

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

From Boycott to Expropriation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Magdeburg was an industrialised, working-class city. Support for socialism and communism was strong prior to 1933.⁴ Gerry Levy recalled with some irony that after the Nazis assumed power, an expression concerning the change in public support circulated throughout the city: '*Innen rot, außen braun – Wie ein Steak!*' ['Red on the inside, brown on the outside – just like a steak!']⁵ The political metamorphosis expressed in this phrase provides an insight into the population's adoption of official antisemitism, as the overwhelming majority of interviewees

² This subject, together with examples, will be discussed in Chapter Three.

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

⁴ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁵ Correspondence from Gerry Levy AM to the author, 10 January 2002.

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

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

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

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

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

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Personal interview with Gisela Kent (recorded), Sydney, 16 January 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sigrid Freeman also recalled the antisemitic propaganda and particularly the antisemitic signage leading up to and including the actual boycott of 1 April 1933.¹³ Hemmi Freeman commented on what he perceived as a transition period for both Jews and non-Jews:

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

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

¹⁰ Poppert, *op. cit.*, 9 January 1998.

¹¹ Personal interview with Rosemarie Austinat (recorded), Wolmirstedt, 29 January 2001.

¹² Personal file on the Herrmann family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 20, ASGM.

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

¹⁴ H. Freeman, *op. cit.*, 13 May 1998.

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁶ H. Freeman, *op. cit.*, 3 June 1998.

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

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

Further to this, the publication and distribution of tens of thousands of copies of the booklet *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!* in February 1935²³ led to an

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁵ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

²⁶ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

²⁷ H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

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

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

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

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

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

²⁸ Poppert, op. cit., 9 January 1998.

²⁹ Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

³¹ H. B., op. cit., 15 August 1997.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

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

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

business in Magdeburg is further confirmed in correspondence from the office of the president of the province of Saxony and the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for Trade and Commerce to all government offices in the province of Saxony on 22 and 24 April 1936.³⁹ Instructions were given that all Jewish commercial representatives and agents were to be replaced by ‘representatives of German lineage.’⁴⁰

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

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

⁴⁰ Ibid.

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

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

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

Given the intensity of this campaign, Jewish businesses maintained their existence for varying periods of time. However, with the campaign's escalation after October 1935 through to the pogrom of November 1938, a large number of businesses were sold at less than market prices or 'aryanised.' Where possible, Jewish business people maintained their businesses in their original premises, some eventually with only minimal stock and little custom. Samuel Freiberg, his siblings Joachim and Lilli Freiberg, Julius Schetzer and Heinrich and Bertha Silbermann provide examples of this pattern. Samuel Freiberg operated a paint, wallpaper and floor coverings shop at *Halberstädter Straße* 52a,⁴⁴ Joachim (Jochen) and Lilli Freiberg operated a leathersgoods shop at *Breiter Weg* 73–74,⁴⁵ Julius Schetzer operated a textiles shop at *Jakobstraße* 8⁴⁶ and the Silbermanns operated a music and musical instrument shop at *Breiter Weg* 10.⁴⁷ These businesses were eventually 'aryanised,' the first being the business of Julius Schetzer in 1937.⁴⁸ In an attempt to salvage their finances, a number of other business people sold their businesses and/or premises and moved to smaller and cheaper locations. Friedrich Jankelowitz, who operated a leathersgoods business⁴⁹ located at *Gärtnerstraße* 1b, is an example of this. His daughter recalled that her maternal grandfather had started the business, which her father later joined. He eventually had to give up his old shop, as his daughter recalled:

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

⁴⁴ *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Personal file on the Schetzer family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 15, ASGM.

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

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

⁴⁹ *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM, op. cit.

gave up the old shop and rented a cellar somewhere and worked from there.⁵⁰

A number also sold businesses and simply lived off capital. This option was especially common amongst those close to retirement or those already retired. Hemmi Freeman recalled his parents' clothing business located at *Breiter Weg* 87⁵¹ was sold voluntarily in the early years. They chose this option because of the increasingly bleak economic future for Jewish businesses.⁵²

Parallel to this economic strangulation of Jewish businesses in the city ran the extremely limited employment opportunities for Jewish school-leavers and those seeking employment, as only Jewish establishments would employ them. Given the level of impoverishment of the majority of Jewish businesses, they could provide little work and minimal training, as both Gisela Kent and Hemmi Freeman discovered when they finished school in 1935. The young Gisela Jankelowitz was employed by three different Jewish establishments until her emigration on 21 August 1938.⁵³ She recalled that whilst she was paid and performed all of her assigned duties, in reality she learned little, as her employers had almost no business to speak of.

