

Chapter Seven: The Jewish Community during World War Two

***Judenhäuser* and Stigmatisation**

By the end of 1939 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* was the only Jewish organisation operating in Magdeburg. Under the leadership of Hermann Spier, the various religious congregations had merged into one body and regular religious services continued to be held. With the outbreak of World War Two, even though emigration was still permitted, there were no documented successful attempts. By this time the majority of Jews had been evicted from their homes and herded together into '*Judenhäuser*' in cramped conditions with few facilities for all to share. Stigmatisation reached new levels in autumn 1941 when Jews were ordered to wear a sewn-on, yellow Star of David. All remaining Jewish property was appropriated, completing the process of 'aryanisation.' Life in the public domain further deteriorated and most Jews avoided being outdoors altogether, unless it was absolutely necessary. Jews were subjected to curfews, faced total bans from all public venues and public transportation, and were ordered to surrender the majority of their remaining possessions. Even articles of clothing deemed 'unnecessary' were confiscated. The community's sense of isolation and stigmatisation increased rapidly, but they attempted to maintain their dignity in spite of their daily humiliation. This phase marked the beginning of the physical ghettoisation of the Jews of Magdeburg.

Between the pogrom of November 1938 and the end of 1939, the remaining Jewish organisations in Magdeburg were dissolved or were incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, and their survival was directly linked to the nature of their work. On 19 January 1939, the *Jüdischer Hilfsverein*

was dissolved and deregistered.¹ Documentation concerning the activities of its partner organisation, the *Provinzial-Verband für jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege in Sachsen-Anhalt, Beratungsstelle Magdeburg*, ended in May 1938.² Given the nature of its work and the general co-ordination of such work from Berlin, it is most likely that it continued to operate until it too was incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. On 29 September 1939, the *Israelitisches Altersheim* was incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* by order of § 5 der Zehnten Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz from 4 July 1939,³ as was the *Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft* on 3 October 1939,⁴ followed in succession by the *Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse* on 5 December 1939,⁵ which was subsequently forced into liquidation. Thus, by the beginning of 1940 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* was the only remaining Jewish organisation operating in Magdeburg.

When World War Two broke out, numerous Jews were in possession of tickets and visas and were desperate to emigrate. However, no record has been located indicating any successful attempts after September 1939, despite the fact that the government still permitted emigration up to the autumn of 1941. With the outbreak of war, routes of passage became very limited. Walter Heinemann was

¹ Jüdischer Hilfsverein zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2305, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 71.

² No documentation concerning any of its roles or activities beyond May 1938 has been located.

³ Correspondence from the Reich Minister for the Interior to the Israelitisches Altersheim in Magdeburg, 29 September 1939, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2481, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 92.

⁴ Correspondence from the Head of the SS and the SD, Berlin to the Israelitische Beerdigungs-Gesellschaft, 3 October 1939, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 293.

⁵ Jüdische Bezirksdarlehnskasse zu Magdeburg, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2235, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 50.

the agent for Jewish emigration in Magdeburg and as such was the registered agent for the entire province of Saxony-Anhalt for the Hamburg-based 'Red Star Line'. His approval as an agent dated back to 14 September 1937.⁶ The company offered passage from Antwerp to the United States of America (USA) and Heinemann was authorised to book all passages for 'non-Aryans.'⁷ He continued to book passages for Jewish emigrants via this route until the shipping line went into liquidation in November 1939.⁸ In the first quarter of 1940, 10,312 Jews from German-occupied territory emigrated. The emigration figure from the *Altreich* was that of 4,755 Jews.⁹

Another documented route was that from Lisbon to the USA. However, despite some travel routes remaining open, the obstacle continued to be the acquisition of the necessary visas, as the story of the Zadek family illustrates. The Zadek family had moved from Magdeburg to Berlin in July 1937 and settled in Neukölln. The family consisted of Siegfried and Hulda and their twin daughters Hanna and Ruth, aged thirteen years at the time. Hulda Zadek's sister lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and, through family sponsorship, the Zadeks were hopeful of emigrating to the USA. On 31 October 1939, both her brother-in-law,

⁶ Correspondence from the Red Star Linie G.M.B.H. to Walter Heinemann, Magdeburg, 14 September 1937, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 227, Band 3, LHASA MD, pp. 146–149.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁸ Betr.: Auswanderer-Erlaubnis für Herrn Walter Heinemann, Magdeburg, 24. November 1939, *ibid.*, p. 150.

⁹ Die jüdische Auswanderung aus dem Altreich, der Ostmark und dem Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren im ersten Vierteljahr 1940, 12. April 1940, Collection 0.51.OSSOBI, File 103, YVA, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–3. Of the total figure the destinations of emigrants were as follows: North America – 4,500; Central and South America – 2,398; Australia – 6; Africa – 137; Asia – 1,675; Palestine – 394; and Europe (excluding 'enemy nations') – 1,202.

Nathan Kann, and her cousin, Silas Adelsheim, dispatched affidavits to the American Consulate in Berlin in support of the immigration of the Zadek family.¹⁰

On 25 February 1941, the Zadeks received confirmation from ‘Palestine and Orient Lloyd’ of their third-class passage aboard the *Serpa Pinto* departing Lisbon 24 May 1941 and bound for New York.¹¹ On 10 March 1941, Siegfried Zadek forwarded on the booking confirmation, together with further affidavits from his wife’s American relatives, to the American Consulate in Berlin. Zadek sought their urgent attention to his family’s case.¹² Nevertheless, the family did not receive the necessary visas. Subsequently, the family of four remained in Berlin, up until the time of their deportation on 2 April 1942 to Trawniki, where they all perished.¹³ With the commencement of war and the continued reluctance of countries to accept Jewish immigrants, there was little chance of escaping Germany. One interviewee recalled his feelings and that of his family when war was declared:

I remember when the war started. I think it was a rather gloomy time for us. We then realised that we were going to be stuck there for a long time. I remember Dad became very worried about our future and because he felt there was no escape for us anymore.¹⁴

This family, however, was one of the very fortunate few to survive in Magdeburg and eventually emigrated to Australia in 1947.

By the end of 1939 the majority of the Jewish population had been evicted from their homes and were allocated rooms or apartments in designated

¹⁰ Correspondence and affidavits from Nathan Kann and Silas Adelsheim to the American Consulate, Berlin, 31 October 1939 – 2 November 1939, Bestand 1, 75E, Signatur Nr. 631, CJA, pp. 94, 160.

¹¹ Buchungsbescheinigung, 25. Februar 1941, *ibid.*, p. 152.

¹² Betr.: Reg. No. 43170-71-72-73 Deutsche Warteliste, 10. März 1941, *ibid.*, p. 155.

¹³ Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 1385.

¹⁴ Name withheld, *op. cit.*, 18 June 1999.

‘*Judenhäuser*.’¹⁵ Prior to this, however, all of the buildings which became ‘*Judenhäuser*’ already possessed a number of Jewish tenants and the actual buildings were owned by Jews. Some buildings were premises formerly owned by the community. The relocations were mandatory. However, initially in some cases, Jews were offered a choice. Living in overcrowded conditions with poor facilities, quality of life deteriorated further. Jews not only had to deal with impoverishment, humiliation and segregation, but had also lost the privacy and sanctity which their own homes had afforded them.

In Magdeburg there existed at least nine ‘*Judenhäuser*.’ They were located at the following addresses: *Arndtstraße 5*, which was the former *Israelitisches Altersheim*; *Brandenburger Straße 2a*, located within walking distance to the main railway station and which had formerly been a hotel owned and operated by businessman Bernhard Brustawitzki;¹⁶ *Fermersleber Weg 40–46*, which was the caretaker’s house at the Jewish cemetery; *Große Mühlenstraße 11/12*; *Große Schulstraße 2b*, the Jewish community building located next door to the destroyed synagogue, which housed the community’s offices, the re-established religious congregation, the ‘*Judenschule*’ and a number of apartments; *Johannesberg 15a*; *Lübecker Straße 30a*; *Schöninger Straße 27a*; and *Westendstraße 9*.¹⁷ With successive deportations, these buildings became vacant and were appropriated by the city and the province.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive discussion on ‘*Judenhäuser*’ see Konrad Kwiet, “Nach dem Pogrom. Stufen der Ausgrenzung,” in Wolfgang Benz, ed., op. cit., pp. 545–659; Barkai, “In a Ghetto Without Walls,” in Meyer, ed. op. cit., pp. 343–346; and Kaplan, op. cit.

¹⁶ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹⁷ Four deportation lists of Jews deported from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/1, 18 November 1942; Transport XX/2, 25 November 1942; Transport XX/3, 2 December 1942; and Transport XX/4, 11 January 1944, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, pp. 45–59. These lists confirm the personal particulars of deportees, including their addresses at the time of their deportation.

The Freiberg family, consisting of Joachim and Elli Freiberg and their two sons, had moved into the city centre in 1937. The building in which their apartment was located, at *Große Mühlenstraße* 11/12, later became a ‘*Judenhaus*.’ Consequently, they retained their apartment in the building, whilst non-Jews were relocated from this designated ‘*Judenhaus*.’¹⁸ Designated ‘*Judenhäuser*’ became exclusively Jewish, as ‘Aryans’ were moved out. Jewish inhabitants did not necessarily remain at the same address for any given period and could be ordered to move into another ‘*Judenhaus*’ at any time. When the Freibergs had moved into the apartment building in *Große Mühlenstraße*, the only other Jewish family living there was the Weinberg family. The Freiberg family remained in their old apartment and continued their former restricted lifestyle, but at least they were still living in familiar surroundings in their regular-sized apartment. By the time they were ordered to move out in early 1940, however, there were already several Jewish families living in the apartment building.¹⁹

The Freibergs were deeply shocked when they were ordered by the Gestapa to move into another ‘*Judenhaus*,’ located at *Brandenburger Straße* 2a. The Freibergs’ youngest son recalled his feelings when they moved:²⁰

We didn’t want to go there. That was the first relocation. It was a fourth-rate hotel. It was run by a Jewish family who came from the east and it had a reputation for being pretty dirty. We hated the idea of moving there, but we had to. There was something like thirty or forty people living there. We had only one room or we might have had two small rooms. I know it was way up the stairs and the toilet was one level below, to be shared with lots of other people.

There were the usual squabbles between neighbours. People of different backgrounds looking down on each other – there was everything there – Polish

¹⁸ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹⁹ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²⁰ Ibid.

Jews, German Jews. There were also quite a number of children and we had a small yard.²¹

Jews from all backgrounds, often unknown to one another, were forced to share limited facilities. Pre-existing divisions and differences between Jews only exacerbated the already prevailing tensions in daily life. In this particular ‘*Judenhaus*,’ social contact on the adult level seldom occurred and relations between Jews were poor. Arguments and complaints were normal, owing to so many people living in such a confined space. The greatest source of aggravation surrounded the use of the communal toilet. In forcing Jews to live under these new dehumanising conditions, tensions reached new heights, as Jews attempted to adapt to this new repressive measure.

Adding to their humiliation and stigmatisation, all Jews were ordered, in March 1942, to display a Star of David on the front door of their apartments, as recalled by an interviewee:

You had to put a ‘star’ on the door of where you lived. The same star [as the sewn-on, yellow Star of David], but in white. They were on white paper with black print, same size, everything – the exact copy of the yellow star.²²

Coupled with this, was the tension created by regular contact with the Gestapo:

The Gestapo came around every now and then. Usually, there was some sort of reason, like when my aunt got the orders to go [that is, when she received notification of her imminent deportation]. The early morning door knock. It happened like that.²³

Sometime after February 1943 the Freiberg family were ordered again to relocate to another ‘*Judenhaus*’ located at *Große Schulstraße 2b*. Comparatively, their new ‘home’ was an improvement, as one of their sons recalled:

Things were a lot better. There were quite a few families there. We had two rooms; I think we had a small apartment there, because I don’t remember

²¹ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²² M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²³ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

sharing anything with anyone. There were three or four levels and there were at least seven or eight families. There was a fair bit of land with that one, by Magdeburg standards. It had a big yard and it had another little yard on the side which was not paved and we started to grow vegies there and one of the guys didn't like it. So when it never succeeded he made us take it out – Mr Heinemann – he wasn't a very friendly person. And we kept a couple of rabbits in cages. We used to gather grass and leaves for them as food. Well, we stayed there until it was bombed out.²⁴

From this point onwards relations between Jews in the '*Judenhäuser*,' where the Freiberg family lived until liberation, were much improved. Neighbours interacted with one another as they each shared the same problems and burdens together.

Whilst the situation between residents appears to have been better, the anxiety caused by the prevailing conditions, the inability to make choices governing one's life and the looming threat of deportation still maintained a constant tension. One ongoing difficulty of home life which all Jews faced, and which interviewees recalled sharply, was the food situation:

We received ration cards, but much less than anybody else. It was very little. It was just enough to stop us from starving. They were stamped either with a big 'J' or the word *Jude* [Jew], so that the shopkeeper knew that he was serving a Jew. I mean, they would have known us anyway!²⁵

The rations received were augmented by vegetables, grown seasonally, in particular, in a communal vegetable garden located in the field belonging to the Jewish cemetery. There were also certain times when Jews could obtain vegetables without producing ration cards. By 1944, however, obtaining sufficient food had become a serious problem.²⁶

²⁴ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004. From 15 May 1942, Jews were forbidden from owning household pets, including dogs, cats and birds and this became a punishable offence. Rabbits may not have been classified as regular household pets or alternatively the interviewee's family permitted this breach.

²⁵ Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

²⁶ Ibid.

Interviewees also recalled that home life continued and that ‘life in general, as peculiar as it might sound, always went on.’²⁷ For adults, reading became a popular activity as Jews were banned from owning radios.²⁸ Both Freiberg brothers also recalled the birth of their sister, on 14 March 1944, and that their mother was attended to by another member of the community.²⁹

During an allied air raid of the city on 16 January 1945 the ‘*Judenhaus*’ at *Große Schulstraße*, in which the Freiberg family lived, was destroyed.³⁰ Fearful of air raids and of imminent deportation, as rumour had spread that ‘the Gestapo was rounding up anyone, whoever they could find for deportation,’³¹ the family fled for a short time to a village near Stendal. When they returned to Magdeburg, they installed themselves at the ‘*Judenhaus*’ at *Westendstraße*: ‘There were not many families there; it was only a house. There was hardly anyone left. There wouldn’t have been more than four or five families there.’³²

Jews herded together in ‘*Judenhäuser*’ experienced isolation and exclusion from society. This stripped them further of dignity and inflicted appalling living conditions on them, which only compounded their emotional and physical degradation and torment. This also allowed the Gestapo to both monitor the population and to convey directives, primarily notices for forced labour and pending deportation. After the establishment of the ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ the physical and spiritual needs of the Jews of Magdeburg were attended to solely by the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.

