup>

This pogrom-like situation might at the outset have been somewhat encouraged by the new men in power as a safety valve for the uncontrolled social revolutionary tendencies among their own followers; however, the longer the state of chaotic interventions in the economic and administrative life of Vienna continued, the higher rose the anguish of the leading Nazi functionaries. Most anxious of all was Josef Bürckel, who had been appointed Reich-Commissioner in Austria and who feared that the National Socialist 'Reconstruction' would be hindered by the chaos. Above all, Berlin had expressed concern that 'in Austria there had occurred widespread confiscations of property' which had been impossible to control.<sup>20</sup> Therefore measures were taken, even before the 'plebiscite' of 10 April 1938, to rein in the pogrom.<sup>21</sup> This led to a phase of seemingly legal actions whose function it was to prepare the further progress of anti-Jewish measures.

---

### 3. The Conceptual Delineation and Definition of the Enemy Group

---

As long as it was possible for non-Jews to become victims of persecution because of the blurred outlines of both the popular and the 'scientific' idea of 'the Jew,' there was no assurance that radical measures of persecution would be tolerated by the large but not actively participating parts of the population. This principle was later to become clear during the euthanasia actions. The category 'Jews' had, of course, been definitively delineated by the Nuremberg racial laws, which were formally introduced into Austria on 20 May 1938. They stated what legally constituted being a 'Jew,' the criteria being in the last resort based on religious-historical factors rather than racial-biological nations. Since Nazi genealogists made good use of the resulting boom, everyone soon knew whether or not he came under the classification of 'Jew.'

This process of authoritative definition found its clearest preliminary expression in the special marking of identity cards for Jews. In July and August 1938, legisla-

---

<sup>17</sup> For literary accounts see: H. Hilsenrad, 1966, *Brown was the Danube*, New York, pp. 275 et seq.; G. Clare, 1983, *Last Waltz in Vienna*, London.

<sup>18</sup> Botz, *Vienna*, op. cit., 98-105; Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., 39-41; wrong figures are still derived from Gedye, op. cit., 300, 309.

<sup>19</sup> *Neues Wiener Amtsblatt*, Vienna, 5 April 1938, 8.

<sup>20</sup> MD 3872/38, Archive of the City and Land of Vienna (abbreviated: AdStuLW), letter of J. Bürckel to Göring, 19 July 1938, R. 104/Pak/Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (abbreviated: BA).

<sup>21</sup> *Wiener Zeitung*, Vienna, 3 March 1938, 4; M.D. 2802/38, AdStuLW.

tion was introduced covering the entire Reich which required Jews to adopt the distinctive first names 'Israel' or 'Sarah.' The passports of Jews were also marked with a large red 'J' on the first page. From the age of about fifteen, all Jews were obliged to carry the identity card at all times; they also had to declare their Jewish identity 'un-asked, and on pain of prosecution, whenever they had dealings with the civil or Party authorities.'<sup>22</sup> Moreover from the beginning of November 1938, all Jewish-owned shops had to display inscriptions in Hebrew lettering.

In the course of the temporary advance of traditional authoritarian-bureaucratic tendencies in the Nazi policy in Austria during the summer of 1938, this restricting categorization was the precondition for a sort of 'legal' (i.e. regulated by law) anti-semitism which showed itself in the schools, the professions, and the economy. In the area of education, blow followed blow against the Jews after the plebiscite of 10 April 1938. On 24 April a *Numerus clausus* was introduced for Jewish university students (2 per cent), followed on 27 April by separation of Jewish pupils in the secondary schools and the establishment of eight purely Jewish secondary schools, and on 9 May by the same action with regards to primary, comprehensive and trade schools. By 1 July 183 Jewish teachers had been dismissed, and the number of Jewish pupils of compulsory school age diminished accordingly as many Jewish schools were closed down. From the autumn, only 1 per cent of university students were to be of Jewish descent; on 14 November they were completely excluded. Instead of the previous 6,000 secondary school pupils there were now only 500, all of them crammed into the single remaining secondary school. Altogether, approximately 16,000 pupils had been affected by the 'de-schooling' which had taken place in April. 'At first they were taught in accommodation provided by the city. At the end of the school year 1938/39 all public education of Jewish children was forbidden.'<sup>23</sup>

By the end of November 1938, those of mixed race were also excluded not only from the free professions, the press, literature, theatre, film, music and creative arts, but also from the professional bodies of physicians, pharmacists, lawyers and notaries public. They thereby lost to their 'Aryan' competitors their right to practise.

By these measures, which carried out earlier demands of German nationalist and Christian Social antisemitism, the social and organizational networks of Viennese Jewry were destroyed, even before the physical destruction of the Jews set in. With the loss of the multiplicity of everyday Jewish social organizations, Jewish identity also lost its social basis in Vienna. Thus, Nazism destroyed an important precondition of the cultural achievements of the Viennese Jews.

---

<sup>22</sup> Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich, Vienna 327/1938; E. Mannlicher, 1942, *Wegweiser durch die Verwaltung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verwaltung im Reichsgau* Wien, Berlin, 210-11, 233.

