

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.¹ 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.

¹ 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.² As children of highly acculturated Jewish Germans, they felt no great attraction toward things Jewish.³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵ 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

² Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

³ Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.⁶

In January 1934, the Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Education commenced preparations for changes to Jewish educational institutions.⁷ 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.⁸ 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*.⁹ 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

⁶ 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.

⁷ Betrifft: jüdische und gemischt-jüdische Volksschulen, 8. Januar 1934, *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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*.¹⁰ Pupils studied the following subjects: Religious Studies; Biblical History; Jewish History and Literature; Hebrew; and Jewish Prayer and Scriptures.¹¹ 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.¹² 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!¹³

Gerry Levy recalled, with some amusement, his shock at the time to learn that one of his friends actually enjoyed classes:

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Zeugnis für Hansgünter Jeruchem, Religionsschule der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Schuljahr 1935/1936, Private Archive of Hans Jensen.

¹² Nachweisung über das jüdische Volksschulwesen, 25. Mai 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, pp. 59–60.

¹³ 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!¹⁴

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.”

¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.’¹⁶

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.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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.¹⁹

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;

¹⁵ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

¹⁶ Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

¹⁷ Personal interview with R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 15 August 1997.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ 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 1935.²⁰ *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’²¹ 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

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.²² 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.²³

In addition to the registration of Jewish pupils, two private Jewish educational establishments under the directorship of Sebastian Kaltenstadler and Rabbi Dr Wilde were registered²⁴ and were placed under surveillance by 19 February 1937.²⁵ Jewish staff offering private lessons were registered and preparations were made for securing the necessary Jewish teaching staff for the new segregated school.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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

²² 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.

²³ Betr.: Rassentrennung auf den öffentlichen Schulen, 1. Oktober 1935, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 89, Band 1, LHASA MD, p. 8.

²⁴ 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'.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.²⁸ In March 1937, guidelines for Jewish teachers instructing Jewish pupils were despatched nationally.²⁹ 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

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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.³¹

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!³²

Both incidents indicate the level and regularity of the exclusion and humiliation Jewish pupils encountered.

³⁰ Reed, op. cit., 4 August 1999.

³¹ Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

³² 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,³³ 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.³⁴

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.³⁵ 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.'³⁶

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

³³ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

³⁴ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

³⁵ R. Z., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

³⁶ 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.³⁷ 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.

³⁷ 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.’³⁸ 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.³⁹

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!⁴⁰

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

³⁸ Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

³⁹ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ 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.’⁴² 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.⁴³

Hans Jensen could not recall any antisemitism on the part of his teachers at his school, the ‘*Vereinigtes Dom- und Klosterschulhaus*’, and completed his schooling there on 24 February 1938.⁴⁴ 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.

⁴¹ S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁴² Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

⁴³ H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

⁴⁴ Zeugnis der Reife, Vereinigtes Staatliches Dom- und Klosterschulhaus 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.⁴⁵ The letter reiterates the previous complaint and requests that the 'evil state of affairs be rectified by the establishment of '*Judenschulen*.''⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷

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 1937.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ It discussed school attendance, education for '*Mischlinge*,' examinations and teacher education requirements.⁵⁰ 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

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ 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.'

⁴⁸ Betrifft: Rassentrennung auf den öffentlichen Schulen, 28. Juni 1937, *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Auswirkung des Reichsbürgergesetzes auf das Schulwesen, 2. Juli 1937, *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–27.

Science, Art and Education was received in Magdeburg.⁵¹ 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.⁵² 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.⁵³ 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 1938.⁵⁴

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

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 62–63.

⁵³ Beschäftigung jüdischer Lehrer an öffentlichen jüdischen Schulen, 30. Dezember 1937, ibid., p. 67.

⁵⁴ Correspondence from Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, 28 April 1938, ibid., p. 68.

Jews.’⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶

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 1938.⁵⁷ After a lengthy application process Rudolf Rosenberg, who already occupied a teaching position at the *Religionsschule*, and Kurt Schindler, formerly of Berlin, were appointed.⁵⁸ 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

⁵⁵ Betr.: Einrichtung einer Judenschule, 12. März 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Betr.: Errichtung von Lehrstellen für die Judenschule, 18. Januar 1938 – 28. Januar 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

⁵⁷ Correspondence from the office of Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Magdeburg, 17 May 1938 – 12 August 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 7–21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

same courtyard in the summer months, however, at different times.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ 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

⁵⁹ M. F., *op. cit.*, 27 June 1999.

⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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.⁶² They also fostered and developed positive Jewish identities in young Jews.⁶³ 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

⁶¹ H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

⁶² Kaplan, op. cit., p. 109.