²⁷ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²⁸ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

By the beginning of 1940 the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* had assumed responsibility for all matters relating to the administration of the Jewish community as well attending to religious and welfare matters. The *Synagogen-Gemeinde* officially became known as the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg)* on 5 January 1940.³³ This organisation was also later dissolved and the community was officially incorporated into the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* on 27 May 1941. The deregistration was recorded on 8 August 1941.³⁴ Henceforth the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde* became known as the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*.³⁵ This remained so until the actual dissolution of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* itself on 10 June 1943. Until this time the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, in its altered state, continued to function in its various capacities.³⁶

All matters relating to the Jewish community were administered through the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg)*. This included the issuing of financial assistance to the needy and attending to the general welfare of the community; the collection of financial contributions by

³³ Registration and dissolution of the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung Synagogen-Gemeinde Magdeburg*, 5 January 1940 – 9 August 1941, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 20504, Band 7, LHASA MD, p. 189.

³⁴ Ibid.

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

³⁶ No archival material has survived indicating any imposed name changes or changes of status of the Shtiblech for the period. It is most likely that that they were not operational beyond the middle of 1939 at the very latest.

members to the community; the management of religious affairs; the conveying of all information from the government via the Berlin office of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, particularly further edicts restricting the lives of Jews, as well as the management of the ‘*Judenschule*.’

In November and December 1940 the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung* provided financial assistance to six individuals. This assistance included rental assistance to senior citizens and, in the case of eighty-five-year-old Adelland Zadek, it also included a supplement for the services of a cleaner.³⁷ However, such welfare assistance was only provided to Jews who were German nationals. When a stateless Jewess by the name of Gitla Buchhalter moved to Magdeburg from Leipzig in March 1941 and requested financial assistance, she was refused. On 8 March 1941, in a clinically worded letter, Leo Hirsch advised her of the rejection of her request on the grounds of her being stateless and of having relocated without official permission.³⁸

Attending to the general welfare of community members also included acting on their behalf in legal matters, as the unusual case of Kurt Berendsohn illustrates. Berendsohn was a casual worker and was employed in the community for odd jobs, including assisting with housework and washing. He was also employed by the Jewish community at the Jewish cemetery, where he transported corpses to the cemetery, prepared them for burial and dug the graves. In May 1940, Berendsohn was charged by the city’s health department for violation of the city’s health regulations. The crime was for not having prepared a grave deep enough for a

³⁷ List of recipients of financial assistance to members of the Jewish community of Magdeburg, November–December 1940, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 47, ASGM, p. 62.

³⁸ Correspondence to Gitla Buchhalter from the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung* (Synagogen Gemeinde E. V. Magdeburg), 8 March 1941, Bestand 2A2, Signatur Nr. 2814, CJA, p. 3.

burial, which occurred on 17 November 1939.³⁹ Owing to the unusual size of the casket, the late arrival of the corpse and the onset of the Sabbath, Berendsohn had not dug the grave deep enough. The end result was that after the burial of Moses Lewin, the ground settled in the ensuing days and the casket moved upwards, creating a hillock. Through the intercession of the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung*, which pleaded Berendsohn's case, he was neither charged nor imprisoned. At the time of Berendsohn's arrest, he was the sole carer of five children. His wife, the widow Hertha Zander née Basch, was in Waldheim prison, serving a sentence of two years and three months for aborting their child and was not due to be released until July 1941.⁴⁰ On 6 August 1940, the mayor's office issued a written warning to Berendsohn that such an occurrence was not to be repeated.⁴¹

For the period up until October 1941 the Jewish community was also responsible for the collection of community levies from those members still in a financial position to contribute. For the accounting year of 1940 sixty-five individuals were levied on their remaining assets. The total value of those assets listed was RM 3,889,674.40 and the total levies received amounted to RM

³⁹ For the complete and comprehensive police reports and all correspondence between the relevant parties concerning this matter see Bestand Rep. 38, Signatur Nr. 2501 R1, STAM, pp. 14–22. For a comprehensive personal file on the Berendsohn family see Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 06, ASGM.

⁴⁰ Betr.: Jude Kurt Israel Berendsohn, geb. 14.4.89 in Hamburg, 14. Juni 1940, Bestand Rep. 38, Signatur Nr. 2501 R1, STAM, p. 16 R. Hertha Zander née Basch was eventually released from prison, but later sent to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, where she perished on 12 May 1942. Her husband Kurt Berendsohn, together with their five children, four whom were from his wife's previous marriage, were deported to the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942. It is unknown whether or not they perished in the ghetto or in an extermination camp. For complete details on the Berendsohn and Zander children see Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 06, ASGM.

⁴¹ Verwarnung an Herrn Kurt Israel Berendsohn, Magdeburg, Fermersleberweg Nr. 40/46, 6. August 1940, *ibid.*, p. 22.

41,434.95.⁴² Additionally, twenty individuals were levied on their income and the total levies received equalled RM 4,980.20.⁴³ Of the individuals levied, seven paid both types of levy. The total gross amount levied for 1940 from both sources amounted to RM 46,415.15.

When the renamed *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung*, the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*, issued its October 1941 newsletter, it advised all members that communal levies were now being collected by the Leipzig office of the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, provided members with the banking details of the Leipzig office, and requested that payments be made directly.⁴⁴

Financial management of the community also extended to dealing with the local authorities. An example of this occurred when Dr Max Kaufmann received an invoice on 28 October 1941 for fees payable for the dissolutions of all Jewish organisations in Magdeburg. Kaufmann responded to the office of the Court Cashier with a reminder that the Jewish community was exempt from such charges and quoted the relevant legislation.⁴⁵ Administratively and financially the community had adapted yet again and managed its affairs to the best of its resources.

For the duration of the existence of the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*, community members were kept informed by regular newsletters. The most

⁴² Beitragserhebung nach dem Vermögen 1940, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 47, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 63–66.

⁴³ Beitragserhebung nach der veranlagten Einkommensteuer, ibid., p. 67.

⁴⁴ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

⁴⁵ Betrifft: Kassenseichen I 4294, 5. November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 129, Signatur Nr. 2165, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 298.

important information conveyed concerned further repressive measures against Jews and reminders of legal obligations and of the consequences of breaches. In this respect the newsletters confirm the role of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* – namely that of acting as an intermediary between the government and the Jewish communities.

The remainder of the information reflected everyday concerns. Religious services were advertised. Complaints were made that community members were seeking advice from staff from the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg*, outside office hours, and the request was made that members make the necessary appointments. Members were informed that due to the financial situation of the community, fees would have to be charged for all communal services, including advice on matters relating to accommodation, general advice and access to the clothing pool. Members were also reminded to lodge their requests for ration cards on the appropriate day each month in order to avoid delays in receiving their food coupons. Distribution of fruit and vegetables such as apples and potatoes also took place and professional services were advertised.⁴⁶ The *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* administered communal affairs and liaised with its members on all matters. It continued to perform these roles until it was dissolved. Simultaneously, the religious duties and responsibilities of the community were attended to by Hermann Spier and later by lay community members as numbers reduced due to deportations.

⁴⁶ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter. Further newsletters informing community members of further repressions and antisemitic laws were issued on 14 January 1942, 17 June 1942, 19 June 1942, 14 August 1942 and 3 October 1942. These are located in the cited file.

By the end of 1939 all of the former staff who held religious responsibilities at the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* had left. The cantor and teacher Max (Meier) Teller was the last to leave the community. He left Magdeburg some time after July 1939 bound for Belgium. Whilst details of his exact fate remain unknown, it is known that he was arrested in Belgium and did not survive the *Shoah*.⁴⁷ When Hermann Spier was appointed to the position of teacher at the re-opened ‘*Judenschule*,’ the religious community also benefited by virtue of his training and former position as a cantor. However, most importantly, as a highly competent and diligent individual, he became the community’s religious leader and a source of inspiration and moral courage.

Spier was born on 22 April 1885 in Schrecksbach in the Prussian province of Hesse-Nassau. He completed his teacher training in Jewish education at the Jewish seminary in Kassel in 1906.⁴⁸ He was married to Frieda Kaufmann and they had three children, Hans, Ruth and Siegbert.⁴⁹ Prior to the commencement of his teaching duties in Magdeburg in June 1939, he had held the position of cantor and teacher at the *Synagogengemeinde Prenzlau* in Brandenburg since 15 January 1934.⁵⁰ Previously, he had occupied the same post at the *Synagogengemeinde Braunsberg* in East Prussia.⁵¹

⁴⁷ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

⁴⁸ Correspondence from Der Vorstand der Synagogengemeinde Prenzlau, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 5 February 1934, Bestand Rep. 2A I Pol, Signatur Nr. 2010, Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Potsdam (BLHA), unnumbered page.

⁴⁹ Personal file on the Spier family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 44, ASGM.

⁵⁰ Correspondence from Der Vorstand der Synagogengemeinde Prenzlau, An den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 5 February 1934, Bestand Rep. 2A I Pol, Signatur Nr. 2010, BLHA, op. cit., unnumbered page.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Spier arrived in Magdeburg in the spring of 1939 and celebrated Passover with the community. From that point up until his deportation in April 1942, he led the religious services. As a religious leader he was regarded as inspirational:

He was a real professional. He was a first-class teacher, a first-class cantor and a very good *Ba'al Koreh* [reader of the *Torah*]. He had such knowledge! He was really an outstanding personality. He taught me Hebrew and *Nusach* [the rite or custom of Jewish prayer]. He was just unbelievable!

In these smaller congregations you have one man who can do everything. He was one of those. He taught school, he led services and he also gave Hebrew lessons to adults every Sunday morning – they were still preparing to go to Palestine. And with children he was outstanding. If there was a need for anything in the community, then he did it. He was a friend of everyone. He was a unique personality!⁵²

Spier's energy in his numerous roles and responsibilities continued throughout his tenure.

Religious services were conducted in the Orthodox tradition. Morning and evening services were held each day and all three Sabbath services were conducted. Often after evening services on the Sabbath, an explanation and discussion on the text from the *Torah* set for that week was offered.⁵³ During the entire war period, interviewees did not recall the public celebration of anyone's *Bar Mitzvah* nor any circumcisions.⁵⁴ However, interviewees recalled the wedding of Hermann Spier's daughter, Ruth. Whilst a regular wedding ceremony took place, there were no traditional festivities to celebrate the event.⁵⁵

Not considered useful to the war effort, Spier and his wife were included on the first deportation from Magdeburg in April 1942. His departure deeply shocked the community, as he had provided such moral resistance in addition to his

⁵² M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

⁵³ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

⁵⁴ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

⁵⁵ Ibid and M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

outstanding communal work.⁵⁶ The deportation coincided with Passover, and interviewees recalled Spier giving an inspiring and uplifting sermon just prior to the festival and his deportation. Correspondence was received from him from Warsaw for a period of time and then it ceased. It is not known whether Hermann and Frieda Spier perished in the Warsaw ghetto or were deported to an extermination camp. Spier's son Hans emigrated to Palestine in 1933 and his daughter Ruth survived the *Shoah* and immigrated to the USA.⁵⁷ His second son Siegbert, who had married a Jewess from Magdeburg, Eva Bruck, was an agricultural specialist and lived in Thomasdorf in Brandenburg. On 15 August 1942, both he and his wife were deported from Berlin to Riga, where they perished. They were aged twenty-seven years old and twenty years old respectively.⁵⁸

With Spier's departure, the community lost its religious leader. For the remaining official existence of the Jewish community, lay individuals led the religious services. Given the strong influence of his personality and his dynamic and varied role in the community, his departure only increased the despondency of the community. Spier had displayed and imparted a sense of hope. For some, Spier also embodied the resilience of the Jewish spirit, in celebrating and cherishing Jewishness at this calamitous time. His deportation left a significant vacuum which was not filled as the situation continued to deteriorate. Despite the void, religious practices and services continued, often conducted by those whom Spier had taught so dedicatedly.

⁵⁶ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

⁵⁷ Personal file on the Spier family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 44, ASGM, op. cit.

⁵⁸ Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., p. 1229.

In the wake of the declaration of war, simultaneous to the establishment of ‘*Judenhäuser*’ and the reduction of communities to absolute compliance, the Nazis stepped up their repression in both the economic and public domains. They commenced the finalisation of expropriation of Jewish property, including the remaining ‘aryanisations’ of businesses and dramatically expanded repressive measures against the lives of Jews in public. This also included a new level of stigmatisation, which destroyed any hope of anonymity for Jews.

In October⁵⁹ and November 1939⁶⁰ the financial obligations of emigrating Jews were further increased in Magdeburg. On 21 October, banks were instructed to call in all outstanding loans and debts owed by Jewish communities.⁶¹ Strict guidelines were also imposed on how Jewish vendors of real estate were to be ‘compensated’ for property sold.⁶² This chiefly involved price-fixing for ‘Aryan’ purchasers. On 23 February 1940, the provincial government banned ‘Aryan’ tailoresses and seamstresses who manufactured and sold female undergarments, particularly corsets and brassieres, from coming into physical contact with Jewesses. Henceforth, permission would be granted to a limited number of Jewesses to attend to such needs.⁶³

⁵⁹ Betrifft: Erweiterung der Zahlungspflicht bei der Judenvermögensabgabe, 14. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 104.

⁶⁰ Betrifft: Erweiterung der Zahlungspflicht bei der Judenvermögensabgabe, 2. November 1939, *ibid.*, pp. 107–108.

⁶¹ Die Forderungen von deutschen Banken sowie der deutschen öffentlich-rechtlichen Sparkassen und der Girozentralen gegen jüdische Kultusvereinigungen, 21. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 202–209.

⁶² Betrifft: Erhebung von Ausgleichszahlungen bei der Entjudung nicht land- oder forstwirtschaftlich genutzten Grundbesitzes, 23. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 67–69.

⁶³ Betr.: Verordnung zur ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben vom 12. November 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 16, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 30.

In attempting to expedite the compulsory acquisition of Jewish property by ‘Aryan’ purchasers, the provincial government posted further guidelines on 27 February 1940 on how such contracts of sale and purchases were to be conducted.⁶⁴ In May 1940, sales were expedited after a further amendment to the edict on the compulsory registration of Jewish assets and property.⁶⁵ On 21 September 1940, the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce notified the provincial government that there were no longer any Jews of foreign nationality operating businesses in the city.⁶⁶

On 24 October 1940, the provincial government declared that the removal of the Jews from the local economy had been achieved. Only two businesses remained to be dealt with administratively, as their former major Jewish shareholders had emigrated to England.⁶⁷ These businesses were ‘Max Brandus Pty. Ltd.’, located at *Gröperstraße* 2, and the pump factory ‘Hannach & Co.’, located at *Stolzestraße* 2-5. On 1 April 1941, a list of fifty-five recently ‘aryanised’ businesses in the administrative district of Magdeburg was despatched to the provincial government. Fifteen of those listed were in the city of Magdeburg itself, including the abovementioned two businesses.⁶⁸ Attached to this list was a further incomplete list of thirty ‘aryanised’ Jewish businesses in Magdeburg with the dates of the registrations of the new owners. The earliest

⁶⁴ Betrifft: Einsatz des jüdischen Vermögens, 27. Februar 1940, Bestand Rep. K 3, Signatur Nr. 4094 e, Film 58, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 83–85.