<sup>23</sup> Amtsblatt der Stadt Wien, vol. 46, no. 27, 2; 'Stadtchronik 1938/1940', Handbuch Reichsgau Wien, vol. 63/64, Vienna, 1941, 975-6.



---

#### 4. Destruction of Economic Means of Subsistence

---

The same kind of 'legal' discrimination was carried through in the economic field. In the public services and in some sectors of private enterprise, Jewish employees and workers were dismissed in large numbers, which led to a temporary increase in the rate of unemployment in Vienna. In spite of that, some rabid Austrian Nazis found too slow the process which had begun in March and was to continue for several more months. According to a plan of the Ostmark's economics minister, Hans Fischböck, all 200,000 of Vienna's Jews ought to relinquish their workplaces to unemployed 'Aryans' in one comprehensive action. However, in contrast to the public sector and the free professions, the governmental agencies moved in fact with some caution in relation to private enterprise. Economic considerations were decisive. Reich-Commissioner Bürckel, who, notwithstanding his wide-ranging powers regarding 'Jewish policy,' was under strict instructions from Göring, proceeded from three principles. The aims were: first, to remove 'the Jew' unconditionally from the economy and finally from Austria altogether, especially from Vienna; second, 'de-judaisation' was to proceed in a way which would prevent any serious damage to export or domestic trade; and, third, it was required that the 'Jewish question' be solved in a legal manner by means of severe legislation in order to preserve the economy intact.<sup>24</sup>

These guidelines were difficult to put into effect at first, particularly in Vienna. In contrast to the 'Old Reich,' where the 'de-judaisation' of the economy was dragging on, in Austria after March 1938 the 'spontaneous Aryanisation' was carried out completely without any orders from above and without following rules. Looking back, Reich-Commissioner Bürckel remarked: 'The splendid history of National Socialism and the rising in Austria has had a cloud cast over it by the extent of robbery and theft which occurred in the first few weeks, which required me to take most severe action.'<sup>25</sup>

The extent of 'Aryanisation' had become so great in Vienna that it could no longer be met by improvisations as in the 'Old Reich.' According to National Socialist estimates, of the 146,000 businesses in Vienna, 36,000 (25 per cent) had been in Jewish hands; of the capital value of these firms – 800 million *Reichsmark* – 300 million was Jewish.<sup>26</sup> Even after the wave of 'spontaneous Aryanization,' 26,000 of these enterprises still remained. In some cases these were handed over to approximately 25,000 'Aryan administrators,' which meant Nazis.<sup>27</sup> In others the

---

<sup>24</sup> M. Rieser, 1953, *Österreichs Sterbeweg*, Vienna, 131; R. Luža, 1975, *Austro-German Relations in the Anschluss Era*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 217.

<sup>25</sup> Genschel, op. cit., 162.

<sup>26</sup> K. Schubert, 1940, *Die Entjudung der ostmärkischen Wirtschaft und die Bemessung des Kaufpreises im Entjudungsverfahren*, PhD Diss., University of World Trade, Vienna, 10; D. Walch, 1971, *Die jüdischen Bemühungen um die materielle Wiedergutmachung durch die Republik Österreich*, Vienna, 3; cf. A. Krüger, 1940, *Die Lösung der Judenfrage in der deutschen Wirtschaft*, Berlin, 64-5; L. Wittek-Saltzberg, 1970, *Die wirtschaftspolitischen Auswirkungen der Okkupation Österreichs*, PhD Diss., Vienna, 225.

<sup>27</sup> *Der Prozeß gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof*, Nuremberg, 1947 seq. vol. 27, 163 (doc. 1301-PS) (abbreviated: IMT).

enterprises were continued in the form of so-called 'NSBO-enterprises' (National Socialist *Betriebs-Organisation*-firms) by National Socialist co-operatives of the 'Aryan' employees, which were then put under the control of NSDAP.

To prevent senseless destruction of the economic capacity of the *Ostmark* and to mobilize for the Balkan trade which was a burning interest of Göring's, Bürckel had no choice but to legalize the system of commissars which had spontaneously emerged as a 'necessary evil,' to get the policy to contain the worst excesses, and to attempt, in the months following the Anschluss, a half-way orderly method of 'Aryanisation.' In consequence 'Aryanisation Instructions' were speeded up, dictated by events in Vienna for the whole Reich at the end of April 1938. Administrative methods developed in Austria soon became models for the 'Old Reich' as well as for the 'newly-acquired territories of the Reich.'

The Nazi party itself increased the economic dangers by making 'Aryanisation' into an instrument of social and economic welfare in the hands of its members and followers – a process facilitated by the size of the Jewish economic sector in Vienna. At the same time this 'middle-class' welfare system came into conflict with the economic, and particularly macro-economic-orientated organs of the Nazi state. Most of the 'provisional managers' (*Kommissare*) were either unable or unprepared to take a long-term view of economic management, while on the other hand the 'Four-Year Plan' was directed toward economic efficiency for war. The interests of the non-Jewish middle class, moreover, favoured the liquidation of those frequently uneconomic small and medium-sized Jewish businesses, a measure which was put into effect towards the end of 1938. The Vienna Nazi leadership was thus able to justify accelerating the concentration and improvising the structure of Vienna's economy, which was limping along behind that of the 'Old Reich' anyway, even at the danger of causing bitter resentment among the 25,000 'provisional managers.'