⁶³ 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 groups⁶⁴ was still operating and all four documented Zionist youth groups had been dissolved.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶ 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*

⁶⁴ 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.

⁶⁵ Very limited archival documentation and oral history material exist on these organisations and their dissolutions.

⁶⁶ 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;⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸ 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 1937.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ 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.

⁶⁸ 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.

⁶⁹ 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.

⁷⁰ 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 1933⁷¹ 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.⁷² 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

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² 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.⁷³ At the time of registration, the group possessed forty-five members.⁷⁴ 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.⁷⁵

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.⁷⁶

⁷³ Satzungen des Jüdisch-religiösen Jugendbundes ‘Heimat’, Magdeburg, 1. Juli 1933, Bestand 1, 75C Ar 1, Signatur Nr. 3, CJA, op. cit., pp. 46–47.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 45.

⁷⁵ Levy, op. cit., 4 August 1997.

⁷⁶ 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.⁷⁷ 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.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ 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.

⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰ Former members of *Habonim* clearly recall their families' connection to Zionism and to Palestine.⁸¹ 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.⁸² 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.'⁸³ This youth group was dissolved in August 1935 and the remaining Zionist youth groups were dissolved in July 1938.

⁷⁹ 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.

⁸⁰ Personal interview with R. Z. (recorded), Sydney, 19 November 1997.

⁸¹ H. B., op. cit., 19 November 1997.

⁸² H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

⁸³ 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.’⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵

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

⁸⁴ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁸⁵ 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*.⁸⁶ 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 1935,⁸⁷ 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

⁸⁶ Protokoll der Hauptversammlung des Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, 11. März 1934, ALJGSA, op. cit., p. 2.

⁸⁷ 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.’⁸⁸ On 5 July 1935, the same office requested the registration of all Jewish training centres by 10 August 1935.⁸⁹ On 15 August 1935, the Gestapa in Berlin was informed that two such centres were operating in Magdeburg.⁹⁰

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.⁹¹ 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*.⁹² 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.⁹³ On 24 April 1937, the Gestapa in Berlin despatched its written approval to its Magdeburg office.⁹⁴ Clearly at this point in

⁸⁸ Rundschreiben Nr. 240/35; Betr.: Geldsammlung der Zionisten, 2. Juli 1935, Bestand Rep. C 31, Signatur Nr. 26, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 6.

⁸⁹ Rundschreiben Nr. 249; Betr.: Jüdische Umschulungslager, 5. Juli 1935, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., p. 232..

⁹⁰ Betr.: Jüdische Umschulungslager, 15. August 1935, Collection RG-11.00M.01, Reel 2, File 500-1-173, USHMMA, p. 75.

⁹¹ 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.

⁹² 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.

⁹³ 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.

⁹⁴ 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.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷

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

⁹⁵ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁹⁶ Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

⁹⁷ 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*⁹⁸ 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.’⁹⁹ 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.¹⁰⁰

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.¹⁰¹ 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:

⁹⁸ 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.

⁹⁹ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ 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.¹⁰²

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.¹⁰³

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!¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

¹⁰³ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

¹⁰⁴ 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.¹⁰⁵ 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.’¹⁰⁶

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.¹⁰⁷ In the same time period, in a bid to ensure that school leavers were suitably prepared

¹⁰⁵ 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.

¹⁰⁶ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

¹⁰⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸

In February 1938¹⁰⁹ 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.¹¹⁰ However, the situation for emigration to England was more favourable.¹¹¹ 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’¹¹² 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,¹¹³ or

¹⁰⁸ 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.

¹⁰⁹ Betr.: England – Unterbringung von Jugendlichen, 22. Februar 1938, *ibid.*, p. 295.

¹¹⁰ 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.

¹¹¹ Betr.: Amerika-Unterbringungen, 26. Juli 1937, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., pp. 270–271.

¹¹² Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 25. März 1938 – 28. März 1938, *ibid.*, pp. 300–301.

¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴

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.’¹¹⁵ 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.¹¹⁶ 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

distinguished from Jews and were not to be subjected to deportation and extermination.

¹¹⁴ Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 25. März 1938 – 28. März 1938, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., p. 301.

¹¹⁵ Betr.: Unterbringung von Mischlingen in Neuseeland, 29. März 1938, *ibid.*, p. 302.

¹¹⁶ 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.¹¹⁷

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.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

¹¹⁸ 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.¹¹⁹ 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 1946.¹²⁰

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:

¹¹⁹ Jensen, op. cit., 14 June 1999.

¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹

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.¹²² 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.¹²³

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.¹²⁴ 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,

¹²¹ Poppert, *op. cit.*, 9 January 1998.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ 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.¹²⁵ 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

¹²⁵ Offene Praktikanten- u. Lehrstellen, 8. März 1935, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 1315, CJA, op. cit., p. 118.

the chaos and panic that followed.¹²⁶ 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.¹²⁷ 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.¹²⁸

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

¹²⁶ 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.

¹²⁷ Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

¹²⁸ 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.¹²⁹

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.¹³⁰

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.¹³¹

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

¹²⁹ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

¹³⁰ Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

¹³¹ 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.¹³²

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.¹³³

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.¹³⁴

¹³² Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ 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.¹³⁵ All letters from Germany were censored, often with sections blacked-out or even with pieces physically cut out of the letters.¹³⁶ 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.¹³⁷

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.¹³⁸

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.¹³⁹ 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

¹³⁵ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

¹³⁶ Ibid and Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

¹³⁷ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

¹³⁸ Kaplan, op. cit., p. 117. The phrase in its original German was: 'Aus Kindern wurden Briefe.'

¹³⁹ Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM, op. cit.

her mother was in 1942.¹⁴⁰ This International Red Cross message consisted of approximately fifteen words.¹⁴¹ 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.¹⁴²

The last residence in Magdeburg of Otto and Regina Herrmann, the parents of Inge-Ruth, was at *Große Klosterstraße* 10a.¹⁴³ In September 1940 the couple left Magdeburg and relocated to Potsdam, where they were working at a Jewish home for the aged.¹⁴⁴ Prior to this Otto Herrmann had been a forced labourer in Magdeburg.¹⁴⁵ Sometime thereafter, they moved to Berlin¹⁴⁶ and were deported from their registered address in the city centre, which was *Große Hamburger Straße* 26.¹⁴⁷

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.¹⁴⁸ Mail was possible via the International Red Cross. Shortly prior to

¹⁴⁰ Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM, op. cit.

¹⁴¹ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

¹⁴² The lives and fates of the members of the Jankelowitz family have also been discussed in previous chapters, particularly in Chapters Two and Three.

¹⁴³ Personal file on the Herrmann family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 20, ASGM, op. cit.

¹⁴⁴ Private correspondence from Otto Herrmann, 25 November 1940, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

¹⁴⁵ Austinat, op. cit., 29 January 2001.

¹⁴⁶ Private correspondence from Otto Herrmann, 29 November 1942, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

¹⁴⁷ Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., *Gedenkbuch Berlins der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1995, pp. 484–485.

¹⁴⁸ 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!¹⁴⁹

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 1944.¹⁵⁰ The only letter ever to reach the Herrmanns' daughter in Sydney arrived via Sweden, when Betty Caspari forwarded it on.¹⁵¹ 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 1944.¹⁵²

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.¹⁵³

When Hemmi Freeman left for England prior to the *Reichskristallnacht*, he sailed from Hamburg, later docking at Cherbourg, before disembarking in

nine-page manuscript was translated from the original German into English by the author of this thesis in 2004.

¹⁴⁹ Private correspondence from Otto and Regina Herrmann, 29 July 1942, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

¹⁵⁰ Private correspondence from the Herrmann and Manneberg families, 8 August 1943 – 17 August 1944, ibid.

¹⁵¹ Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ 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.¹⁵⁴ 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.¹⁵⁵

His relief was even greater when his parents reluctantly left Magdeburg for Palestine in August 1939.¹⁵⁶ 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.¹⁵⁷

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,¹⁵⁸ 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

¹⁵⁴ H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

¹⁵⁵ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ S. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

¹⁵⁸ 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'¹⁵⁹ 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 Manneberg¹⁶⁰ was living with his parents-in-law, the Wandrows, at *Schönebecker Straße 29/30*.¹⁶¹ 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 1934.¹⁶² 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.¹⁶³ It is most likely that Heinrich Manneberg was deported to the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942.¹⁶⁴ It is not known if he perished there or in an

¹⁵⁹ Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Personal file on the Manneberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 31, ASGM, op. cit.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ 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.

¹⁶⁴ 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.¹⁶⁵

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!¹⁶⁶

After marrying in 1949 and settling in Bournemouth, he and his family immigrated to Australia in 1960 and settled in Perth.¹⁶⁷ 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

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.

¹⁶⁵ Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 765.

¹⁶⁶ Mannings, op. cit., 17 August 1999.

¹⁶⁷ 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*.¹⁶⁸ 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.

¹⁶⁸ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.