⁶⁵ Vierte Anordnung auf Grund der Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden, 4. Mai 1940, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 128.

⁶⁶ Betreff: Behandlung fremder Staatsangehöriger bei der Ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben, 21. September 1940, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 16, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 38–40.

⁶⁷ Betrifft: Entjudung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft, 24. Oktober 1940, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 211.

⁶⁸ Anlage zum Schreiben vom 1.4.1941 an den Herrn Regierungs-Präsident, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 934, Band 1, LHASA MD, pp. 12–13.

registration date was that of 13 May 1933 and the most recent was that of 7 February 1941.⁶⁹

In December 1941 the mayor's office confirmed that all businesses owned by Jews had been 'aryanised.' In their investigations, however, they discovered that at least eight businesses that had been 'aryanised' prior to 1938 had not been given official approval and this required rectification. The mayor's office further indicated that the final twelve businesses to undergo an audit had been duly conducted and had met all requirements. This confirmed that the required processes governing 'aryanisations' had been duly conducted.⁷⁰ Once again, a list of all Jewish businesses and properties 'aryanised' to date was appended.⁷¹ Finally, on 16 April 1943, the *Gauwirtschaftsberater* for the district of Magdeburg-Anhalt advised the Magdeburg-Anhalt District Chamber of Commerce that, with regard to the auditing of 'aryanisations' of former Jewish businesses and property, there existed no pressing cases worthy of investigation.⁷² From the end of 1939, the only Jews operating businesses were those attending to the needs of an exclusively Jewish clientele. In Magdeburg, the Jews had now been completely removed from the economy of the city and from their former homes. Now housed in '*Judenhäuser*,' this pauperised and degraded community was left with one communal venue – the former *Synagogen-Gemeinde*.

⁶⁹ Anlage zum Schreiben vom 1.4.1941 an den Herrn Regierungs-Präsident, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 934, Band 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 30–32.

⁷⁰ Betrifft: Durchführung der Verordnung über die Nachprüfung von Entjudungsgeschäften, 8. Dezember 1941, *ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷¹ Aufstellung der zur Arisierung gekommenen Geschäfte und Grundstücke zur Errechnung der Ausgleichsabgabe, Kreis Magdeburg, *ibid.*, pp. 37–40. This list provides the addresses of such businesses and properties, the names of the Jewish vendors, the names of the 'Aryan' purchasers and the month and year when the 'aryanisations' occurred. The list is incomplete and numbers seventy-seven businesses and properties.

⁷² Betrifft: Nachprüfung der Entjudungsgeschäfte, 16. April 1943, Bestand Rep. C 110, Signatur Nr. 47, LHASA MD, p. 36.

In consort with those measures, they also experienced the radicalisation of their stigmatisation in the public domain. This marked the prelude to the third phase of the *Shoah*, culminating in deportation and extermination. In June 1941 the Nazi Party for the *Gau* Magdeburg-Anhalt requested that the provincial government legislate to ban Jews from attending ‘German cultural events.’⁷³ The argument raised was that despite Jews not being permitted to attend theatres, cinemas, concerts, public lectures, art shows, dances and all cultural events, the onus of not permitting entry to Jews was still placed on the organiser of the event or the proprietor. According to the complaint, Jews were using this perceived legal ambiguity to their advantage and attending such venues. The complainant felt that this was further evidence of the ‘typical impudence’ of the Jews. In order to cease this alleged practice, the suggestion was made to legislate and thus legally prevent all Jews from attending any venues where ‘Aryans’ would also be in attendance.⁷⁴ On 16 June 1941, the provincial government replied to the complaint and complied with the request.⁷⁵

On 22 July 1941, the provincial government issued a police ordinance banning all Jews from attending any cultural venue, including theatres, concerts and cinemas. The ban further specified that cabarets, variety shows, taverns, dances, markets, parks and amusement parks were banned to Jews. Breaches of the ordinance attracted a fine of RM 150 or two weeks’ imprisonment.⁷⁶ On 9 September 1941, the *Reich* Office for Propaganda for Magdeburg-Anhalt lauded

⁷³ Betrifft: Besuch deutscher Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 12. Juni 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 336–337.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Betrifft: 1. Besuch deutscher Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden. 2. Einkaufszeiten für Juden, 16. Juni 1941, ibid., pp. 430–432.

⁷⁶ Polizeiverordnung über das Verbot des Besuchs kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 22. Juli 1941, ibid., p. 346.

the initiative of the provincial government for having effectively removed Jews from any public space in Magdeburg.⁷⁷ Henceforth, Jews would only be in public when attending to their own affairs. However, in spite of this measure, the subject of Jews allegedly attending ‘Aryan’ venues remained a constant annoyance to the local authorities.

Owing to complaints that in judicial matters Jews were still being identified as *Reich* Germans, in June 1941 the *Reich* Minister for Justice ruled that Jews were to be identified as ‘subjects of the state’ or ‘*Staatsangehörige*,’ reconfirming their status. He further requested that the word ‘German’ not be used in any form in any reference to matters pertaining to Jews.⁷⁸ In September 1941, female Jewish students of nursing in Magdeburg were notified that they were no longer insured, owing to the cancellation of all insurance policies for Jews from 21 July 1941. The *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, which operated the nursing establishment in Berlin, was advised to make provision for this in the event of the illness of its students.⁷⁹ This removal of the Jews in a physical and psychological sense from German society continued in intensity, leading sequentially to their final level of their ostracism. This occurred when Jews were physically labelled, thus making them obvious targets of German scorn and abuse.

The destruction of any anonymity occurred on 1 September 1941, when all Jews above the age of six years were ordered to wear a six-pointed, yellow Star of David from 15 September 1941. One interviewee recalled that up until this point,

⁷⁷ Betr.: Polizeiverordnung über das Verbot des Besuchs kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 9. September 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 351.

⁷⁸ Memorandum from the Reich Minister for Justice, 26 June 1941, Bestand Jur.-012, ASGM, op. cit., p. 95.

⁷⁹ Krankenversicherung jüdischer Lernschwestern (Krankenpflegeschüler), 24. September 1941, Bestand Rep. 10, Signatur Nr. 2497 Tc 6, STAM, p. 166.

he had escaped most abusive situations owing to his physiognomy, recalling: ‘We didn’t look Jewish at all and we were blond. So, we had no incidents up to that point; none whatsoever.’⁸⁰ The yellow star with the word ‘Jew’ inscribed in black in the middle was to be stitched on to the left chest of the outer garment. Breaches of the decree attracted a fine of RM 150 or up to six weeks’ imprisonment.⁸¹ The decree also specified the exact size specifications of the star and how it was to be worn. One interviewee recalled:

We were very much shaken by this and were shocked at how big they were. Then Mum set about very carefully sewing them on to jackets. She folded them perfectly over and went right around the six parts. She did a beautiful job, while others only tied them up in the corners. But being kids we used to fold our jacket under our arms; very rarely actually displayed it. When it was displayed, we were targeted, mostly by other kids, very rarely by adults. I only ever remember being abused by an adult once, fairly solidly, but not physically, but just abuse. This was simply because I was Jewish.⁸²

However, even for young Jews it was not always possible to conceal the star:

We couldn’t always hide our star, because people would recognise us. Some were abusive, some weren’t – the whole gamut. They were mainly abusive, but not so much the adults, it was mainly younger people. I hated their guts, to tell you the truth.⁸³

The seriousness of such breaches was something that was included in the Jewish community’s newsletter for November 1941. Emphasis was placed on the fact that not only was the star to be worn, but that it had to be at all times clearly visible.⁸⁴

In spite of the numerous acts of degradation and humiliation which Jews had endured up until this point, this labelling of them ushered in a new level of

⁸⁰ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

⁸¹ Polizeiverordnung über die Kennzeichnung der Juden, 1. September 1941, Collection JM, File 10625, op. cit., pp. 3–21. This file contains the comprehensive details of the entire decree.

⁸² Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

⁸³ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

⁸⁴ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

humiliation. Jews were abused physically and verbally in Magdeburg, particularly by the younger Germans. Some Germans spat on Jews; others even kicked them.⁸⁵ Fearful of confrontations, most Jews avoided main thoroughfares and used side streets to avoid potential abuse and humiliation.⁸⁶ Jewish adults made certain that the star was visible. Younger Jews often concealed the star or in the warmer months simply took their outer garment off.⁸⁷ Jews were forbidden from leaving their domicile without written permission from the local police. The decree also mandated the reduction of the use of public transport by Jews.⁸⁸ On 23 September 1941, the provincial government received a further memorandum specifically discussing policies on travel by Jews in and beyond their communities. It also indicated that Jews could only travel third class on trains, could only be seated if all 'Aryans' were seated and could not use public transport during peak periods, should there be overcrowding. Jews were permitted to continue using waiting-room facilities, so long as this was included on their travel authorisation, acquired from the local police.⁸⁹

In October 1941, the provincial government refined its ban on Jews attending 'German cultural venues' and henceforth included sporting attractions, cafés and all eating and drinking venues. Jews were still permitted to attend therapeutic bathhouses, providing they possessed authorisation from a registered and authorised physician. All of the subject bans did not include events organised by

⁸⁵ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 31. Oktober 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

⁸⁶ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

⁸⁷ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

⁸⁸ Polizeiverordnung über die Kennzeichnung der Juden, 1. September 1941, Collection JM, File 10625, op. cit., pp. 3–21.

⁸⁹ Betr.: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden, 18. September 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 237–240.

and conducted at the premises of the Jewish community.⁹⁰ After the decree concerning the wearing of the star, few Jews in the city ventured outdoors unless they were going about their daily affairs. For this reason, the ongoing issuing of police ordinances and complaints concerning the alleged practice of Jews attending ‘German cultural venues’ was, arguably, largely an act of propagandistic value in furthering the demonisation of the Jews and their complete removal from the German consciousness. After September 1941, the majority of Jews in the city were fearful of being in the public domain, let alone attending venues where they placed themselves at even greater risk. Other than the offices of the Jewish community, the only other venue where Jews met as a group was the field next to the Jewish cemetery. Owing to its location, it became the only venue where Jews met in public. Jews met there socially on Sundays, without fear of verbal and/or physical abuse.

As with all matters of excluding Jews, the subject of Jews using public transport continued. On 23 October 1941, strict guidelines concerning Jews’ use of public transport operated by the German postal authority were received in Magdeburg.⁹¹ However, with the large-scale increase in the use of Jewish forced labour, the *Reich* Minister for Transport modified the restrictions for the use of public transport by Jews on 31 October 1941. The concern had arisen that the measures in place could affect the production of war materials provided by Jewish forced labour. Further guidelines concerning new measures were received in

⁹⁰ Polizeiverordnung über das Verbot des Besuches von Veranstaltungen und Gaststätten durch die Juden, (undated) October 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 373–376.

⁹¹ Betrifft: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel der Deutschen Reichspost durch Juden, 16. Oktober 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 241–243.

Magdeburg on 21 November 1941.⁹² One of the new provisions was for a limited seating allocation in railway carriages marked for Jews only.⁹³ These measures continued to remove Jews from the physical consciousness of the population, whilst simultaneously consolidating their demonisation.

With the commencement of deportations from Germany, the confiscation of the remaining possessions of Jews ensued. On 19 November 1941, the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified all members of the Jewish community in its newsletter that on 20–21 November a mandatory registration of the following goods owned by Jews would take place at the community's offices: typewriters, adding machines and duplicating machines; bicycles, together with their accessories; cameras, film projectors, enlargement machines and light meters; and binoculars.⁹⁴ Owners of the goods also had to provide all of the particulars of such goods and signed declarations that such goods in their possession had been registered. Breaches or false information were punishable by the Gestapo. Those in privileged '*Mischehen*' were exempted.⁹⁵ Registration became a ritualised practice. After registration, confiscation followed. The deportation of the former owners of the goods completed the process with the removal of the Jews themselves.

The subject of Jews in Magdeburg attending 'German cultural venues' re-emerged in November 1941 when the local Gestapa lodged another complaint. It

⁹² Betrifft: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden – Erlaß des Reichsverkehrsministers 15 VPA 21 – vom 18. September 1941; hier: Erlaß weiterer Bestimmungen, 18. November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 244.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 245.

⁹⁴ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 19. November 1941, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered pages, two-page newsletter.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

bemoaned that breaches of the police ordinance could not be pursued as criminal acts, and that in Magdeburg only nominated venues by name had been banned to Jews. Consequently, in the case of cinemas in the city, only three had been nominated in the previous ban. Schooled in such devious ways, the impudent Jews were allegedly sighted at other cinemas, not nominated in the ban – much to the outcry of the ‘Aryan’ cinema-goers.⁹⁶ In December 1941, the Gestapa confronted the president of the Jewish community over the matter and ordered the practice to cease in order to pacify the ‘Aryan’ population.⁹⁷ When the matter reached the *Reich* Minister for the Interior in Berlin it was referred back to the associated governmental bureaucracies in Magdeburg to be resolved legally.⁹⁸ By the time the matter was resolved in February 1942, the organisation for the first mass deportation of Jews from Magdeburg was already underway. On 27 February 1942, the provincial government deemed the request for the legislation by the

⁹⁶ Betr.: Besuch von Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 25. November 1941, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 381. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘In der Stadt Magdeburg sind für die Juden nur die drei führenden Lichtspieltheater: Deulig-Palast, Fülü, Kammerlichtspiele verboten. Wie die Praxis gezeigt hat, sind die Juden über diese Tatsache wohl unterrichtet. Ihrer frechen Art entsprechend, besuchen sie daher nach wie vor Veranstaltungen der Kinos, die ihnen bisher nicht ausdrücklich verboten sind. Es ist daher dringend notwendig, dass ehestens dieser unhaltbare Zustand beseitigt wird. Es ist nämlich damit zu rechnen, dass die arische Bevölkerung in begreiflicher Erbitterung über diese jüdische Frechheit zu Selbsthilfemassnahmen greift.’

⁹⁷ Betr.: Besuch von Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 12. Dezember 1941, *ibid.*, p. 383. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Um Ausschreitungen der deutschblütigen Bevölkerung gegen Juden zu verhindern, habe ich heute den Juden in Magdeburg durch den Vorsitzenden der Jüdischen Gemeinde die Auflage erteilen lassen, daß ihnen mit sofortiger Wirkung jeder Besuch von Lichtspieltheatern und sonstigen Kinoveranstaltungen verboten ist.’

⁹⁸ Betrifft: Polizeiverordnung über den Besuch kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 19. Februar 1942, *ibid.*, p. 387.

police commissioner as unnecessary.⁹⁹ Despite this resolution, the Gestapo in Magdeburg continued in its quest. This degradation of the Jewish population by the Gestapo conforms to the pattern of a mythological agitation and pressure from the grassroots level of German society to deal with the Jews. In essence, the Gestapo was simultaneously justifying and preparing the local population for the physical removal of the Jews from the city.