For the Viennese Jews, 'Aryanisation' meant mostly economic expropriation. The most rapid 'Aryanisation' to the end of 1938 involved 'several hundred Jewish enterprises of importance for defence and economic development' – mainly large-scale enterprises – all well-known obviously Jewish businesses' as well as the big department stores.<sup>28</sup> These especially were the targets of spontaneous or orchestrated anti-Semitic outbursts. The very large Jewish industrial enterprises and joint stock companies were approached by the Third Reich with circumspection; the property of foreign Jews was not touched until the outbreak of war.

The radical policy of 'Aryanisation,' tried and carried out mostly in Vienna through a combination of spontaneous action from below and official regulation from above, earned distinction for the Austrian Minister for Economics, Labour and Finance, Dr Hans Fischböck. He had already aroused the admiration of Göring and the managers of the economy of the 'Old Reich' in the autumn. In consequence this procedure was applied to the whole of the Reich at the end of 1938. The Austrian procedure became a kind of model for the remaining parts of the Greater German Reich.

---

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 28, 525 (1816-PS); R 104/Pak/BA.; F. Romanik, 1957, *Der Leidensweg der österreichischen Wirtschaft 1933-1945*, Vienna, 24-8; Adam, *op. cit.*, 195 et seq.; Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, *op. cit.*, 60-70.

---

## 5. Forced Emigration

---

After a large part of Viennese Jewry had been ruined through the destruction of their economic base, they were obliged to leave the country. But they now faced such obstacles as travel expenses, immigration quotas, fees, the limited chances of integration in other countries, and the barriers of German bureaucracy and the 'Reich-escape tax' (*Reichsfluchtsteuer*). The more successful the expropriation of the Jews became, the more difficult it became for Viennese Jews to find avenues for emigration. The Gestapo in Vienna therefore devised the following solution, as the chief of the Gestapo, Heydrich, reported after the *Kristallnacht*:

We did it by demanding a certain sum of money through the Jewish community from the rich Jews who wanted to emigrate. With this sum, plus some payments in foreign currency a number of poor Jews could also be got out. The problem was not to get rid of the rich Jews but of the Jewish mob.<sup>29</sup>

The Gestapo utilized the enforced co-operation of the Jewish community organization, the *Kultusgemeinde*, a division of labour between the persecutor and persecuted which was to prove its usefulness right into the Nazi extermination camps. Eichmann had come to Vienna for this task and was to excel himself in the creation and management of the 'Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna' to such an extent that it opened up a further career for him.<sup>30</sup> As in other areas of the anti-Jewish policy, this Central Office had grown out of the necessity of mastering the administrative problems of Nazism's Jewish policy in Vienna.

The activities of the Vienna Central Office considerably speeded up the enforced emigration of Jews, which reached its high point of almost 10,000 emigrants as early as September 1938, one month after its foundation. Between the *Anschluss* and the end of July 1938, only 18,000 Jews left Vienna as emigrants. In the three months to October 1938, however, 32,000 Jews emigrated; and by July of the next year a further 54,000 followed. On 30 November 1939 the count was 126,445 Jewish emigrants, a number which did not significantly increase later on. In addition to the profits gained through 'Aryanisation,' this expulsion of the Jews brought the Reich the sum of 1.6 million dollars which had been raised by Jewish immigration aid societies by the end of November 1939. After the beginning of the war Jewish emigration soon came to an end. Even so, another 24,500 Viennese Jews managed to emigrate during the Second World War.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> IMT, vol. 28, doc. 1816-PS.

<sup>30</sup> Letter of Eichmann to Herbert Hagen, 8 May 1938, Microfilm T 175, R 413, 2,938.501, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; cf. also R. M. W. Kempner, 1961, *Eichmann und Komplizen*, Zurich, 42-9; Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., 71-7.

<sup>31</sup> Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., 105-25, 168-78. J. Moser, 1966, *Judenverfolgung in Österreich 1938-1945*, Vienna, 6 et seq.

---

## 6. Radicalization and *Reichskristallnacht*

---

In the late summer of 1938 the bureaucratically softened law-and-order phase of the Nazi regime in Austria was followed by a newly radicalized policy. The threatening economic and socio-political crisis brought about by the increased armaments policy urgently required further foreign policy and military expansion,<sup>32</sup> which went hand in hand with increasing severity of control over internal political adversaries, national minorities and Jews. The *Reichskristallnacht* of 9 November 1938<sup>33</sup> marked the beginning of a new phase in the politics of the Third Reich. Vienna, once again in the vanguard, had already witnessed pogrom-like attacks against Jews in October.