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

⁵⁰ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

⁵¹ *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM, op. cit.

⁵² H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁵³ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

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

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

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

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

⁵⁵ Kent, op. cit., 5 January 1998.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ *Magdeburgs Juden stellen sich vor!*, 1935, ASGM, op. cit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁵⁸ H. Freeman, op. cit., 3 June 1998.

⁵⁹ H. Freeman, op. cit., 13 May 1998.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

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

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

In order to provide for his wife and two children, Friedrich Jankelowitz belatedly applied for his entitled war pension, even though it proved in vain. Jankelowitz survived Buchenwald Concentration Camp after being arrested on 10 November 1938, only to die in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp on 12 October 1942.⁶² His wife Alice and son Günther were deported to the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942 and did not survive.⁶³ His daughter Gisela arrived unaccompanied in Perth, Australia aboard the *Oronsay* on 22 September 1938.⁶⁴ She was eighteen years old.

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

⁶¹ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Personal file on the Jankelowitz family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 22, ASGM.

⁶⁴ Kent, op. cit., 12 January 1998.

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

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

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

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

municipalities as well as by professional associations that wanted to further their own interests.⁶⁶

In Magdeburg the vast majority of members of the Jewish community were involved in businesses or in the professions. Nevertheless, a significant number were salaried staff in a variety of white-collar positions. Of the documented cases, few of these individuals were employed in their former positions beyond 1936. In May 1933⁶⁷ the administration of the Magdeburg Institute for Guards and Warders notified the chief of police in Magdeburg that the institute's director was Jewish. It cannot be established what ensued after the notification was made. However, by virtue of the fact that a memorandum was despatched so early and with the sole intent of notifying the police, it would be unlikely that the Jewish director of the institute was not dismissed. In 1936 the employment contract of Friedrich Röhricht, who had been appointed to Magdeburg in 1925 as the area director for the Central and Phoenix Insurance Companies, was cancelled.⁶⁸ Like the majority of Jews who found themselves in this situation, his options were extremely limited. One could either retrain and gain employment in another chosen field or seek alternative employment in the same profession, but with a Jewish employer. In Röhricht's case in Magdeburg, it is not known whether he sought retraining. However, he did remain unemployed, unable to support his wife Betty and

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

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

⁶⁸ Personal interview with Ursula Reed (recorded), Sydney, 4 August 1999.

children Werner and Jutta. Due to these circumstances the family moved to Aachen pending emigration to Australia in July 1937.⁶⁹

George Mannings recalled that his father, Heinrich Manneberg, a sales representative for office furniture and equipment,⁷⁰ was dismissed not long after the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws. He remained unemployed and was still struggling to survive financially when his only child, Günter, emigrated to England after the November pogrom, toward the end of 1938.⁷¹ Even with retraining, the number of positions in Jewish companies either in Magdeburg or in neighbouring towns and villages was limited, thus forcing individuals from this sector of the workforce into unemployment. Technically, the only individuals who were provided with some temporary reprieve until 1938 were those war veterans and/or their families and some senior civil servants who were exempted. However, such exemptions failed to assist both Röhricht and Manneberg, both of whom were decorated war veterans.

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

⁶⁹ Reed, *op. cit.*, 4 August 1999.

⁷⁰ Personal file on the Manneberg family, Bestand Pe, Signatur Nr. 31, ASGM.

⁷¹ Mannings, *op. cit.*, 17 August 1999.

full extent of the economic strangulation taking place.⁷² This situation involving exemptions also contributed to the illusion of a period of respite between 1934 and the end of 1937.⁷³ In Magdeburg, as elsewhere, the number of Jewish war veterans was substantial, giving rise to a significantly large number of veterans and their families in receipt of such exemptions. However, this reprieve ended on 30 September 1938, when all Jews lost their right to travel domestically to conduct any business or represent any companies and this was enforced in Magdeburg upon its receipt on 30 August 1938.⁷⁴

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

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

⁷² Levy, op. cit., 7 November 1996.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁷ Ibid.

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

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

removal of Jews from public office in accordance with a directive from the Prussian Ministry of Justice⁸⁰ and the application of the *Berufsbeamtengesetz*.