As further preparations for deportations commenced, so too did the legislation required to expropriate Jewish property. On 25 November 1941, legislation was enacted which allowed for the revoking of German nationality of expatriate Jews and the confiscation of all property when Jews left Germany. This decree permitted access to all Jewish property, whether the owners had emigrated or been deported.¹⁰⁰ In cases of exception, Jews signed over their assets prior to deportation, as for example in the cases of those deported to Theresienstadt. In a further measure stripping Jews of dignity, from 10 January 1942, Jews were ordered not use the titles of *Herr* (Mr) or *Frau* (Mrs/Ms).¹⁰¹

On 14 January 1942, Dr Max Kaufmann of the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified all members to surrender the following goods at the community's offices on 15–16 January 1942: all products made from wool and animal skins, skis and climbing boots. Extended hours on the evening of 16 January were provided to allow forced labourers to surrender their goods. Jews had to remove all identifying signs that indicated ownership and had to submit a signed declaration in

⁹⁹ Beschränkungen für das Auftreten der Juden in der Öffentlichkeit (Judenbann), 27. Februar 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 390–391.

¹⁰⁰ Elfte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz, 25. November 1941, G 1, Signatur Nr. 389, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 139.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum from the Reich Minister for Justice, 10 January 1942, Bestand Jur.-012, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 99–100. This ordinance also applied to Poles.

quadruplicate with the owner's first name, surname, complete address, identification card for Jews (indicating their place of registration and their identification number) and their signature. One copy of the completed declaration was retained by the individual submitting the goods. Community members were warned that breaches of the ordinance would be severely punished.¹⁰²

A further ordinance concerning Jews using public transport was announced on 24 March 1942.¹⁰³ Jews travelling in their place of residence still required written authority from the local police, but special conditions were created for forced labourers, school pupils and legal and health-care professionals.¹⁰⁴ Owing to the hostility of the environment, Jews in Magdeburg avoided the use of public transport altogether. The ongoing hostility and agitation of the Magdeburg Gestapo with regard to Jews allegedly attending 'German cultural venues' continued simultaneously. Despite the provincial government's earlier resolution on the matter and not legislating against this supposed practice, on 11 May 1942 the Magdeburg Gestapa informed the government of its own measures.¹⁰⁵ It advised the government that the Jewish community had been informed that Jews breaching the ordinance would be arrested and escorted to a concentration camp.¹⁰⁶ Despite this policy, legislation was not enacted and the provincial government deemed the matter closed on 9 April 1942,¹⁰⁷ five days prior to the

¹⁰² Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 14. Januar 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

¹⁰³ Betrifft: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden, 24. März 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 256–259.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Betrifft: Besuch von Kulturveranstaltungen durch Juden, 11. Mai 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 396.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Betrifft: Polizeiverordnung über den Besuch kultureller Veranstaltungen durch Juden, 9. April 1942, Collection JM, File 10625, YVA, op. cit., p. 53a.

first mass deportation. However, the consistent and persistent pursuit of ongoing measures against the Jews provides evidence of the diligence and degree of thoroughness of antisemitic activities and policies at the local level. The Magdeburg Gestapo was unrelenting in its pursuit of Jews.

Jews who possessed dual nationality were stripped of their German nationality from 14 May 1942 and hence their assets were confiscated.¹⁰⁸ As deportations increased, so too, did the desire to remove the remaining Jews in Germany from public space. On 6 June 1942, Jews were banned from using waiting-room facilities at all public transport stations.¹⁰⁹

Approximately one month prior to the second mass deportation of Jews from Magdeburg on 11 July 1942, further confiscations of their property took place in June 1942.¹¹⁰ On 17 June 1942, Dr Julius Riese of the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* informed members of the Jewish community that the following goods were to be surrendered to the community's offices by 21 June: electrical equipment, including heaters, electric fires, sunray lamps, electric heat pads, saucepans, hotplates, vacuum cleaners, hairdryers and irons; and gramophones, including electrical gramophones and records. Items used in medical consultations by medical and dental practitioners were exempted, as were such items belonging to homes for the aged, for the infirm and for children.¹¹¹ As in the past,

¹⁰⁸ Betr.: Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz (Anwendung auf Juden mit doppelter Staatsangehörigkeit), 14. Mai 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, p. 70.

¹⁰⁹ Betr.: Benutzung der Verkehrsmittel durch Juden, 6. Juni 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 262.

¹¹⁰ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 17. Juni 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

community members were reminded of the penalties, should they breach the ordinance.

Two days later, on 19 June 1942, Dr Riese notified the community of a list of further goods to be surrendered. All of the requirements listed in the previous newsletters concerning surrendering goods remained the same, including the completion of a declaration in quadruplicate. Goods to be surrendered were all items of manufactured clothing which the owner considered ‘were absolutely no longer necessary for a simple or modest lifestyle.’¹¹² This included both new and old men’s and women’s outer garments: suits, coats, hats, caps, gloves, machine-made clothing and blouses, dresses, skirts and jackets, aprons and work dresses; and all old manufactured goods: linen, underwear, tights and stockings, ties, towels, scarves, as well as cotton rags and anything manufactured from cotton, wool and string remnants. Jews had until 23 June to surrender the goods in the cleanest possible condition.¹¹³ Dr Riese also reminded those individuals who were leaving on the forthcoming shipment or ‘*Transport*’ that they were permitted to complete their packing arrangements first, before surrendering their remaining goods. They were also instructed to deposit their packed suitcases at the community’s offices and to ensure that their personal particulars were visible on the outside of the suitcase.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 19. Juni 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Bekleidungsstücke, soweit sie zum eigenen Gebrauch (oder bei Einrichtungen zum Heimgebrauch) bei bescheidener Lebensführung nicht mehr unbedingt notwendig sind.’

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘Den zum Transport vorgesehenen Gemeindemitgliedern ist es gestattet, das für den Transport vorgesehene Gepäck vor der Spinnstoff-Abgabe zu packen und

On 25 July 1942, all confiscated goods were advertised for sale to public servants within the Ministry of Finance.¹¹⁵ All interested parties were advised to lodge their personal details and a list of desired goods by 20 July. The expectation was that demand would exceed supply and those expressing an interest in a bicycle were further instructed to justify their request in writing.¹¹⁶

In August 1942, Jews were reminded not to use their former titles or professional titles in any correspondence. They were also advised that no Jew should have any female 'Aryan' providing any form of household assistance to them. Jews in this position were to cease the practice by 1 September 1942 or alternatively provide written details to the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* by 2 September 1942 as to why the relationship had not ceased.¹¹⁷ On 1 October 1942, 'racial' Jews who were not members of the Jewish community of Magdeburg or who had subsequently left the community but still resided in the city were instructed by Police Headquarters to use the term 'without religious belief,' *glaubenslos*, when completing forms. Jews were further instructed to refrain from using the term 'non-denominational,' *gottgläubig*.¹¹⁸ In the same newsletter, Dr Riese reminded all members of the curfew from 8.00 p.m. until 6.00 a.m. from and including 1 October 1942 up until and including 31 March 1943.¹¹⁹ By the time the curfew had been lifted on 1 April 1943, both Dr Riese and his wife Else

die Koffer mit vollständigen Namen und Anschrift versehen bei der Gemeinde abzugeben.'

¹¹⁵ Betrifft: Anfall und Verkauf von Fahrrädern, Fotoapparaten, Operngläsern usw., 25. Juli 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 15, LHASA MD, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 14. August 1942, File AR 6559, LBIA NY, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

¹¹⁸ Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg, 3. Oktober 1942, ibid., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Riese née Kochmann had already perished in Auschwitz, having been sent on the last mass deportation from Magdeburg in February 1943. They were aged fifty-eight years old and fifty-six years old respectively.¹²⁰

On 20 February 1943, the *Reich* Minister for Transport sanctioned a reduction in public transport fares for Jews in particular categories, mainly for school children and the disabled.¹²¹ This was approximately the same date that the third and final mass deportation of Jews from Magdeburg took place. By March 1943 Magdeburg had rid itself of all but a small number of elderly Jews and those in mixed marriages and their children.

In the two-year period between the commencement of World War Two in September 1939 and the introduction of the Star of David in September 1941, the completion of the pre-war policies against the Jews ensued. Emigration had reached its final phase; Jews had been evicted from their homes and allocated housing in ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ and further stigmatised by the allocation of identification numbers; all Jewish organisations, with the exception of the religious community, had been dissolved; Jewish communities in consort with the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* managed and were responsible for all Jewish matters; and Jews had been completely ousted from the economy and all property confiscated. This period was chiefly characterised by a de-facto ghettoisation, both physically and psychologically. When the ultimate act of stigmatisation occurred with the wearing of the star, the preparatory steps for deportation followed. Edicts and ordinances steadily dehumanised the Jews,

¹²⁰ Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., pp. 1033–1034.

¹²¹ Betr.: Bewährung von Fahrpreisermäßigungen an Juden, 20. Februar 1943, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 263.

stripping them of all vestiges of human traits and dignity. Forced labour followed and segregated schooling continued. With curfews and bans from public space, coupled with fear, Jews physically began to disappear from the cityscape. This became symbolic of the actual physical removal of the Jews from the city, which occurred in a perfectly organised and well-executed manner. As early as March 1942, the *Verwaltungsstelle Magdeburg* notified community members of the forthcoming *Transport* to the east. For some of the Jews of Magdeburg the phase of ghettoisation was approaching its end, as they unknowingly and methodically prepared their suitcases for what became their final journey. Deportation and extermination had reached the remnant of the community.

Die Judenschule and the Daily Lives of Children

On 1 September 1939, when news of the declaration of war became known to Hermann Spier, the sole teacher at the '*Judenschule*' in Magdeburg, he dismissed his pupils mid-morning. Indicative of his own sense of pastoral responsibility, he advised his pupils to use only the side streets in returning to their homes, lest they attract unwanted attention.¹²² This important role was one which Spier held with much conviction until his departure on 14 April 1942 on the first mass deportation from Magdeburg. For the duration of his tenure, he was also assisted by registered and approved teaching assistants. Owing to the combination of Spier's ability and character, the segregated learning environment and a broad and inclusive general and Jewish curriculum, Jewish pupils developed identities and their own intellectualism in a positive and nurturing learning environment. They also

¹²² Correspondence from M. F. to the author, 12 July 1999.

developed a positive attitude to their own Jewishness and to their religion.¹²³ Once deportations had commenced, the numbers of pupils at the school steadily declined, causing much sadness to this small group of learners. From the time of Spier's deportation until the dissolution of the school on 30 June 1942, the remaining pupils were taught by lay members of the community, who attempted to continue Spier's legacy. Given its pervading positive environment, the school provided Jewish children with a respite from the harsh reality of the outside world. For Jewish children in Magdeburg, their daily lives were fraught with potential abuse and humiliation in the public domain, particularly after the introduction of the wearing of the star. Nevertheless, at home, at school and when they were afforded the opportunity to meet other Jews in public, they attempted to lead what they thought were normal lives in highly abnormal times.

In the wake of the declaration of war, the city of Magdeburg was relieved of its administration of the '*Judenschule*.' By order of the *Zehnte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* of 4 July 1939, on 1 October 1939 the administration of the '*Judenschule*' was taken over by the Education Department of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*.¹²⁴ In Magdeburg the teaching staff remained the same, despite this change. However, one noticeable change did take place. On 16 November 1939, the *Reich* Minister for Science, Training and National Education ordered that all small classes of Jewish children, some even numbering between three and six pupils, in small villages and some towns were to be dissolved and the pupils ordered to attend nominated larger Jewish schools in designated areas. The '*Judenschule*' in Magdeburg was made one of those

¹²³ Joseph Walk, *Jüdische Schule und Erziehung im Dritten Reich* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Anton Hain, 1991.

¹²⁴ Betr.: Übernahme der jüdischen Schulen, 19. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 88.

designated schools and Jewish children from neighbouring areas were instructed to enrol there by 14 October 1939.¹²⁵

In February 1940, the ‘*Judenschule*’ consisted of twenty-eight pupils; twelve males and sixteen females.¹²⁶ Of this figure, seven pupils travelled to Magdeburg daily from nearby villages and towns, including from Calbe, Burg and Köthen.¹²⁷ The profile of the pupils corresponded to eight different school grades. As such they were divided into three composite classes. The first class consisted of Grades One and Two; the second of Grades Three through to Five; and the third of Grades Six through to Eight. Lessons were conducted in the same two classrooms as previously occurred in the Jewish community’s offices in *Große Schulstraße*.¹²⁸ The school’s staff consisted of one teacher, Hermann Spier, and three teaching assistants, including Dr Erwin Lehmann and Joachim Freiberg.¹²⁹ Dr Lehmann specifically taught English and History and Freiberg taught Music and Sport.¹³⁰ The third teaching assistant was a female who attended to the needs of the youngest class.¹³¹ All pupils learned the same subjects from the same curriculum. When this information was conveyed from the superintendent of schools for the city to the provincial government, he also reported that the curriculum was particularly designed toward the preparation for emigration and that the city

¹²⁵ Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 16. November 1939, Betr.: Übernahme der jüdischen Schulen, 19. Oktober 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 83.

¹²⁶ Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, *ibid.*, p. 86.

¹²⁷ Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

¹²⁸ Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 86.

¹²⁹ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999. The exact details of this woman’s identity remain unknown.

should not expect the school to grow, but in fact to expect a steady reduction in its number of pupils.¹³²

Pupils attended the school Monday to Friday and attended Bible and Hebrew lessons and an explanation on the weekly portion of the *Torah* on Saturday evenings. Pupils participated in the following subjects, listed in the order in which they appeared on the pupils' weekly timetable: Hebrew, Religion, German, English, Geography, Writing, History, Arithmetic, Natural History, Drawing, Gymnastics, Handicraft and Singing.¹³³

Whilst the three teaching assistants were not trained teachers, they were well educated and performed their duties in a professional manner. The gymnastics and sporting events were conducted in the vacant field, adjacent to the Jewish cemetery in Sudenburg.¹³⁴ Some pupils also had private tuition from the teaching staff. In particular, Dr Lehmann gave private tuition in English to a number of pupils.¹³⁵ The positive recollections of this school are testimony to the dedication of the staff in a time of great adversity. Despite the pervasive bleak and hostile external environment, this school celebrated life:

We learnt all the things we had to. It was a happy time. It was a good place to go. The teachers were very professional. They were trying very hard to do the right thing. We had competitions to win prizes. I won a prize – a big book. It was a fairly happy thing, you know. It was much better doing that than if we had been permitted to keep on going to the public school, I'm sure.¹³⁶

¹³² Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 86. The cited quotation is the author's translation from the original German which reads: 'Der Unterricht ist besonders auf die Vorbereitung der Auswanderung eingestellt. Ein Anwachsen der jüdischen Schule ist nicht zu erwarten. Es ist vielmehr mit einer ständigen Abnahme der Schülerzahl zu rechnen.'

¹³³ Betr.: jüdisches Schulwesen, 29. Februar 1940, *ibid.*, p. 89.