The Vienna pogrom was probably more violent and the cause of more bloodshed, as far as the Jewish population was concerned, than that in the 'Old Reich.' Apart from the thousands of shops and dwellings demolished in Vienna, 42 synagogues and prayer rooms were burnt down, at least 27 Jews were killed<sup>34</sup> and 88 were severely injured. In addition, the numbers of those who out of despair made an end to their lives rose by leaps and bounds. In Vienna 6,547 were arrested in the course of the *Judenaktion*, 3,700 of whom were taken to the concentration camp of Dachau straight away. The greater part of the concentration camp detainees were released only during the first part of 1939 on production of proof of emigration documents, or on the condition of emigration within fourteen days.<sup>35</sup>

The result of this 'unchaining of the lowest instincts,' as the representatives of 'orderly, legal' antisemitism in the Gestapo uneasily put it,<sup>36</sup> brought with it in the end a speeding-up of 'Aryanisation' and a radicalization of the entire anti-Jewish policy as Hitler's foreign policy moved towards the Second World War.

---

## 7. Spatial Segregation (Ghettoization)

---

A few days after the pogrom of November 1938, there was an intensified revival of 'spontaneous Aryanisation' of houses and flats such as had occurred in the days immediately after the *Anschluss*. This time, however, the robbery of Jewish dwellings was managed from above as a means of propaganda and served as indemnification of 'comrades, men of the people, who had served the Nazi movement in especially deserving ways.'<sup>37</sup> To cope with this problem, which assumed immense proportions, the Vienna City Council – but not the Reich authorities or the NSDAP

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. T. W. Mason, 1975, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft: Dokumente und Materialien zur deutschen Arbeiterpolitik 1936–1939*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 119–58.

<sup>33</sup> H. Rosenkranz, 1968, '*Reichskristallnacht*: 9. November 1938 in Österreich', Vienna; idem, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., 159–67; cf. H. Graml, 1955, *Der 9. November 1938: Reichskristallnacht*, Bonn; L. Kochan, 1957, *Pogrom: 10. November 1938*, London.

<sup>34</sup> Recent Research has shown that these figures have to be reduced substantially (Betz 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Betz, *Wien*, op. cit., 402 and 533.

<sup>36</sup> Quotation see: *Widerstand und Verfolgung, Wien*, op. cit., vol. 3, 279–80.

<sup>37</sup> MD 3300/1938, AdStuLW.

– devised administrative procedures and prepared a draft law to deprive Jewish tenants of protection. Of particular interest to the Nazi City Council administration – which calculated a housing shortage of about 70,000 dwellings for the total indigent population of Vienna plus new arrivals from the Reich – were the dwellings occupied by Jews, originally also numbering 70,000 and representing approximately 10 per cent of the total housing stock of Vienna. By the end of 1938 alone, following forced emigration and ‘spontaneous Aryanisation,’ 44,000 Jewish homes had been occupied by ‘Aryans,’ but there remained more than 26,000 dwellings to be ‘Aryanised.’

Once again, a problem was tackled by the Reich authorities for the territories under their control only after the solution had presented itself in Vienna. The structure of the housing problem and the acute need for accommodation in Vienna, given the fact that Jewish property constituted a significant economic share, created in the city a special radical form of persecution of the Jews. The accommodation occupied by the Jews, and therefore at the disposal of the Nazi regime, totalled 70,000 dwellings – 6,000 more than the Social Democrats in ‘Red Vienna’<sup>38</sup> had managed in fifteen years of intensive building policy! The intensification of the war economy in the Third Reich and its internal supply crisis in 1939 made the procedures developed in Vienna worth copying throughout the Nazi sphere of power. I have characterized this specific substitutive form of socio-political procedure, including certain aspects of ‘business Aryanisation,’ as *negative social policy*.<sup>39</sup>

Complementary to the ‘Aryanisation’ of homes was the development of semi-ghettoes in city districts along the Danube Canal, particularly in the *Leopoldstadt*. The concentration of the Viennese Jews (still numbering almost 100,000 in October 1939 and now defined as ‘Jews by race’ in the sense of the Nuremberg laws) in single houses, entire blocks and parts of some districts was partly a side-effect of the legal framework of the ‘Aryanisation procedure,’ and partly a deliberate policy of the Viennese Nazi district leaders. This process of relocation went on until it found its final conclusion in 1942.

This process of segregation again aroused the objections of those Nazi functionaries, party members and ‘comrades’ who were affected by the ghetto formation; they insistently demanded the removal of the Jews from their district, not least so as to seize for themselves the remaining, often overcrowded, Jewish homes. As early as July 1939, a plan had surfaced in Reich-Commissioner Bürckel’s office to expel the remaining Viennese Jews to barracked encampments; the plan envisaged ‘an intensive productive employment of the inmates.’<sup>40</sup> The Viennese City administration clearly

---

<sup>38</sup> F. Czeike, 1962, *Liberale, christlichsoziale und sozialdemokratische Kommunalpolitik (1861–1934), dargestellt am Beispiel der Gemeinde Wien*, Vienna, 104; cf. P. Feldbauer, 1977, *Stadtwachstum und Wohnungsnot*, Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 209–86; cf. also A. Lichtblau, 1984, *Wiener Wohnungspolitik 1892–1919*, Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 24–32.

<sup>39</sup> See G. Botz, 1976, National Socialist Vienna: Anti-Semitism as a Housing Policy, *Wiener Library Bulletin* 29 (39/40): 47–55.