Exemptions for a number of solicitors barring them from practice in the civil service did follow, although the exact number cannot be established. On 5 May 1933, Dr Rudolf Brandus, Dr Martin Cohn, Dr Erich Hannach, Dr Katz, Dr Lewin and Dr G. Loewenthal lost their rights to practise, as did Willi Lange on 6 May 1933.⁸¹ Of the original twenty-seven Jewish members of the legal fraternity listed in April 1933, only thirteen of this group were still listed in 1934.⁸² Of this number, only five were still registered with the district court in the wake of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935,⁸³ with the same names still appearing in June 1938.⁸⁴ The individuals named were Max Abraham, Julius Jarosch, Dr Ernst Merzbach, Bruno Neuhaus and Dr Julius Riese. Other legal professionals may have maintained private practices, but no evidence of this has been located.

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

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

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

⁸² *Verzeichnis nichtarischer Rechtsanwälte Deutschlands* Berlin: Buchdruckerei R. Scherk, 1934, *ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁸⁷ Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden Sachsen-Anhalt, ed., op. cit., p. 188.

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

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

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

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

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

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

⁹³ Ibid.

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

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

reply from Burkhardt dated 19 January 1935.⁹⁶ The letter endorsed the action of the Butchers' Guild, expressing the view that the list was a good idea as it would ensure that all 'Volksgenossen' would not make the error of receiving medical services from 'non-Aryan' physicians.⁹⁷ Burkhardt's position was fully endorsed by the *Kreis- und Abschnittsleiter*, Rudolf Krause.⁹⁸ Cohn replied, stating that in his view this was not a reply from the city council and that he would instruct the Jewish physicians in question to pursue the matter legally. The Magdeburg branch of the Nazi Party forwarded all the associated correspondence to the city's mayor. No further action on the part of the mayor's office was recorded.⁹⁹ Thus, it can be clearly established that, as early as late 1934 the main authorities in the city had co-operated to ensure the exclusion of Jewish physicians. Prior to the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, forty physicians were still residing in Magdeburg. It is not known how many of them were still in private practice.¹⁰⁰

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

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

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 21–36.

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁰³ Personal interview with Hans Jensen (recorded), Sydney, 11 July 1999.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Approval as physician revoked.¹⁰⁶ Dr Jeruchem's licence was revoked in October 1938.¹⁰⁷ Beyond the period after the November pogrom, a number of Jewish physicians were reregistered to treat Jewish patients only,¹⁰⁸ by which time less than half the Jewish physicians registered in 1933 were still in practice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The ramifications of this memorandum occurred with remarkable speed, indicating the level of efficiency in racial politics in the province and in Magdeburg. On 16 October, the Department of Secondary School Education for the province of Saxony, based in Magdeburg, recommended four suspensions of teachers with Jewish lineage. This included the *Studienrat* Hans Rothenberg, who was employed at the ‘Lessing School’ in Magdeburg. His immediate suspension was recommended as he was racially a ‘full Jew.’¹¹³ He was duly suspended from his teaching position on 20 October 1935.¹¹⁴ On 4 November 1935, the *Oberschullehrerin* Maria Gottschalk, who was employed at a private grammar school in Magdeburg, the ‘Elisabeth Rosenthal School’, was dismissed on the

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

¹¹¹ Fragebogen zum Nachweis der arischen Abstammung, *ibid.*, pp. 20–22.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

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

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

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

Suspended Jewish civil servants were forcibly retired on 31 December 1935 when a further amendment of the *Reichsbürgergesetz* was enacted on 9 December 1935.¹¹⁷ Jewish civil servants who were war veterans or Jewish civil servants whose brothers and/or fathers had fallen in battle lost their exemptions and were subjected to the same measures.¹¹⁸ Pension records for those forcibly retired in Magdeburg indicate that eight Jewish members of the teaching profession in public schools had been relieved of their duties and retired by 14 October 1936. These included two male principals, one female principal and five male teachers.¹¹⁹ As a general rule non-Jewish civil servants who were married to Jewesses were forcibly retired on 8 April 1937.¹²⁰

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

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

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

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

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–60.