¹³⁴ Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

Spier was particularly remembered for ‘picking children who were inclined in certain ways and developing their talents.’¹³⁷ In this respect he fostered a love of learning and of celebrating Jewishness in his learning community. One interviewee concluded his remarks on Spier in this powerful way:

He was such a grand person, such a unique personality. I know he was just unbelievable! He was a teacher with such conviction. You know, everyone remembers one teacher, and I remember him!¹³⁸

The learning experience at this school consequently left an indelible imprint on the lives of all of its pupils, including the small number who survived.

In March 1941 all Jewish schools, including that in Magdeburg, were still in the process of enrolling pupils from the dissolved smaller, outlying schools.¹³⁹ In cases where children were unable to attend a designated school, private tuition was permitted, and the cost born by the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*. This practice was further clarified in April 1942, when Jewish boarding schools were established to meet the needs of children, who were still not attending segregated schools. Schooling remained mandatory. The only remaining exemptions for private tuition in homes were for those children too ill to attend. Such exemptions were regulated by the Education Department of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*.¹⁴⁰

An unknown number of ‘*Mischlinge*’ also attended the ‘*Judenschule*’ in Magdeburg. In a number of cases parents in mixed marriages sought exemptions and applied to the provincial government for a re-assessment of the racial classification of their children and/or permission for their children to attend a

¹³⁷ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Privatunterricht für jüdische Schulkinder, 3. März 1941, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 90.

¹⁴⁰ Schulpflicht und Privatunterricht jüdischer Schulkinder, 14. April 1942, ibid., p. 91.

‘German school.’ One such example was the case of the Friedländer family. Max Friedländer was married to a non-Jewish woman (by the name of Fynni Mroka). They had one daughter, Margot, born in 1931.¹⁴¹ On 5 March 1940, Fynni Friedländer requested that her daughter be permitted to attend a ‘German school.’ On 22 December 1941, the provincial government rejected her application.¹⁴² The majority of ‘*Mischlinge*’ in the city attended the ‘*Judenschule*.’ On 15 July 1942, the provincial government received a memorandum which clarified which ‘*Mischlinge*’ were to attend which schools and under what conditions this should occur. Six classifications were articulated.¹⁴³

Spier, his wife Frieda, and all the teaching assistants and their families, with the exception of Joachim Freiberg¹⁴⁴ were deported on 14 April 1942.¹⁴⁵ Freiberg had been conscripted as a forced labourer in the city some time earlier. With Spier’s departure, Joachim Freiberg and lay members of the community continued to teach the remaining pupils, of whom there were very few left. Most of those selected in the first deportation were families.¹⁴⁶

On 22 June 1942, Dr Fritz Grunsfeld of the Leipzig office of the *Bezirksstelle Sachsen-Thüringen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* informed parents of all pupils attending Jewish schools in Chemnitz, Erfurt and Magdeburg

¹⁴¹ Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁴² Correspondence from Der Regierungspräsident, An Frau Fynni Friedländer, 22 December 1941, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 3996, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 33–39.

¹⁴³ Betrifft: Zulassung jüdischer Mischlinge zum Schulbesuch, 2. Juli 1942, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁴⁴ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

¹⁴⁵ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

in a typed memorandum that the schools would be closed effective 1 July 1942.¹⁴⁷ Beyond this date private tuition of Jewish children was not permitted. However, parents were allowed to provide instruction in the home. Children above the age of fourteen years could henceforth be used in forced labour and were instructed to register with local authorities. All pupils in possession of travel passes were ordered to surrender them to the issuing authority.¹⁴⁸ On 10 July 1942, the provincial government received a memorandum which indicated the closure of the schools 'in view of the recent development in the 'resettlement' of the Jews.'¹⁴⁹ The second mass deportation from Magdeburg occurred the following day. Henceforth, until capitulation of the Nazis, the remaining children received home schooling.

Whilst school life formed a large component of their lives, the children in the Jewish community occupied themselves in a routine, much the same way as their adult counterpart did. Despite their living conditions and the hostility of the outside world, they participated in family life and sought leisure activities. Prior to the introduction of the wearing of the star, abuse and violence toward them existed, but not on the same scale as occurred after this edict. Jewish children became serious targets, with non-Jewish children regularly abusing them verbally, throwing objects at them and performing other acts of violence.¹⁵⁰ Whilst in the majority of cases the acts were performed by younger Germans, there were such cases where adults behaved toward Jewish children in exactly the same manner.

¹⁴⁷ Betr.: Auflösung des jüdischen Schulwesens, 22. Juni 1942, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, op. cit., unnumbered page, one-page newsletter.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Schließung jüdischer Schulen, 7. Juli 1942, Bestand Rep. C 28 II, Signatur Nr. 88, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 97.

¹⁵⁰ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

Owing to the pervasive hostile and threatening environment Jewish children did not spend a great deal of time outdoors as a group. When outdoor group social activities took place, they generally occurred in the relative safety of the courtyards of any of the '*Judenhäuser*,' in the field adjacent to the cemetery and in the cemetery itself. Jewish children tended to visit each other at each other's homes 'where parents could try to shelter them.'¹⁵¹ One interviewee recalled:

I mean we had incidents where we got abused in the streets and spat at and once or twice punched in the nose by other children. All I could do was run away as quickly as possible. It wasn't terribly bad; I mean kids fight each other under any circumstances. It was just that they had a better reason to attack us – they didn't need any other reason. Simply call us 'Jews!' and have a go at us!¹⁵²

Jewish children adapted very quickly to the hostile environment and applied certain strategies to reduce the possibility of abuse. A common strategy was simply to move around by one's self, as this attracted far less attention.

In spite of bans, some children rode on public transport, particularly trams, as a novelty. This was a risky exercise, as their star would either have to be covered or removed and the child not identified by commuters.¹⁵³ Walking through the city was another form of leisure. As an important errand, children were also sent out to view the newspaper headlines posted on billboards in order to report back on what was occurring with regard to the war. During the day some children visited their fathers who were on forced labour detail. One interviewee recalled when his father was working with two other Jews on forced labour detail on the River Elbe, he was taught to swim in the river.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹⁵² Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

¹⁵³ Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

¹⁵⁴ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

Family life at home continued and parents attempted to shield their children from the reality of many of the situations that befell them. Children recalled reading voraciously, particularly in the winter months. In one household, there were fond memories of being able to participate in their father's work as a forced labourer for a company making military equipment. Their father regularly brought work home.¹⁵⁵ There was also a recollection of pride in this work. Like all children, they were happy at being able to assist their father. No doubt, they were also pleased at having the opportunity of performing constructive and useful tasks.

Given the intensity of the persecutions and the size of the small community of children, all knew one another and formed close relationships. The majority of these ended in sad farewells. Once deportations commenced in April 1942, the number of children steadily dwindled. One interviewee recalled: 'I met all these wonderful kids and formed friendships, but then they started disappearing.'¹⁵⁶ At that time children discussed what was taking place, irrespective of their comprehension of the real situation:

With the deportation of my school friends it was very obvious. It was obvious to me and to my brother that this was happening, despite that our parents were shielding this from us or not. Because we did discuss it. When the teacher, Spier, was deported and my father took over, this was a major thing happening in a child's life. Suddenly the teacher goes and your own father becomes the teacher. By that time there weren't many left. I think by the time my father took over there were between ten and fifteen.¹⁵⁷

After the commencement of deportations and the dissolution of the '*Judenschule*' in June 1942, for the majority of the few remaining children, life eventually became centred on activities within Jewish space:

We weren't allowed to go on the trams; we weren't allowed to go to the movies; we obviously weren't allowed to go to school; we didn't belong to

¹⁵⁵ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

any organisation.....I still managed to roam all over Magdeburg on foot. We didn't have any bicycles. Once we lived in the '*Judenhaus*' next to the burnt-out synagogue, there was a bit of a community thing there. I mean people didn't go out unless they had to and they stayed within that little complex. It had a garden and we sort of interacted with our neighbours. Everybody had the same problems.¹⁵⁸

With the continued reduction in community numbers up until the last mass deportation in February 1943, Jewish children continued to live as they had previously done. The majority of these children had only known a life under Nazism.

The lives of Jewish children in the community continued to be fully enriched educationally and in terms of their Jewish identities, even once deportations commenced and the '*Judenschule*' was dissolved. In spite of the pervading sadness, which occurred when friends and/or relatives were deported, children continued to attempt to live as normally as possible. Simultaneously, parents attempted to buffer the reality. As the situation in the public domain increased in danger, Jewish children were constantly forced to adapt and ultimately, not dissimilar to their adult counterparts, avoid being in public altogether. For the majority of the children who remained in the community from October 1939, their limited experience of life had only been one of love and protection afforded by family and community in the private domain and one of hate and ostracism and ultimately dehumanisation in the public domain. Sadly, the children had adapted to these abnormal conditions. They had known no other life.

¹⁵⁸ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

Mischehen and Mischlinge

In September 1935 with the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws, the *Reichsbürgergesetz* and the *Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* commenced the definition process of who was a Jew according to Nazi racial ideology,¹⁵⁹ prohibiting intermarriage and sexual relations between Jews and individuals of ‘German blood.’ The laws also defined and classified ‘*Mischehen*’ and ‘*Mischlinge*.’¹⁶⁰

Classification was dependent on Nazi racial theory and on the number of Jewish grandparents one had. As a process it was continually refined, but it was administered arbitrarily. The religious affiliations of those affected also reflected the levels of both acculturation and assimilation, and Magdeburg was no exception. Couples in ‘*Mischehen*’ and likewise children from such unions were represented in the Christian communities, the Jewish community and there can be

¹⁵⁹ Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheit, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und Das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. November 1935*, Bestand Rep. C 28 I g, Signatur Nr. 460, Band 3, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 33–44.

¹⁶⁰ The *Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* defined ‘full or racial’ Jews as people with at least three Jewish grandparents, or, if fewer than three, a person belonging to the Jewish community or married to a Jew. ‘First-degree Mischlinge’ were defined as people who did not belong to the Jewish religion and were not married to a Jewish spouse, but had two Jewish grandparents; ‘second-degree Mischlinge’ were people with one Jewish grandparent; and those of ‘German blood’ were people with no Jewish grandparents. The Nuremberg Laws permitted ‘full or racial’ Jews to marry other Jews, as well as ‘first-degree Mischlinge,’ but forbade individuals of ‘German blood’ from marrying Jews or ‘first-degree Mischlinge.’ They permitted ‘second-degree Mischlinge’ to marry individuals of ‘German blood,’ but forbade them from marrying ‘full or racial Jews’ or even others like themselves, but permitted special exemptions for them to marry ‘first-degree Mischlinge.’ The Nuremberg Laws effectively split ‘non-Aryans’ of racial Jewish pedigree into two groups: ‘Mischlinge’ and Jews. Both groups had to observe strict marriage restrictions, but in general ‘Mischlinge’ were spared the expropriation, ghettoisation, deportation and extermination reserved for Jews. See also Kaplan, op. cit., p. 77.

little doubt that there were those who were unaffiliated. The persecutions and experiences of those individuals of 'mixed race' were not uniform. Discrimination depended on the racial classification the individual was allocated and eventually on whether a mixed marriage was 'privileged' or 'non-privileged.'¹⁶¹ The refinement of definitions and their applications continued for the duration of the war, affecting the families of anyone connected to a racially mixed pedigree. Children of unions between Jews and individuals of 'German blood' were labelled '*Mischlinge*,' meaning of mixed blood or hybrid, but with a derogatory connotation as in mongrel, mixed breed or cross-breed.¹⁶² In the 1930s only approximately 11% of such children had remained religiously Jewish. These children, as well as '*Mischlinge*' who had married Jews, were called '*Geltungsjuden*' and were treated as 'full or racial' Jews.¹⁶³

In Magdeburg, of the few documented cases of members of the Jewish community who were in a '*Mischehe*,' the majority were subjected to the same persecutions as all Jews, as were their children who were counted as '*Geltungsjuden*' or 'those individuals who counted as Jews.' However, the situation for their non-Jewish spouses varied.¹⁶⁴ Such couples and their children were also, as a rule, not subjected to deportation. Consequently, by April 1945, with the exception of Jews living in hiding, the overwhelming majority of Jews

¹⁶¹ See Meyer, op. cit.

¹⁶² Kaplan, op. cit., p. 75.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ For a comprehensive discussion on the treatment of non-Jewish spouses and on the divisive classification of 'Mischehen' into 'privileged' and 'non-privileged' marriages, see Victor Klemperer, *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1933–41* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998 and Victor Klemperer, *To The Bitter End: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1942–45* London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1999.

still resident in Magdeburg and known to the local Gestapo were of mixed marriage and the children of such marriages.

According to the census of 1939, approximately 739 individuals in Magdeburg had four Jewish grandparents; five had three Jewish grandparents, 320 had two Jewish grandparents and approximately a further 224 had one Jewish grandparent.¹⁶⁵ Converts to Judaism were not included in any statistic, owing to their non-Jewish racial pedigree. Of these statistics, the respondents would have been members of both the Christian and Jewish communities, in addition to those individuals who were unaffiliated. Whilst the figures of those belonging to Christian communities and those unaffiliated with either the Christian or the Jewish communities remain unknown, the Lutheran Church in Magdeburg received memoranda from both the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* and the Gestapo on how to treat members of the Lutheran community who were of Jewish lineage.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, it received counsel on a diverse range of matters relating to Jewish Christians.¹⁶⁷ Jews married to non-Jews also sought baptism in the vain hope of protecting themselves. As late as May 1942, the head office of the Lutheran Church for the church province of Saxony, based in Magdeburg, sought counsel on such a matter from its head office in Berlin.¹⁶⁸ In a blistering

¹⁶⁵ Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., pp. 3–29. The statistics from the census were based on the respondent's number of 'racially' Jewish grandparents. All figures are approximates. The racial classification of a further 66 individuals could not be established. These figures were defined according to racial classification, as dictated by the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, and, consequently, converts to Judaism were not included in the statistics.

¹⁶⁶ Behandlung evangelischer Gemeindeglieder jüdischer Abstammung, 23. April 1940 Bestand Rep. A, Generalia, Signatur Nr. 429b, AKPS, unnumbered page, one page.

¹⁶⁷ For a highly comprehensive and detailed account on the persecution and treatment of Jewish Christians, see James F. Tent, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Nazi Persecution of Jewish-Christian Germans*, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003.

¹⁶⁸ Correspondence to the head of office of the Lutheran Church for the province of

reply, on 3 July 1942, the Magdeburg office was reminded that such activities had ceased almost one year earlier at the request of the Gestapo.¹⁶⁹ The Berlin office also ruled that the baptisms of ‘full or racial’ Jews, who were members of the Jewish community were in any event out of the question. From 25 March 1942 Jews who wished to leave their registered community had to be granted special permission from the *Reich* Minister for the Interior. The reply further articulated that baptism was permitted for ‘first-degree *Mischlinge*,’ who had never been members of any Jewish community, as according to the Nuremberg Laws, they were citizens of the *Reich*.¹⁷⁰

Some insight into how those individuals connected to the Jewish community of Magdeburg were persecuted and treated is provided by a limited number of documented cases. Of the known cases, the persecution and treatment of individuals and their families varied. However, from the limited picture provided a number of observations can be made.