<sup>40</sup> Memorandum E. Becker’s, mat. reg., file 235 (2315/6), Reichskommissar, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Vienna (abbreviated: Rk. AVA) and Letter of Bürckel to Göring, 8 July 1939, file 235 (2315/7) Rk. AVA, see: Botz, *Wohnungspolitik*, op. cit., 146–8, 172–3.

had in mind two concentration camp-like labour camps in the vicinity of Vienna and by the beginning of September 1939 had prepared detailed building plans.

A change in these plans came with the outbreak of war. The planned 'overall measures' of which Heydrich informed the commanders of the *SS-Einsatzgruppen* in Hitler's name on September 1939, envisaged the early deportation of 300,000 poorer Jews from 'Greater Germany' to Poland. They also cast a glance at a 'Final Goal' (*Endziel*) which was not yet clearly defined.<sup>41</sup> Only after the rapid conquest of Poland made that more comprehensive solution appear realistic did the Viennese authorities abandon their plans of re-locating the Jews in a nearby vicinity. That Hitler had the 'declared intention' in supporting this re-location measure 'to cleanse the *Ostmark* of Jews as a beginning' is supported by sources.<sup>42</sup> A memorandum in Bürckel's staff files states: 'This re-location procedure will be concluded in three quarters of a year at the latest. With it the Jewish problem in Vienna will have been completely solved.'<sup>43</sup>

It cannot be excluded, given the early date of the proposed deportation initiative in Vienna, that Viennese anti-Jewish policy had an influence on the Reich policy in this area as well. After all, Hitler may well have looked with greatest interest, as well as sense of first-hand knowledge, at that city where he had first learned of the 'Jewish problem.'<sup>44</sup> We see here a typical oscillation and opportunism in the anti-Jewish policy: always working toward the ultimate goal within the realm of the possible, never restricting itself to any single line of policy.

How this deportation policy was implemented in Vienna, in so far as it had not simply arisen from the pressure by the 'Aryan' Viennese, is revealed in the following citation from a report to Bürckel by a National Socialist *Ortsgruppenleiter* from a Vienna Jewish residential area (*Rossau-Alsergrund*) in 3 October 1939:

The extent of anti-Jewish feeling in the population is beyond measure. It is entirely thanks to the exertion of all our energy that in no case have riots occurred. I am fully conscious that this cannot be carried on forever, and that it is a pretty thankless task for a political leader, you will understand. The populace constantly points to the fact that the Jews are the only ones responsible for the war, and that they ought to be dealt with accordingly. People cannot understand why Jews receive the same quantities of food-stuffs as do Aryans. They fail to understand why Jews are not conscripted for forced labour and are left to pursue their dark schemes. The population is completely convinced that the Jews know of ways and means to obtain more goods, even these days, than they are entitled to. Proof, however, is not available, since this would be the task of the police to provide, who cannot cope in our Jew-infested district. The population sees it sometimes as a sign of weakness that organs of the Party are not entitled to do away with abuses. People feel them-

---

<sup>41</sup> H. Krausnick, 1967, *Judenverfolgung, Anatomie des SS-Staates 2*: 289, Munich.

<sup>42</sup> File 235 (2315/7), Rk. AVA.

<sup>43</sup> Memorandum 12 October 1939, Rk. AVA (see Botz, *Wohnungspolitik*, op. cit., 164).

<sup>44</sup> A. Hitler, 1939, *Mein Kampf*, New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 73-9; see also F. Heer, 1968, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler*, Munich, 51 et seq.; J. S. Jones, 1983, *Hitler in Vienna 1907-1913*, New York: Stein & Dau, 115-21; W. A. Jenks, 1976, *Vienna and the Young Hitler*, New York.; W. J. McGrath, 1974, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 241.

selves severely disadvantaged, as long as 'Aryans' have to live in damp cellars while Jews are permitted to wallow in beautiful apartments. The morale of part of the population is being so thoroughly affected by their living in such close proximity with the Jews that it will not be possible for many years, in spite of great efforts, to win them over. Therefore I propose: 1. Either to set male Jews to work in mines or similar labour where they can be supervised easily, and accommodate their female family members in nearby camps. 2. Or, should this not be possible, to consider their evacuation to Poland, east of the Vistula, since it is all the same whether 2.5 or 2.7 million Jews live in Poland. 3. Should this be impossible as well, then the transfer of Jews should be carried out under other considerations than hitherto. Either: 4. to those habitations which are unhealthy (mainly cellar flats where even today Aryans have to live with their children) or 5. into apartments exposed to the dangers of air raids (4th or 5th floor).<sup>45</sup>

Procurement of accommodation at the expense of the Jews, i.e. negative social policy, also played a central role in all other newly conquered territories of the Third Reich and in the 'Final Solution,' though I shall not go into the question of how far this applied to Poland and Romania. It was probably less a mere instrument of rationalization and pseudo-moral legitimation than an effective moving force towards the 'Final Solution.'<sup>46</sup>

Until the beginning of 1942, by which time the victorious *Wehrmacht* had opened up new perspectives on Jewish transportation to bleak and unhealthy reservations (previously the French colony of Madagascar had been mooted), insurmountable obstacles had arisen due to the internally competing institutions of the Third Reich; hence the deportation of Jews did not really get under way. However, as early as October 1939 there had been two transports of Jews from Vienna to Nisko; although their continuation was prevented by Himmler 'for reasons of technical difficulties.'<sup>47</sup> Obviously, the pressure of events, and the requisite internal radicalization of the Third Reich in the phase of the Blitzkrieg, had not yet developed sufficiently to overcome the obstacles to such mass deportation measures.