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

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

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

senior civil servant failed to submit the mandatory questionnaire on his racial lineage, together with the supporting attachments. As a result of this refusal, Trier was dismissed from his position in January 1936.¹²² The reasons for his failure to comply are not known. However, it is most likely that he was an unaffiliated Jew or possessed enough Jewish lineage for him to be concerned about submitting the completed questionnaire. Details of his eventual fate are not known.

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

On 28 April 1938, Jews were ordered to report all assets and property. This decree included agricultural properties, urban real estate, active business capital and disposable assets such as bank notes, securities and proceeds from the sale of businesses already liquidated.¹²³ The value of reported Jewish assets and property for the entire *Reich*, including Austria, tabled in a report dated 28 November 1938,

¹²² Übertritt der jüdischen Beamten in den Ruhestand, 25. Januar 1936, Collection JM, File 10624, YVA, op. cit., p. 36.

¹²³ Barkai, op. cit., p. 113.

was approximately RM 8.531 billion gross, RM 7.123 billion net after deduction of debts and other obligations.¹²⁴ The relevant forms to be completed were despatched with directions to all relevant governmental administrative bodies in Magdeburg for the province of Saxony on 8 June 1938.¹²⁵ Completing this process was undertaken so thoroughly in Magdeburg that even the value and contents of safety deposit boxes of Jewish clients were meticulously registered by the *Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Filiale Magdeburg* and despatched to the Customs Investigation Office of the provincial government in July and August 1938.¹²⁶

On 5 October 1938, the registrations of all property owned by Jews in the province was finalised. The city of Magdeburg recorded that there were 350 registrants. Of this figure, 261 were German-born Jews, nineteen were non-Jewish spouses, forty were foreign-born Jews and thirty were classified as stateless Jews. The total net value of the reported Jewish assets and property was RM 14,993,915.69; this figure also included the amount of RM 154,549.79, which represented registered foreign assets of German-born Jews.¹²⁷ This figure must be viewed cautiously, as by this time over 60% of Jewish-owned businesses in Magdeburg had been sold or ‘aryanised’ at prices far below market value, including the most successful and lucrative enterprises such as ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*’. From a memorandum emanating from the office of the

¹²⁴ Barkai, op. cit., p. 113.

¹²⁵ Betrifft: Amtliches Muster für die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden auf Grund der Verordnung vom 26. April 1938, RGB1.I.S.414, 8. Juni 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 11–13.

¹²⁶ Correspondence between the Allgemeine Deutsche Credit-Anstalt, Filiale Magdeburg and the Zollfahndungstelle, Magdeburg, 22 July 1938 – 6 September 1938, Bestand Rep. I 94, Signatur Nr. 18, LHASA MD, pp. 2–31.

¹²⁷ Betrifft: Auswertung der Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden und jüdisch Versippten auf Grund der Verordnung vom 26. April 1938, RGB1.I.S.414, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 48–51.

Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern dated 29 September 1938 and despatched nationally, it was made clear that Jewish assets would be confiscated.¹²⁸ Preparations for the final exclusion of Jews from the German economy and society were proceeding at a rapid pace. Legislation designed to financially cripple German Jewry was expedited in 1938,¹²⁹ culminating in this registration of Jewish assets.

A number of conclusions and observations can be made on the process of economic strangulation of the Jewish community. The experiences of individuals were dependent on which sector of the commercial landscape they occupied. As with all Jewish business owners in Germany, 1933 was a tumultuous year of ongoing boycotts and fear in Magdeburg. However, in spite of an effective and ongoing campaign of defamation and boycott, the majority of Jewish businesses adjusted to the new and difficult conditions. With the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, the ferocity of the public defamations were expedited, as Jews possessed no civil rights and became open targets. In the wake of these laws the process of ‘aryanisation,’ particularly of lucrative and highly coveted businesses, commenced. This period also marked the real end of any non-Jewish patronage of Jewish businesses. By 1938, of the 40% of the original businesses in existence in 1933, only a small minority were functioning with any serious business turnover. However, of all the sectors in the commercial landscape, they possessed slightly

¹²⁸ Betrifft: Verwaltung von Vermögen, das zum Zwecke der Einziehung beschlagnahmt wird, 29. September 1938, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 1831, Band IV, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 118–120.

¹²⁹ See Hans Safrian, “Expediting Expropriation and Expulsion: The Impact of the ‘Vienna Model’ on Anti-Jewish Policies in Nazi Germany, 1938,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 14, number 3, 2000, pp. 390–414 and Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und Nationaler Sozialismus* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2005.

more autonomy over their financial future. The only other group that could be included in this category were self-employed merchants and business people. Despite the circumstances, all of these individuals still possessed some control over their financial futures. The vast majority of Magdeburg's Jews fell into this category.