Prior to the Nuremberg Laws coming into effect, Herbert Levy married his non-Jewish partner.¹⁷¹ In May 1939, the couple, together with their daughter, were living in an apartment building located at *Lübecker Straße* 30a.¹⁷² This building eventually became a ‘*Judenhaus*,’ but it remains unknown whether the family remained there. Although Levy’s relatives were all closely affiliated to the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*, he was largely unaffiliated. For the duration of the war he

Saxony, 18 May 1942, Bestand Rep. A, Specialia K, Signatur Nr. 2430, AKPS, unnumbered page, one page.

¹⁶⁹ Betr.: Judentaufen, 3. Juli 1942, *ibid.*, unnumbered pages, two pages.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Levy, *op. cit.*, 7 November 1996.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

remained in and around Magdeburg. There were no recorded persecutions of Levy and his daughter and the family of three survived the war years.¹⁷³

The situation of the Klemm family provides further insight into the unusual course of events which could and did occur in families of mixed marriages. In May 1939 the Klemm family lived at *Breiter Weg* 82.¹⁷⁴ There exists no record indicating any family religious affiliation with the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. Klara Klemm née Heil was married to a non-Jew and had two sons, Manfred and Wolfgang, aged seven and two years respectively in 1939.¹⁷⁵ Not dissimilar to the situation of the family of Herbert Levy, by the end of 1939 the Klemms had not been evicted from their home and were not forced to move into a ‘*Judenhaus*.’ However, unlike the Levys’ daughter, the two boys were compelled to attend the ‘*Judenschule*.’¹⁷⁶ With the deportation of Klara Klemm in 1942, a series of events unfolded, which quite possibly saved the boys’ lives. A school friend of Manfred Klemm recalled:

Klemm lived about twenty metres from the *Katharinenkirche* [St Catherine’s Church]. His mother was Jewish, but his father was half-Jewish, but had Jewish as his religion. The mother quite early in the piece was deported and never heard of again.

Now in that same building one floor above them was a German family who had something like four children and after Mrs Klemm had to go, the oldest of those children was a girl and she started helping to look after the boys. This went on for quite some time. Eventually, the father, Klemm, went undercover and this family looked after these two boys. The boys remained in the apartment. Then came the big bombing in January 1945.

Shortly before that the father had returned and was living with them and of course by that time you could get away with things like that. The Gestapo wasn’t chasing us around that much anymore. By this time, the young lady,

¹⁷³ Levy, op. cit., 10 July 1997.

¹⁷⁴ Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

whose name was Ilse, and Klemm had formed a relationship and they stuck together through all this. The Klemms found some house in a suburb called Werder. So, they just moved in for the period of January 1945 until April when the Americans arrived. Nobody bothered them; they probably didn't advertise the fact that they were living there and got away with it.¹⁷⁷

Whilst records do not indicate that the boys' father had any Jewish grandparents, it remains unknown as to why he fled the city and left the boys in the charge of this non-Jewish family. The family's care of these two children possibly saved their lives.

From the examples of the Levy and the Klemm families it is clear that the lack of religious affiliation did not guarantee safety or lack of persecution. However, it did create ambiguity in the application of antisemitic measures. The family of Herbert Levy was not subjected to the same persecution as the Klemms. Even so, the Klemms were not subjected to the full range of the persecution which other religiously affiliated Jews in mixed marriages experienced. The classification of the marriages of both couples as either 'privileged' or 'non-privileged' could not be established. Yet, these two examples indicate the level of arbitrariness which existed in the application of persecutions against those in mixed marriages and the children from such marriages, be they either loosely affiliated or unaffiliated to the Jewish community.

The situation of active members of the Jewish community who were living in mixed marriages was unequivocally precise. Such individuals were subjected to the same level of persecutions as was inflicted on all Jews, with the exception of deportation. Of the two documented cases, the marriages were clearly classified as 'non-privileged' and the children treated as '*Geltungsjuden*.'

¹⁷⁷ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner¹⁷⁸ was an active member of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde*. His wife, Lisbeth née Leidenroth, whom he had married in 1927, was Lutheran. They had one son, Werner, who was born in 1929¹⁷⁹ and who had been raised Jewish.¹⁸⁰ Despite pressure from the local Gestapo, Karliner's wife would not divorce him and the family of three remained intact until liberation. However, both Karliner and his son were subjected to the same discrimination as other Jews in the city. This included segregated housing, the wearing of the star and forced labour.¹⁸¹ Whilst Karliner's wife was not officially subjected to these persecutions, in remaining with her husband and son, she endured the daily spectacle of the degradation and humiliation of her loved ones and the community of which she felt a part.

The same situation existed for the Freiberg family. Joachim Freiberg and Elli Freiberg née Langwagen were very active members of the *Synagogen-Gemeinde* and the Jewish community as a whole. Elli Freiberg had converted to Judaism under the instruction of Rabbi Dr Wilde.¹⁸² The couple had three young children by war's end. As with the example of the Karliners, Freiberg and his children were subjected to the same discrimination as other Jews. They lived in a 'Judenhaus,' they wore the star, the children attended the 'Judenschule' and Freiberg was a forced labourer. Not dissimilar to Lisbeth Karliner, Elli Freiberg

¹⁷⁸ Lebenslauf des Vorsitzenden der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto Horst Karliner, genannt Ismar Karliner, 22. Januar 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 252–253.

¹⁷⁹ Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁸⁰ Lebenslauf des Vorsitzenden der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto Horst Karliner, genannt Ismar Karliner, 22. Januar 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM, op. cit.

was not restricted in her movements, nor subjected to the same level of persecution, technically. However, the reality for such spouses was different. In remaining devout in her adopted Judaism and a loyal wife and caring mother, she was subjected to the same measures by default. However, as one of the Freibergs' sons recalled, his mother's access to areas off limits to Jews slightly improved the quality of their wretched life, as revealed in the following quotation:

I was a fantastically fast reader and Mum used to get me books from the library. Mum was free to move around wherever she wanted to. I remember she used to get me two books and by the time it got dark I had finished them, and I would ask if she would get me another two and she would say: "No, not today, I'll get you another two tomorrow." So reading was one big thing.

I remember one day I happened to be walking past this shop and there was a queue and I just covered my Star of David and joined the queue and they had vegetables and when I got home my mother said: "I'll go down too!" And she joined the queue for some more. But it was a rare event.¹⁸³

Whilst Elli Freiberg endured the humiliating conditions under which both she and her family were forced to live, she, nevertheless, used her position to the family's advantage. No doubt, some of the staff at any of the venues where she went would have known of her situation. However, she did remain free to move about the city and through this attempted to improve the difficult lives of her family.

The examples of the situations of the Karliner and the Freiberg families demonstrate the clear distinction when it came to their persecution. As active members of the Jewish community, both men and their children were subjected to the same persecutions as other Jews, whilst the persecution of their spouses occurred indirectly owing to their marital situation.

The Gestapo in Magdeburg consistently monitored and acted on any anomalies in the pedigrees of the city's population. In August 1944, the case of forty-five-year-old, Rudolf August came to its attention. Originally from Berlin,

¹⁸³ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

August had settled in Magdeburg and had been employed as a clerk at a local savings bank since 31 December 1943.¹⁸⁴ The Gestapo in Magdeburg, having investigated his 'racial status,' notified the provincial government and confronted the bank, informing it that it had a Jew in its employ. The bank reacted immediately, claiming ignorance, owing to the fact that August had been sent to them by the city's employment agency. He was dismissed immediately.¹⁸⁵ What took place in the aftermath remains unclear and his fate is unknown. Importantly, however, the incident testifies to the degree of seriousness with which local authorities took racial politics in their quest to declare their city 'judenfrei.' All persons of any Jewish lineage were to be identified, registered, classified and then subjected to discrimination based on their racial classification.

Once deportations commenced in April 1942, all Jews in '*Mischehen*' and '*Mischlinge*' constantly lived in the shadow of 'resettlement to the east.' Regardless of the level of persecution to which they had been subjected, there remained the constant fear that exemptions granted would be revoked. Whilst the exact number of individuals affected by the Nuremberg Laws and their applications in Magdeburg has not been established, those of mixed marriage or lineage who were directly affiliated to the Jewish community were subjected to the full extent of persecutions reserved for all Jews. However, there were no recorded cases whereby such individuals were included in the mass deportations. Of the 185 Jews remaining in Magdeburg in July 1944, the vast majority were Jews living in mixed marriages and their children. Of this figure, the majority

¹⁸⁴ Betr.: Juden Rudolf Israel August, geb. 22.11.98 Berlin, wohnhaft Magdeburg, Baenschstr. 5, 5. August – 2. September 1944, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 399–400.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

were to lose their lives in the remaining months of the war during the aerial bombardment of the city by the Allies.

Forced Labour and Deportations

The forced labour deployment of Jews in Magdeburg commenced as early as the winter of 1939–1940. Jews were involved in bridge construction on the River Elbe, in the production of goods in war-related industries and in garbage removal. Both men and women were conscripted. Forced labour also continued beyond the aerial destruction of the city by Allied bombers on 16 January 1945. With the commencement of the mass deportation of Jews in April 1942, possessing a position as an ‘essential worker’ in a war-related enterprise delayed and sometimes even assisted in evading ‘resettlement to the east.’ Between 14 April 1942 and 11 January 1944, a minimum of three deportations from Magdeburg to the east and four to Theresienstadt took place.¹⁸⁶ A considerable number of Jews, originally from Magdeburg, who had relocated to other communities were also deported. With the occurrence of the first deportation, the community was shocked, but unsure as to what ‘resettlement’ involved and what it actually meant. Fears were allayed when correspondence was received in Magdeburg from deportees. However, with successive deportations and no correspondence, by the time the last deportation took place some Jews attempted, unsuccessfully, to flee. Deportees were notified in advance and the deportations were well organised and orchestrated without violent round-ups. The third and final phase of the destruction process of the Jewish community had commenced. This phase marked

¹⁸⁶ Both archival sources and oral history confirm this figure of a total of seven mass deportations from Magdeburg.

the physical destruction of the Jews and the disappearance of not only their community but the Jews themselves from the landscape of the city they had so patriotically called home.

With the outbreak of war and a severe labour shortage, a demand for Jewish labour became apparent.¹⁸⁷ It is not known exactly when the labour deployment of Jews occurred, however, it is most likely that it had commenced by the winter of 1939–1940. Prior to Otto Herrmann relocating to Potsdam from Magdeburg at the end of August 1940,¹⁸⁸ he had been forced to work as a labourer on a bridge being constructed on the River Elbe. A non-Jewish girlhood friend of Herrmann's daughter, who visited the Herrmanns with food parcels from her mother, recalled seeing Herrmann working in the middle of winter in freezing conditions. Without protective clothing Herrmann laboured in the River Elbe, with water right up to his waist.¹⁸⁹ The Klemm brothers also recalled a bridge under construction, which was never completed. Located in the suburb of Werder, they knew of its existence because they used its thick pylons as a shelter during air raids in 1945.¹⁹⁰

In May 1940 in Berlin, all Jewish men aged between eighteen and fifty-five and all Jewish women aged between eighteen and fifty had to register with the Jewish community for forced labour. Forced labour, itself, commenced in Magdeburg either after its introduction in Berlin or shortly thereafter. Furthermore, in March 1941, all Jews in the *Reich* between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five were formally drafted into forced labour. In the initial years of forced

¹⁸⁷ Konrad Kwiet, "Forced Labour of German Jews in Nazi Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. XXXVI, 1991, pp. 389–410 and Wolf Gruner, "Poverty and Persecution: The Reichsvereinigung, the Jewish Population and Anti-Jewish Policy in the Nazi State, 1939–1945," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XXVII, 1999, pp. 23–60.

¹⁸⁸ Private correspondence from Otto Herrmann, 25 November 1940, Private Archive of I. Poppert, op. cit.

¹⁸⁹ Austinat, op. cit., 29 January 2001.

¹⁹⁰ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

labour in the city the majority of Jews, both male and female, were involved in war-related industry. One of Joachim Freiberg's sons recalled his father's work:

He was obliged to work in one of the factories, which in the main made tarpaulins, tents and so on for the Africa army. That factory later established a branch in the Warsaw ghetto – it was called 'Röhricht'. The factory might have been close because on the weekend they used to send stuff home. With the tarpaulins, the ropes had to be treated and we would be sitting at home doing this.¹⁹¹

Joachim Freiberg worked as a forced labourer at 'Röhricht & Company' from 1941 until 1942.¹⁹² Freiberg's sister, Lilli, was also employed by the same company until her deportation in February 1943.¹⁹³ Freiberg's youngest son also recalled his father's work and that his father was so valued by his employer that when he was ordered to work elsewhere, his employer intervened.¹⁹⁴

Between April and July 1942, Freiberg attended to the needs of the 'Judenschule,' in the wake of the deportation of all of its staff. When the school was officially dissolved at the end of June 1942, he was ordered to work as a garbage collector for the company 'Franz Kühne' in a Jewish work detail. Otto Horst Karliner and his son Werner were also a part of this work detail,¹⁹⁵ as were the brothers Bernhard and Leo Augenreich.¹⁹⁶ Karliner had worked as the caretaker at the Jewish cemetery until the dissolution of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* in June 1943. When this occurred he was inducted into the Jewish labour detail.

One of Freiberg's sons recalled the exact details of this unpleasant work:

¹⁹¹ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

¹⁹² Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM, op. cit.

¹⁹³ Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

¹⁹⁴ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

¹⁹⁵ Lebenslauf des Vorsitzenden der Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto Horst Karliner, genannt Ismar Karliner, 22. Januar 1947, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 252.

¹⁹⁶ Personal file on the Freiberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 14, ASGM, op. cit.

He had to climb down a ladder two or three metres into these dugouts, shovel the rubbish into a basket, which had a rope attached and return up the ladder to a horse-drawn wagon. He and three other Jewish fellows were doing this. That was the second job.¹⁹⁷

Other than the details of his father's long and arduous working day, Freiberg's son also recalled the kindness of his father's non-Jewish employer:

He was mainly working in Cracau¹⁹⁸ and their shift was from very early in the morning until the afternoon. So, in the summer days M. and I used to go and visit him at work and then when they finished work we used to all go down to the Elbe and have a swim. But this Kühne was actually a farmer. I'm not sure where his farm was. But it was pretty close to Magdeburg and he used his horse-drawn wagons on his farm and as a sideline he picked up the rubbish on contract. But every day he had food for us. And there was always extra for us to take home. That was one of the reasons we went to see Dad because we got something to eat. That's why after the war we saw Kühne quite frequently to make sure he was not being hassled.¹⁹⁹

Jews deemed 'non-essential' to the war effort were deported first. Unlike the majority of Jews who had all been deported by March 1943, Joachim Freiberg was still working for Franz Kühne when Magdeburg suffered its near complete destruction in January 1945. He continued in this position until liberation. Of the documented cases of forced labourers, the only ones to remain in Magdeburg after the last mass deportation were those Jews in mixed marriages and '*Mischlinge*.'