---

## 8. Realizing the Nazi Stereotype of the 'Jew'

---

The formation of ghettos and the earlier elimination of the Jews from the economy and the rule of law had led to a further deterioration of the already intolerable situation of the Viennese Jews. In this way the National Socialist persecution policy created a multitude of Jews who corresponded to the stereotype promoted by Julius Streicher in *Der Stürmer*: filthy, down-and-out Jews who snatched greedily at any chance of business dealings. The consequence of the persecution re-enforced the propagandistic stereotype of the 'Jews' and broke the remains of solidarity on the

---

<sup>45</sup> File, mat. reg. 31 (1710), Rk. AVA. See Botz, *Wohnungspolitik*, op. cit., 85-6.

<sup>46</sup> The non-Jewish population was involved in and profited by Nazism's anti-Semitic measures in eastern central Europe to a higher extent than usually admitted; cf. B. Vago and G. L. Mosse, eds., 1974, *Jews and non-Jews in Eastern Europe*, New York: Wiley.

<sup>47</sup> Moser, op. cit., 17 et seq.

part of their 'Aryan' neighbours at the same time. The 'Jew' became as disgusting for the 'Aryans' as the anti-Semites had depicted him as being since time immemorial. For 'vermin' and 'parasites' nothing but extermination was appropriate, as *Völkisch* anti-Semites had already imagined several decades earlier.<sup>48</sup> Only in the wake of this process of de-humanizing the Jews did it become possible further to radicalize the persecution, thus making the Holocaust itself capable of realization.

There remained in Vienna at the beginning of October 1939, 66,000 so-called 'persons of Jewish faith' (*Glaubensjuden*), 39,000 persons of so-called 'Jewish race' (*Rassejuden*),<sup>49</sup> and approximately 13,000 foreign and stateless Jews. Their further pauperization and marginalization was once more put in motion by 'legislative measures.' As early as September 1939 a curfew was imposed and the existing limitations on access to parks and recreational facilities were tightened even further. At the beginning of January 1940 the times during which Jews, whose ration cards were marked with a 'J,' could enter provision stores were limited to those when goods in demand had been sold out.

In 1942 Jews were forbidden to obtain cigars, eggs, meat, full-fat milk and white flour. After they had already been forced in 1939 to hand over all jewellery and precious metal, they were now robbed of fur and woollen clothing. Since the end of 1941 they had been excluded from all public social services, as well as from listening to the radio, use of public transport and use of the telephone. They were forbidden to leave the area of Greater Vienna without permission. The apex of social discrimination was reached with the law of September, 1941, which required the identification of Jews by a yellow Star of David-*Judenstern*, which was to be worn prominently on the left side of the chest. Without it Jews were prohibited to show themselves in public.<sup>50</sup>

A National Socialist report about the economic situation of Vienna's Jews in the summer of 1940 stated 'that they mostly had no income, apart from isolated cases like doctors and dental technicians who treated Jews and lawyers who represented Jews.' Of Vienna's 'Jews by faith' about 40,000 were without means. In September 1939, 35,500 persons were fed each day by the Jewish communal administration and 31,364, about one and a half of the remaining 66,000, received cash grants. The budget of the Jewish community required a monthly sum of 1.4 to 1.5 million *Reichsmark* in order to fulfil all the tasks of social support with which it had been charged and in order to finance emigration up to August 1939. Since these large sums came mainly from foreign-aid committees, the start of the war meant an almost total collapse of Jewish self-aid.

---

<sup>48</sup> Hitler, op. cit., 419-25; cf. an anti-Semitic pamphlet from 1923, G. Botz, 1983, *Gewalt in der Politik*, 2nd ed., Munich, 406.

<sup>49</sup> According to the Nuremberg Racial Laws of 15 September 1935, a Jew was a person who descended from at least three so-called racially full Jewish grandparents. Under certain circumstances (Jewish denomination, marriage to a Jew, illegitimate birth), this definition of 'Jew' applied also to 'half-castes' with only two Jewish grandparents (H. Pfeifer, 1941, *Die Ostmark: Eingliederung und Gestaltung*, Vienna, 173-4). This definition of 'Jew by race' (*Rassejude*) was wider than the 'Jew of denomination' (*Glaubensjude*), which comprised only members of the Jewish religious community.

<sup>50</sup> Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., passim.