The position of businesses and self-employed merchants and business people deteriorated gradually, but salaried employees, professionals and civil servants faced the predicament of immediate collapse. In Magdeburg, given both the support and the efficiency of the Nazi Party, the city's authorities, the province's authorities and the associated professional associations, the situation for the majority of individuals became very grave from the early years of the regime. Almost all salaried employees in non-Jewish establishments were dismissed from their positions with the application of the Nuremberg Laws. For high-profile employees, the end of their careers came as early as 1933.

The situation of professionals in the fields of law and medicine, in which the Jews of Magdeburg were very well represented, was no less serious than the predicament of salaried employees. The effects of the application of the *Berufsbeamten-gesetz* in 1933 and the activities of the *Bund Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Juristen* in Magdeburg effectively reduced the number of legal professionals in 1935 to less than one fifth of those in practice in 1933. The situation of medical professionals was very similar. However, the city's administrative authorities played the greatest role in reducing the number of Jewish physicians, by refusing them access to clinics. The survival rate of their private practices was better than that of their legal cohorts. In 1938, when all legal and medical professionals lost their licences to practise, Magdeburg still possessed

just fewer than 50% of its original medical professionals who were in practice in 1933.

Civil servants, including professionals in education, may have enjoyed a period of respite until the Nuremberg Laws, however, by the end of 1935 and at the very latest by early 1936, Jewish civil servants and non-Jewish civil servants with Jewish spouses had been forced into retirement. Clearly, a greater number of Jewish business people and self-employed individuals in the city were able to maintain their economic existence for a longer period of time than their professional or salaried co-religionists. The only exception to this observation was the case of medical professionals, who, statistically, fared slightly better than those in businesses. By 1938, given the number of businesses sold or 'aryanised' and the number of individuals forced from positions, the options for the two-thirds of the original community who still remained were very limited. With the flurry of legislation in 1938, the community was descending into a state of real impoverishment, which culminated in the registration of Jewish assets. By the time of the pogrom in November 1938, those Jews still holding jobs in Magdeburg were, almost without exception, working for Jewish employers. Consequently, the employment situation was largely dependent on the number of still extant Jewish firms and businesses.¹³⁰ A small minority were living off the proceeds of liquidated assets. The remainder were unemployed.

¹³⁰ Barkai, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

The Process of Aryanisation

'Aryanisations' in Magdeburg commenced as early as 1933. They initially occurred in the form of 'voluntary' sales.¹³¹ The process of coercion and forced sales gathered momentum after the Nuremberg Laws. Sale prices in 1933 were still well below market value, but they were, nevertheless, better than the sale prices which Jewish vendors later experienced, as the acceleration of the displacement of the Jews from the city's economic life gathered momentum. As the years progressed, sale prices plummeted. Those who gained principally were Nazi Party stalwarts and middle-class functionaries of the Nazi Party.¹³² In April 1938 approximately 60% of Jewish-owned businesses in the city had been 'aryanised.'

In Magdeburg the process of 'aryanisation' conforms to the pattern observed throughout Germany with the figure of businesses 'aryanised' by 1935 being between 20% and 25% of those in existence in 1933.¹³³ In addition to the ongoing activities of boycotts and defamation in the local press, small businesses whose shops appeared especially attractive to local Nazi Party functionaries were slowly worn down and demoralised by various means. Claims that building and health regulations had been violated was one such ploy. An example of this was discussed in the previous section in the case of the stationer, 'L. Sperling & Co.'. Another effective ploy occurred after the application of the Nuremberg Laws when a number of Jews were threatened with the accusation of '*Rassenschande*,' or, worse still, were arrested under suspicion of the charge. Through these means

¹³¹ Barkai, op. cit., p. 69.

¹³² Frank Bajohr, "The Beneficiaries of 'Aryanization': Hamburg as a Case Study," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. XXVI, 1998, pp. 173–201.

¹³³ Barkai, op. cit., p. 70.