In the last phase of the war, the situation of labour reached crisis point and, in the winter of 1944–1945, most people defined by the Nuremberg Laws as 'first-degree *Mischlinge*,' Jews married to 'Aryans,' and even 'Aryan men married to Jewish women were also inducted into forced labour.'²⁰⁰ Those not inducted into forced labour faced deportation at any time.

On 4 November 1941, the provincial government in Magdeburg received a nationally-despatched memorandum from the *Reich* Minister for Finance detailing

¹⁹⁷ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

¹⁹⁸ Cracau is a south-eastern suburb of Magdeburg.

¹⁹⁹ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

²⁰⁰ Kaplan, op. cit., p. 174.

the exact procedures to be followed with the forthcoming deportation of its Jews.²⁰¹ Deportations had already commenced in other major centres. Jews who were not employed in industries essential to the war effort were to be deported in the forthcoming months to a city in the eastern region of the *Reich*. The possessions and property of all deportees were to be confiscated by the *Reich*. Deportees were permitted to take luggage of no more than fifty kilograms per person in addition to RM 100. All deportations were administered and executed by the local Gestapo, which also attended to the registration of all goods.²⁰² In Magdeburg, one of those officers actively involved in the deportations, and later imprisoned for his war crimes whilst in Magdeburg, was *SS-Untersturmführer* Errlich.²⁰³

Strict and comprehensive guidelines for the registration and valuation of the confiscated possessions were administered. This included all household goods, works of art, objects made of precious metals, stamp collections and stocks and shares. Vacated apartments and rooms were returned to the city's administration.²⁰⁴ In the ensuing months between November 1941 and April 1942 relevant bureaucracies in the city prepared themselves for their administrative tasks ahead.

Final arrangements for the first deportation from Magdeburg were completed on 23 March 1942.²⁰⁵ 465 Jews from the administrative district of Magdeburg, including 153 Jews from the city itself, were to be deported to the

²⁰¹ Betr.: Abschiebung von Juden, 4. November 1941, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 8–11.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 8.

²⁰³ Betr.: SS-Untersturmführer Errlich, 16. September – 20. Oktober 1949, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 66, CJA, pp. 67–72.

²⁰⁴ Betr.: Abschiebung von Juden, 4. November 1941, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 8–11.

²⁰⁵ Betrifft: Evakuierung von Juden, 23. März 1942, *ibid.*, p. 16.

Generalgouvernement.²⁰⁶ All Jews were to complete a signed declaration attesting to goods surrendered and keys to their former ‘Jew apartments’ or ‘*Judenwohnungen*’ were to be surrendered and receipts signed attesting to such. All Jews would automatically forfeit any claim to their properties in Germany, once they had entered the territory of the *Generalgouvernement* in occupied Poland.²⁰⁷

With this first deportation, Jewish community leaders were ordered to draw up the list of deportees, which added to the emotional burden of the situation:

At some early stages the lists were unfortunately made up by the Jewish congregation. It was a terrible job. The Gestapo said that so many will be going and you supply the list. Whether they were the final arbiters or not, I don’t know. But, I remember that Dad, who wasn’t working for them, but assisting them, was very upset about this and obviously didn’t want anything to do with it. I think, obviously, that single people went first, hence my aunt, who was a spinster. The other criteria was what kind of occupation people were doing.²⁰⁸

Although the community was suspicious, the general feeling was that ‘resettlement’ meant exactly that. According to the information Jews received, they were being ‘resettled’ to various eastern areas. One interviewee attested: ‘I’m sure at the beginning that “resettlement” was accepted as the truth.’²⁰⁹ We had no knowledge that deportation meant probable death.’²¹⁰

One of Joachim Freiberg’s sons recalled that his aunt had been nominated for the first deportation, but because other people volunteered, she was taken off the list. In order to avoid splitting up families, those family members not nominated for deportation volunteered, in order to be with their loved ones. This was a

²⁰⁶ Betrifft: Evakuierung von Juden, 23. März 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 15–16.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Name withheld, op. cit., 23 July 1999.

²⁰⁹ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

normal practice and as many as between twelve and fifteen people ‘exchanged places.’²¹¹ Those nominated were informed in writing and this was personally delivered early in the morning by the Gestapo.²¹² Interviewees recalled that later on ‘the early morning door-knock’ was dreaded in the knowledge that it only brought with it even more misery. The same son recalled the process from notification to actual deportation:

People don’t believe this, but people used to get a notice that they should be ready in four weeks and that they could take so much luggage with them and they just disappeared. They weren’t rounded up. There was some sort of a hall, a dance hall; it was called ‘*Freundschaft*’ [‘Friendship’], funnily enough. It was a hall for hire for weddings and things like that.²¹³

On 14 April 1942, in the first deportation, 153 Jews from Magdeburg were deported to the *Generalgouvernement*.²¹⁴ The destination of this first deportation was the Warsaw ghetto. The arrival and registration of a group of the deportees were recorded on film,²¹⁵ including that of the thirty-eighty-year-old Margarete Katz née Waldbaum.²¹⁶ Members of this group corresponded with relatives and friends back in Magdeburg. The addresses of all of the deportees in Warsaw were various building numbers in *Gartenstraße*. This correspondence calmed some fears in Magdeburg as they knew that their relatives and friends had arrived and welcomed their news. However, it did not take long before correspondence began to cease.

²¹¹ Telephone interview with M. F., Sydney, 18 February 2002.

²¹² Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²¹³ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²¹⁴ Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 101.

²¹⁵ Film footage of the arrival of a group of the Jews from this first deportation from Magdeburg and their registration at the Warsaw Ghetto Reception Camp is located in the “Warsaw Ghetto Compilation”, Photos Archive Collection, Phot Registry Number 5501, YVA and at: http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/Katz/katz_first.htm.

²¹⁶ Sonderaufbereitung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939, Listung der Erhebungsbögen für Provinz Sachsen, Stadtkreis Magdeburg, Gemeinde Magdeburg, BAB, op. cit., p. 13.

By 23 April 1942, the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg had received all of the associated files concerning both the Jews deported and the arrangements for the confiscation of their remaining property.²¹⁷ Throughout the course of the remaining weeks in April, further guidelines on the processes and procedures for confiscation were despatched to Magdeburg,²¹⁸ including that of pensions and superannuation policies.²¹⁹ Examples and case studies were provided for the bureaucrats to assist them. On 8–9 June 1942, a senior civil servant from Magdeburg, Dr Schillst, attended a two-day seminar in Berlin organised by the *Reich* Ministry of Finance. The two days were spent exchanging experiences and information on the processes of confiscating property owned by deported Jews, particularly real estate.²²⁰ In June 1942, owing to a shortage of housing in the city and complaints from the mayor's office, *Reich* civil servants in Magdeburg were reminded that 'Aryan' families with large numbers of children had preference in being allocated vacated '*Judenwohnungen*.'²²¹

The second deportation of an unknown number of Jews from the city occurred on 11 July 1942.²²² Unlike the previous group who were technically 'deported' this group was 'resettled,' as they were sent to an unknown eastern ghetto within

²¹⁷ Betr.: Evakuierung von Juden, 23. April 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 20.

²¹⁸ Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich verfallenen oder zu Gunsten des Reichs eingezogenen Vermögens, Regelung der Zuständigkeit, 25. April 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 15, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

²¹⁹ Betr.: Behandlung der Ruhegehaltsansprüche abgeschobener Juden, 29. April 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 43.

²²⁰ Bericht über die Dienstreise am 8. und 9.6.1942 nach Berlin zum Oberfinanzpräsidenten Berlin-Brandenburg und Reichsfinanzministerium, 14. Juni 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 51–54.

²²¹ Betrifft: Wohnungsfürsorge; hier: Besetzung der Judenwohnungen in reichseigenen, ehemals jüdischen Grundstücken, 18. Juni 1942, *ibid.*, p. 56.

²²² Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, *ibid.*, p. 101. It is most likely that the destination of this group of deportees was the Lodz/Litzmannstadt Ghetto in the annexed Warthegau.

the now enlarged *Reich*. Unlike the first group who were technically ‘deported’ and not ‘resettled,’²²³ this group of deportees did not leave German territory. Thus the authorities declared them enemies of the state in order to confiscate their remaining property in Germany, once ‘resettlement’ had taken place. The third category under which property of deported Jews was confiscated was that of those Jews who had lost their German citizenship.²²⁴ Subsequently, all property owned by Jews was appropriated by the *Reich* under one of the three categories. On 3 August 1942, the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg had received all of the associated files on the Jews deported, including the signed receipts for the keys to their former apartments, and confirmation that they had been deported to the east.²²⁵

In the wake of the second mass deportation, the anxiety, fear and suspicion of Jews in the city increased when no correspondence from the deportees was received, as recalled by one interviewee:

When people didn’t write and there was no feedback whatsoever, then I think it would only have been a matter of a few months before people started to wonder. I know my parents were talking about some dreadful things happening and were really upset about it. But they deliberately excluded the children from this discussion. So we had very little inkling. This threat of deportation was always over us too. I remember talking to M. about this a few times as a child. You know what kids are like. It might be an interesting change, that sort of attitude. You see we didn’t know what was at the end. I

²²³ Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 101. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘I ... die am 14. April 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg in das Generalgouvernement (Ausland) abgeschobenen Juden; IV ... die am 11. Juli 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg umgesiedelten Juden (in Inland verblieben).

²²⁴ Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, *ibid.*, p. 101. The cited quotation is the author’s translation from the original German which reads: ‘I ... die am 14. April 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg in das Generalgouvernement (Ausland) abgeschobenen Juden; IV ... die am 11. Juli 1942 von der Staatspolizeistelle Magdeburg umgesiedelten Juden (in Inland verblieben).

²²⁵ Betr.: Abschiebung von Juden, 3. August 1942, *ibid.*, p. 76.

remember when I made the suggestion that it might be an adventure [to be deported], he said: “No, I don’t think that it would be that good.” I think being two years older he might have had more of an idea than I had.²²⁶

With this doubt in the minds of all Jews, parents only ever discussed the subject in hushed tones and attempted to exclude children from any such discussion.²²⁷ The situation with the ongoing deportations in 1942, coupled with the resulting serious reduction in the community’s numbers, exacerbated the already desperate and despairing lives of those remaining Jews. However, as interviewees recalled, there was nothing that they could do to alter anything. Life continued in its altered form and Jews, yet again, attempted to adjust.

With the deportation of Jews and the evacuation of entire apartment buildings, measures followed governing the refurbishment of such buildings and their leasing arrangements. In Magdeburg in August 1942, orders from the *Reich* Minister for Finance were issued that no beautification or repairs of former ‘*Judenwohnungen*’ were to be carried out. However, medical officers would organise the disinfection of such premises and investigate whether there were any health-threatening situations in apartments which would require repairs for ‘Aryan’ habitation.²²⁸ An example of this was the ‘*Judenhaus*’ located at *Große Mühlenstraße* 11/12. With the deportation of all of its inhabitants by August 1942, including the owner of the building, the widow Rosa Weinberg née Kohane, the Ministry of Finance for the province of Saxony commenced this process in October 1942.²²⁹ For this and other former ‘*Judenhäuser*,’ it also marked the legal

²²⁶ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Instandsetzung von Judenwohnungen in reichseigenen, ehemals jüdischen Grundstücken, 1. August 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 81.

²²⁹ Betrifft: Judengrundstück in Magdeburg, Große Mühlenstraße 11/12, 29. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 3296, Band 2, LHASA MD, p. 93.

commencement of transferring title deeds and often led to disputes as to which authority would appropriate the real estate. City, provincial and *Reich* governmental bodies competed for booty.

By the time the deportation of the aged and war veterans to Theresienstadt commenced in November 1942, deportation had become a component of daily life. In spite of growing suspicions and uncertainty, Jews retained hope. However, a certain fatalistic inevitability evolved, as expressed in the following recollection:

Terezin was a completely separate situation. Terezin – they only sent people over sixty-five and some survived – not only over sixty-five, but also people who had been injured in the First World War. Everybody else went east. Terezin was the exception. In this sort of situation people always hope. I think they also understood that they weren't going to come back. My parents did discuss this.²³⁰

Three mass deportations occurred from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt in 1942. The first deportation of seventy-three Jews left on 18 November 1942.²³¹ It was followed by a second deportation of seventy-six Jews on 25 November 1942²³² and a third deportation of seventy Jews on 2 December 1942.²³³ The same procedure of appropriating vacated '*Judenhäuser*' ensued. With the deportation of Frieda Katzmann and the remaining inhabitants of her property at *Westendstraße* 9, the process began. The same applied to Pauline Lippmann when she and the remaining residents of her property at *Schöninger Straße* 27a were deported,²³⁴ as

²³⁰ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²³¹ List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/1, 18 November 1942, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., pp. 45–48. All cited statistics for all four deportations to Theresienstadt are also to be found in Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., pp. 762–766.

²³² List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/2, 25 November 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 50–53.

²³³ List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/3, 2 December 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 55–58.

²³⁴ Betrifft: Judengrundstücke in Magdeburg, Westendstraße Nr. 9 und Schöninger Straße Nr. 27a, 4. Februar – 25. November 1943, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 3296, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 166–189.

it did to Aron Litmanowitz, who owned and lived at the ‘*Judenhaus*’ at *Lübecker Straße* 30a.²³⁵ In February 1943, the Ministry of Finance in Magdeburg received a memorandum from its counterpart in Berlin indicating that returning soldiers should be given every opportunity of purchasing such real estate.²³⁶

By the time the last mass deportation (to the east) was organised for February 1943, doubts about what was taking place were enough for a handful of Jews in Magdeburg to attempt escape. Evidence suggests that almost all fugitives were caught. This recollection of the situation of the Natowitz family provides such an example:

Natowitz – he is one who tried to escape. But they got caught at the Swiss border. We were told after the war that somebody came to the *Gemeinde* and said that he had met them at five o’clock in the morning and took them to the railway station and bought them tickets – they couldn’t buy the tickets themselves [as Jews] – and they went to somewhere near the Swiss border, but they got caught.²³⁷

All of the preceding deportations both to the east and to Theresienstadt had been direct routes. The mass deportation in February 1943 departed Magdeburg sometime around 19–20 February²³⁸ and conveyed deportees to Berlin. Lilli Freiberg, sister of Joachim Freiberg, was deported in this group, as recalled by her nephew:

We were already in *Brandenburger Straße* when she was deported. She was living in the same building. Our reaction? We were all very upset about it! But that was that. We couldn’t go to the station, because all deportations took place from that hall. People went there and they were sent away the next day. There were no roundups, people just went there.²³⁹

²³⁵ Betrifft: Judengrundstück in Magdeburg, Lübecker Straße 30a , 28. Januar – 4. Februar 1944, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 3296, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 228–231.