The situation of these Viennese Jews was made even more difficult by the fact that 40 per cent of them were above 60 years of age, with those less than 40 years old amounting to only 19 per cent. In addition, women were overrepresented by a factor of two to one. The preponderance of the aged and of women was a consequence of emigration – for economically active persons, men, and middle- and upper-class Jews emigration was less difficult – and the extremely deteriorated conditions of life which had made the remaining Viennese Jews into a moribund community even before their deportation.<sup>51</sup>

---

## 9. Removal and Annihilation

---

In June 1940 Hitler informed the new *Gauleiter* and Reich-Commissioner of Vienna, Baldur von Schirach, that it was his firm intention to remove the Jews of Vienna to the *Generalgouvernement* in Poland. Half a year later the Führer repeated that ‘the 60,000 Jews who still live in the *Reichsgau* Vienna are to be despatched with all haste to the *Generalgouvernement* even now in wartime, because of the need for housing in Vienna.’<sup>52</sup> And in November 1941, Hitler admonished his Reich-Commissioner of Vienna to apply himself energetically to the deportation of all the Jews and then to the removal of all ‘Czechs and other ethnic aliens.’ That way, the dwellings of 400,000 to 500,000 people would be made available to the ‘Aryan’ Viennese!<sup>53</sup>

Thus, the systematic persecution of minorities in the Third Reich was a calculated variable in the redistribution of economic benefits. It seems most likely that the political process which led to the ‘Final Solution’ might well have continued in the case of a German ‘Final Victory’ in the war, and might also have included the Czechs and other ‘alien ethnic minorities’ in the then expanded German conquered territories. In Vienna, the appropriate administrative organization was already in preparation; Viennese Nazis spoke in this context of ‘the expulsion and removal of the Czech minority in Vienna.’<sup>54</sup> However, tactical considerations seem to have led Himmler as early as May 1940 to postpone this other kind of ‘final solution while the war is in progress.’

Preference was to be given instead to the ‘Final Solution’ of the Jewish Question. Until it was dismantled on 1 November 1942, the Viennese Jewish community administration was obliged to compile the lists for the series of transports which started in 1942. Afterwards this role was taken over by ‘the Council of the Jewish Elders.’ Soon ‘Jewish search personnel’ and ‘marshals’ had to drag the Jewish victims to the transports under the supervision of the SS. Initially, the arrests took place during the day. Since the ‘marshals’ often had to wait for hours until the Jewish victims had returned home, the arrests were soon carried out at night when

---

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 297-300; *Die Juden in Wien* (1941); Botz, *Wohnungspolitik*, op. cit., 605-10.

<sup>52</sup> IMT, vol. 29, 176 (PS 1950).

<sup>53</sup> R 43 II/1361a, BA.

<sup>54</sup> For more details see: G. Botz, *Wohnungspolitik*, op. cit.

the Jews were under curfew.<sup>55</sup> Persons of ‘mixed race’ – *Mischlinge* of first and second degree – were safe from these arrests, as at first were employees and workers of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, invalided ex-servicemen, and indispensable workers; but later only those of ‘mixed race’ remained exempt.<sup>56</sup>

Petty offences, like the inadvertent covering over of the Jewish star, possession of a cigarette butt, or infringement of the curfew by a few minutes, led to immediate despatch to a staging camp. There the Jews had to hand over all their cash while awaiting the next transport and sign a document to state that they relinquished voluntarily any claim on their remaining property in favour of the Reich. Each was allowed no more than 50kg of luggage on the journey by cattle-car, the hardships of which many did not survive.

Between 15 February and 12 March 1941, five transports went to the *Generalgouvernement*; this was then discontinued because of the preparations for the attack on the Soviet Union, although only one half of the contingents originally planned had been dispatched. In Poland the Jews were dumped in little country towns, which caused an acute food shortage.<sup>57</sup>

Before suffering mass murder the Jews had to be moved out of sight of the ‘Aryan’ Viennese, so that their extermination like ‘vermin’ could not easily stir human compassion among their fellow Viennese. What happened to them in far-away Poland was not clearly known and did not disturb very many Viennese. The anonymization of the victims of automatic weapons and bombing raids, which enables the spatial and emotional separation of the commanders and perpetrators from the suffering and pain of the human beings attacked – thus preventing the formation of empathy which might inhibit such deeds – is certainly a precondition of modern warfare, as it was for the Nazis’ ‘Final Solution.’

After the attack on the Soviet Union, the SS terror organization moved on to the direct murder of the Jews. Early in the course of the accelerating ‘total solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence,’ trucks were used which had been converted into mobile gas-chambers. Later in the autumn of 1941, the SS began to put into use the gas-chambers which had been found useful in the ‘euthanasia programme.’

In 1942 mass deportations set in anew, and this caused a sudden monthly lowering of the numbers of remaining Viennese Jews by 4,000 to 5,000 persons. In that year alone, 32,000 of the 43,000 Jews were deported. On 15 April 1943 there were still 7,544 Jews in Vienna. Of those, nearly 3,900 lived in ‘privileged’ mixed marriages and about 1,550 in ‘non-privileged’ ones.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> H. Gold, 1966, *Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 102, H. G. Adler, 1974, *Der verwaltete Mensch, Studie zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland*, Tübingen: S. Mohr, 380 et seq.

<sup>56</sup> Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., 282–95.

<sup>57</sup> Moser, op. cit., 22–3; H. Rosenkranz, *The Anschluss and the Tragedy of Austrian Jews, 1934–45*; Fraenkel, op. cit., 512–13.

<sup>58</sup> Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung*, op. cit., 310. Jews or Jewish half-castes living in ‘privileged’ mixed marriages were, under certain circumstances, exempted from deportation if they had offspring with a non-Jewish spouse; exemptions were occasionally given also because of war decorations, non-Jewish appearance, etc.; *ibid.*, 289.

By the end of 1944, the Jews in Vienna were again reduced by one-quarter through the deportation of 1,646 and transfer of 249 Jews to concentration camps. Only about 5,700 Viennese Jews survived the Third Reich in Vienna. Beyond that only 2,142 survived the inferno of the annihilation camps where, including the concentration camps, approximately 65,500 Austrian Jews had met their end.<sup>59</sup>

According to Erika Weinzierl<sup>60</sup> only slightly more than 200 Jews had been hidden by non-Jewish Viennese and thereby saved. This figure is to be contrasted with another one which is based on an estimate of Simon Wiesenthal's in 1966. To quote Wiesenthal: 'At least 3 million murdered Jews have to be blamed on the Austrians who were participants in the crimes of National Socialists (as SS and concentration camp personnel).'<sup>61</sup>

In conclusion, the following points summarize the process of the persecution of the Jews and their elimination from Viennese society:

- 1) The events leading up to the destruction of the Viennese Jews must be seen as a process, but not one with a clearly-defined goal or one that moved unilinearly in a predefined political direction. Although the general direction of antisemitism was determined, it was not fixed in detail in its timing, means or degree of radicalism.
- 2) National Socialist anti-Jewish policy found widespread support in Vienna; it was based on anti-Jewish traditions popular since the Middle Ages.
- 3) The annihilation of the Viennese Jews in the Third Reich showed essentially the same dynamic of hostility towards the Jews as existed in Vienna already before 1900, as indicated in other papers in this volume. Its most powerful driving forces in the Third Reich, radiating from the regional areas, were immediate material interests.

This should not be taken to mean that the strong antisemitism of many Viennese did not also have socio-psychological, cultural or religious causes. The official and party-organized persecution of the Jews was put into effect with a thoroughness which on occasion called forth criticism from even the Gestapo and the economic and state bureaucracy. This points to the extent of the pent-up and socially explosive frustration at the root of the antisemitism of the population and the Nazis of Vienna. It also reflects the massive economic and status-anxiety of the middle layers of a society which had entered the dynamic of capitalist development, threatened by crises and in a state of rapid modernization. Antisemitism doubtless did have a strong anti-capitalist dimension.

Since the economic motives of Jew-hatred have to be reckoned the stronger, the more insecure the economic situation of a country – and the more prominent, affluent and concentrated the Jewish population – the antisemitism in Vienna was more intense than that in the Old Reich. In consequence, from 1938 on Vienna was al-

---

<sup>59</sup> Moser, op. cit., 47-52; Rosenkranz, *Anschluss*, op. cit., 526.

<sup>60</sup> E. Weinzierl, 1969, *Zu wenig Gerechte, Österreicher und Judenverfolgung 1938-1945*, Graz: Styria, 145-6.

<sup>61</sup> Memorandum of S. Wiesenthal of 12 October 1966, sent to the Austrian Federal Chancellor Josef Klaus; copy in: *Dokumentationszentrum des Bundes jüdischer Verfolgter des Naziregimes*, Vienna.

ways a few steps ahead of Germany in the process of persecution of the Jews. Not only were the comparable measures applied earlier in Vienna than in Germany, but they could also count on much broader support among the non-Jewish population. Here, the organizational instruments and procedures could be developed which would later be applied by Eichmann in the 'Final Solution.' It is not surprising, therefore, that in connection with the expulsion of the Jews from their homes, concrete plans were devised in the office of the Reich-Commissioner earlier than anywhere else in the Greater German Reich (except perhaps by Hitler and the innermost circles of the leadership) from the mass deportation and incineration in concentration camps of the entire remaining Jewish population of Vienna.

The response of the party membership to the announcement of a considerably more stringent Jewish policy immediately after the start of the war, which eventually was to bring about the deportation and annihilation of 65,000 Viennese Jews, shows that fantasies and desires in that direction had long been entertained. The 'Final Solution' had already been within the realm of the thinkable before the Nazi period and it became feasible only at the end of a politico-social-psychological process, which dehumanized step-by-step the image of the 'Jew' and weakened the still existing feelings of solidarity with the victims among the non-Jewish population. At the beginning of this process anti-Semitic action on such a massive scale was implausible; by the end it was a self-fulfilling prophecy.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> See also: H. Buchheim, 1965, *Die SS - das Herrschaftsinstrument. Befehl und Gehorsam*, in *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, vol. 1, Munich: dtv. A similar mechanism seems to govern South Africa's Apartheid policy (cf. J. Lelyveld, 1985, *Move Your Shadow South Africa, Black and White*, New York: NY Times).