²³⁶ Einstellung des Verkaufs von Grundbesitz aus eingezogenem und verfallenem Vermögen, 16. Februar – 27. Februar 1943, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 110.

²³⁷ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²³⁸ Ibid. The interviewee recalled this owing to his birthday being at this time.

²³⁹ Ibid.

On 26 February 1943, at least forty-six Jews from Magdeburg were deported directly from Berlin to Auschwitz-Birkenau.²⁴⁰ The Natowitz family, consisting of thirty-seven-year-old Leopold and his three daughters, Mia, Doris and Miriam, aged eight, five and two years old respectively, missed this final mass deportation owing to their attempted escape. Once apprehended, they were returned to Magdeburg, transported to Berlin, and on 2 March 1943, they were deported directly to Auschwitz-Birkenau.²⁴¹

The last mass deportation and the fourth to Theresienstadt left Magdeburg on 11 January 1944, consisting of sixteen Jews.²⁴² During the entire deportation period an unknown number of Jews from Magdeburg were also deported or imprisoned individually, such as young Rita Vogelhut. This ten-year-old girl was transported from Magdeburg to Berlin and from there deported to Theresienstadt on 29 June 1943. She remained there until 18 May 1944, when she was deported on to Auschwitz-Birkenau.²⁴³ In addition, 184 Jews born in Magdeburg, whose domicile was elsewhere, were also deported. Of this figure, 153 of them lived in Berlin up until their deportations.²⁴⁴ Their journeys ended in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Kovno, Lodz, Majdanek, Minsk, Riga, Theresienstadt and Trawniki.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12 March 2001, ASGM, pp. 13–19.

²⁴¹ Ibid., p. 17. As all of the deportees were deported directly from Berlin, their details are also to be found in Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit.

²⁴² List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/4, 11 January 1944, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., p. 59.

²⁴³ Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 219.

²⁴⁴ Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12. März 2001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 1–19.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

By July 1944 the overwhelming majority of Magdeburg's Jews had been deported and the city was almost '*judenfrei*.' Most of the 185 remaining Jews were either in mixed marriages, children of such marriages or were protected as 'first-degree *Mischlinge*.' Rumours continued steadily that the Gestapo would round up and deport anyone to bring about the 'Final Solution.' A few Jews fled to the countryside, attempting to find a hiding-place. Others remained in the city and experienced its aerial bombardment as Hitler's *Reich* entered its final months. The remaining Jews felt that their lives would end either by deportation or bombardment. Nevertheless, they hoped they would still be liberated by the advancing Allied troops. Not all celebrated liberation in April 1945. By this stage, the majority of the remaining Jews had fallen victim to bombardment. When the Allied troops entered the city they found not more than twenty Jews alive.

The Destruction and Dispersion of a German-Jewish Community

With the advance of the Allies and the aerial bombardment of the city, the threat of being killed during an air raid was only equalled by the threat of deportation. Sensing the demise of the *Reich* and acting in the knowledge that they had nothing to lose, Jews took more risks in protecting themselves and attempting to ascertain the war's progress. Some Jews stopped wearing the yellow star and a number regularly sought refuge from bombardment in public air-raid shelters forbidden to Jews. It was at this time that Jews who had previously gone in to hiding or had 'disappeared,' re-emerged and met accidentally, some for the first time in years. In the final months of the war, the majority of Magdeburg's remaining Jews were killed during air raids. By the time the city was liberated in April 1945, the Nazis had achieved success in their quest to erase any form of Jewish community from

the city. At that time, of the original community, there remained approximately twenty Jews.²⁴⁶

With the changing fortunes of the war, the remaining Jews followed its progress with keen attention, as recalled here:

We weren't allowed or were unable to get newspapers. Everyone was very interested in what was going on. And two or three streets away were the offices of the *Völkischer Beobachter* [National Observer] and they displayed the paper every day in glass windows. I used to go over with my jacket tucked around [to cover my yellow star] and read all the headlines and then report back. That was my job every day. So, I was fully aware of what was going on. It was pretty obvious from about the end of 1943 or in the second half of 1943 that the war was going to go bad. So, with each new defeat we were getting slightly more elated. But on the other hand we were pretty frightened of the bombing. It was hard to work out who was going to get us first – the bombs or the Nazis. It's funny, but it wasn't funny at the time. It was the truth. We were just as likely to get killed in an air raid as getting killed by the Nazis.²⁴⁷

However, their fear of being in public was real, and Jews generally avoided being outdoors altogether, even during the day. The general exceptions were those involved in forced labour, those involved in the task of procuring food and unaccompanied children. Curfews were still in place for all Jews of an evening.

For those Jews who did not take flight to the countryside during the air raids, there was no other option but to risk taking shelter in public air-raid shelters. With the absence of shelters in the remaining '*Judenhäuser*,' Jews were faced with little alternative than to risk detection and take refuge:

When we lived in the *Westendstraße*, there was no air-raid shelter there at all. So when the air raid was about to happen we would have to go to a public shelter and this was a time when Dad didn't wear a Star of David either. It was too risky. We just went there and it became a nightly thing. And we got to know the other people there and talk to each other. I think a lot of them knew who we were, but they didn't say anything.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²⁴⁷ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

This also led to Jews meeting other Jews who had been in hiding. An example of this was when Joachim Freiberg recognised his friend Oscar Eisenstedt:

In the shelter there was this guy wearing dark blue glasses and he was always hanging onto his wife and everybody assumed that he was blind. And my father kept looking at him and he kept looking at my father; although you couldn't tell because of the glasses. And one day they bumped into each other and he was very frightened and they realised that they knew each other quite well – it was Eisenstedt. All that time his wife had kept him hidden.²⁴⁹

Shelter was also taken at other venues, including the bombed-out Saint Catherine's Church on *Breiter Weg*.²⁵⁰ However, the majority of the remaining Jews were to perish during such air raids. One such example was that of the family of Walter Heinemann. During an air raid, Heinemann, together with his non-Jewish wife and one of his sons, Rolf, was killed. His surviving son, Gerd, witnessed liberation and eventually emigrated to Australia.²⁵¹

With the realisation that the fortunes of the war had turned against the Germans, some Jewish children simply stopped wearing the yellow star. The exception to this rule occurred when refuge was sought in public air-raid shelters and Jews had no option but to remove the star, as Jews were prohibited from entry. Such risks were not undertaken by adults, indicating the level of fear still extant even in the last months of the *Reich*.²⁵² In the final months before liberation, the few Jews remaining did not feel the same level of fear, as the German population was confronted with defeat, as recalled here:

By this time we were getting around a bit more than earlier, because it was less likely that anybody was going to say anything. Most of the Germans knew they were going to lose the war. There were certain fanatics around who still believed way into 1945 that something would happen, but they were very few in numbers. The vast majority knew they were going to cop it. But they kept going. I don't know why they kept going; it's not for me to make an analysis

²⁴⁹ Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

²⁵⁰ Telephone interview, name withheld on request (recorded), Sydney, 26 April 2001.

²⁵¹ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²⁵² Name withheld, op. cit., 13 July 2004.

of that. They did their best. They worked hard. They certainly no longer showed this strong antisemitism.²⁵³

By this stage, however, there were very few Jews in the city to experience this, as the organised Jewish community itself had long been erased from the landscape of the city. The exact total number of Jews in Magdeburg at that point in time cannot be calculated.

By May 1939, approximately 726 Jews were living in Magdeburg.²⁵⁴ When this figure is subtracted from the original June 1933 census statistic of 1,973 Jews,²⁵⁵ it indicates a population difference of 1,247 persons. The vast majority of this figure emigrated, as did a further unknown figure up until emigration ceased. Emigration destinations included other European countries, Palestine, the British Empire and its dominions, North and South America, Asia and Africa. Of those who emigrated to European countries, it remains unknown how many perished owing to the German occupation of some of those countries and the expansion of the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question.'

Deportation figures for the population which remained in Magdeburg indicate the following statistics:

1. 14 April 1942 – 153 Jews deported to Warsaw²⁵⁶
2. 11 July 1942 – unknown number of Jews deported to the annexed region in the east²⁵⁷
3. 18 November 1942 – 73 Jews deported to Theresienstadt²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

²⁵⁴ Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189.

²⁵⁵ Statistisches Reichsamt, *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Band 451, Volkszählung: die Bevölkerung des Deutschen Reichs nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung 1933, Heft 5, Die Glaubensjuden im Deutschen Reich*, Bestand R 3102, BAB, op. cit., pp. 15–33.

²⁵⁶ Betrifft: Verwaltung und Verwertung des dem Reich angefallenen Vermögens, 23. Oktober 1942, Bestand Rep. G 1, Signatur Nr. 390, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

4. 25 November 1942 – 76 Jews deported to Theresienstadt²⁵⁹
5. 2 December 1942 – 70 Jews deported to Theresienstadt²⁶⁰
6. 26 February 1943 – 46 Jews deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau²⁶¹
7. 2 March 1943 – 4 Jews deported individually to Auschwitz-Birkenau²⁶²
8. 29 June 1943 – 1 Jew deported individually to Theresienstadt²⁶³ and
9. 11 January 1944 – 16 Jews deported to Theresienstadt.²⁶⁴

These figures include only two documented cases of individual deportations, but it can be assumed that others took place. Excluding the second deportation, of which the number of Jews remains unknown, the total figure of deportees computes to 423 Jews. It is most probable that the number of Jews on the second deportation either matched or was greater than the first deportation, which consisted of 153 Jews. If approximately the same figure is used for calculating the number of Jews on the second deportation, the total number of Jews whose domicile was Magdeburg at the time of deportation computes to a figure of close to 580 Jews. When this figure is added to the estimated number of 185 Jews remaining in Magdeburg in July 1944,²⁶⁵ the total figure reached is approximately 765 Jews.

²⁵⁸ List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/1, 18 November 1942, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., pp. 45–48.

²⁵⁹ List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/2, 25 November 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 50–53.

²⁶⁰ List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/3, 2 December 1942, *ibid.*, pp. 55–58.

²⁶¹ Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12. März 2001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 13–19.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 17. As all of the deportees were deported directly from Berlin their details are also to be found in Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit.

²⁶³ Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 219.

²⁶⁴ List of deported Jews from Magdeburg to Theresienstadt, Transport XX/4, 11 January 1944, Collection 0.64, File 271, YVA, op. cit., p. 59.

²⁶⁵ The majority of this figure were Jews in mixed marriages and children of such marriages. Clearly, those individuals in Magdeburg classified as being in

This approximate total figure is close to the statistic of 726 Jews in the city in May 1939.

Deportation figures for Jews who were born in Magdeburg, but whose domicile was elsewhere at their time of deportation, amounted to 184 Jews.²⁶⁶ The figures for deportees who were not born in Magdeburg but left the city have not been established. In approximate terms, a minimum of some 800 Jews who had a connection with the city were deported and the vast majority perished.²⁶⁷

Very few Jews in Magdeburg witnessed liberation with the arrival of the Americans in April 1945. Of the remaining group, the majority had been killed during air raids. One interviewee recalled this period:

There were a few Jewish *Magdeburger* who returned, but not many. There were people who had hidden or so. There were a lot of people who claimed they were Jews and weren't. I don't think there were more than between fifteen or eighteen, maximum twenty Jews. Of this perhaps seven odd were children.²⁶⁸

Very few Jews from Magdeburg survived deportation. There were no documented cases of survival of the deportees to the ghettos in the east. Of the total 235

'Mischehen,' or as 'Geltungsjuden' and 'Mischlinge' possessed a far greater chance of survival.

²⁶⁶ Betr.: Petition Magdeburger Opfer des Holocaust, 12. März 2001, ASGM, op. cit., pp. 1–19.

²⁶⁷ Statistics for the number of Jews from Magdeburg who perished in the *Shoah* have been estimated to be as high as 1,521. See Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 189. The first statistic recorded was in 1948 and cited approximately 1,300 Jews. See correspondence and report from the president of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, Otto (Ismar) Horst Karliner, to Director Fink, American Joint Distribution Committee, Berlin detailing the historical development of the Jewish community of Magdeburg and reporting on the post-war situation and future developmental aspirations of the community, 1 March 1948, Bestand 5B1, Signatur Nr. 65, CJA, op. cit., p. 211. I would argue that both statistics are inaccurate. Documentation supporting such figures has not been located. I would further argue that the figures have been based on the number of Jews who left Magdeburg, that is, both those who relocated elsewhere in Germany and those who emigrated, and not on documented census and deportation statistics. It is most likely that both cited figures have factored in an estimated mortality rate of emigrating Jews in order to reach such total figures.

²⁶⁸ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

deportees to Theresienstadt, eighteen Jews survived.²⁶⁹ Two of these survivors, seventy-year-old Heinrich Berg and seventy-two-year-old Josef Sondheimer,²⁷⁰ returned to Magdeburg in 1945 after their liberation from the camp.²⁷¹ Of the 217 who perished, 172 died in Theresienstadt and the remaining forty-five were deported at various intervals on to Auschwitz-Birkenau and perished there.²⁷² The only other documented survivor to return to Magdeburg after liberation was the thirty-two-year-old civil engineer, Gabriel Weinberger,²⁷³ who was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 26 February 1943.²⁷⁴ Gravely ill, he was hospitalised in a sanatorium in Thuringia in 1945, following his liberation and return to Magdeburg.²⁷⁵

The small number of Jews who witnessed liberation in Magdeburg were simultaneously confronted with the reality of the annihilation and dispersion of their loved ones and friends, coupled with the absence of the community they had known and loved. In their daily lives they often faced their former persecutors. They suffered from their own ill-health and much uncertainty with the arrival of the Soviet forces. All wished to re-establish 'normal' lives, but generally found it too painful to do so in a land which now symbolised unimaginable suffering. Few wished to remain in the city they had once proudly called home. The

²⁶⁹ Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., p. 766. The statistics for those survivors are as follows. The number of survivors is listed against the date of deportation from Magdeburg: 18.11.1942 – 04; 25.11.1942 – 03; 02.12.1942 – 01; and 11.01.1944 – 10.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ M. F., op. cit., 27 June 1999.

²⁷² Institut Theresienstädter Initiative, ed., op. cit., pp. 762-766. The statistics for those deported on to Auschwitz-Birkenau are as follows: 29.01.1943 – 04; 18.12.1943 – 08; 16.05.1944 – 27; 29.09.1944 – 01; 09.10.1944 – 03; 19.10.1944 – 01; and 28.10.1944 – 01.

²⁷³ Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

²⁷⁴ Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin, ed., op. cit., p. 1325.

²⁷⁵ Correspondence from M. F. to the author, op. cit., 12 July 1999.

approximately one thousand years of Jewish history in Magdeburg, as they had once known it, had ended. Those who managed to reach new and safe shores prior to September 1939 and the majority of the remnant which survived in the city now called either the emerging state of Israel or the Jewish diaspora their new *Heimat*. For many, Magdeburg came to symbolise destruction, dispersion and gaping wounds which would not heal.