Jewish business owners, either due to accusations or after having been arrested and/or incarcerated, were ‘persuaded’ to sell their businesses. The incident at the shoe repair shop of Jakob Wurmser, also previously discussed, was an example of this. The owner of ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Barasch*’, Hermann Broder, was also ‘persuaded’ to sell his department store, after members of his senior staff were arrested and charged with ‘*Rassenschande*’ and his department store forced to close temporarily in December 1935¹³⁴ prior to its ‘aryanisation.’

Jewish eyewitnesses recalled the ‘disappearances’ of Jewish businesses from the commercial landscape of the city and how ‘aryanisations’ became a feature of everyday life for Jewish inhabitants, particularly after 1935. Even when businesses were in the process of being liquidated and inventories were being meticulously taken, Jews were still employed to perform these tasks, as one interviewee recalled:

Otto-von-Guericke-Straße was where ‘Sperling’ was. His building was about a four-storey building and the Nazis closed him down and then got Jewish people to do the stocktaking. See, Germans have to do everything correctly – they had to complete a full stocktaking before they took the business. So, Mum worked there for weeks and even Dad got a job there for a few days doing stocktaking.¹³⁵

The evidence indicated here is confirmed by documentation.¹³⁶ In the case of ‘L. Sperling & Co.’ and other similar-sized enterprises, the precise and meticulous records of their ‘aryanisations’ occupy volumes of documentation.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Betrifft: Schließung des jüdischen Kaufhauses Barasch, Magdeburg, 13. Dezember 1935, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 119, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 301–303.

¹³⁵ Personal interview, name withheld on request (recorded), Sydney, 18 June 1999.

¹³⁶ Status der Firma L. Sperling & Co. per 30. September 1939, 4. Dezember 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 15 (1938–1942), LHASA MD, pp. 1–133.

¹³⁷ Sperling, 16. Januar 1939 – 9. Oktober 1944, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 12 (1938–1942), LHASA MD, pp. 1–300.

An undated list of Jewish business people in Magdeburg compiled by the state police in Magdeburg for the provincial government provides the owners' names, the business names and the respective addresses of 322 establishments.¹³⁸ Attached to the list was a letter between governmental bodies in Magdeburg referring to the program of the removal of the Jews from the economy in the region.¹³⁹ The term used in the original letter was '*Entjudung der Wirtschaft im Regierungsbezirk Magdeburg*.'¹⁴⁰ This terminology,¹⁴¹ together with the knowledge of the dates of the 'aryanisations' of a number of the listed businesses indicates that it is most likely that this list dates from early 1936. This would also conform to the already cited statistic that between 20% to 25% of Jewish businesses were in non-Jewish hands by the end of 1935. Another list, possibly from the same period, provides the details of the new and old names of owners of fifteen 'aryanised' businesses registered with the Magdeburg district court.¹⁴² Importantly, the first list referred to provides evidence that the majority of 'aryanisations' prior to the pogrom of November 1938 occurred between early 1936 and early April 1938. As indicated, by April 1938 approximately 60% of Jewish businesses in the city had been 'aryanised.'

An insight into how the practice of 'aryanisation' worked in the city is provided by the examination of a number of cases. The process was never straightforward. It was designed to inflict as much financial damage as possible on the Jewish vendor, whilst simultaneously providing almost unlimited and never

¹³⁸ Verzeichnis der jüdischen Gewerbebetriebe in Magdeburg, undated, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 14, LHASA MD, pp. 1–12.

¹³⁹ Correspondence from Der Landrat, An den Herren Regierungspräsidenten Magdeburg, undated, *ibid.*, unnumbered page, one page.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Barkai, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

¹⁴² List of fifteen 'aryanised' businesses, undated, Bestand Rep. K 17, Signatur Nr. 101, LHASA MD, p. 30.

before experienced investment opportunities to non-Jews at extortionately low sale prices.¹⁴³ The first case involves one of the department stores in Magdeburg. ‘*Kaufhaus Gebrüder Karfiol*’ was owned by Ida Karfiol and located at *Jakobstraße* 38. In early 1938 Ida Karfiol was pressured into selling her department store for RM 24,000 to a local member of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), Albert Wagner. At the time the net worth of the stock in the store was itself estimated at RM 70,000. Given the sum involved, Wagner was not in a position to pay and it was agreed that he would have to pay the first instalment of RM 1,000 by 25 December 1938. However, Wagner did not pay by the due date and after a series of complaints, Ida Karfiol received her first instalment of RM 1,000 on 27 May 1939. For Wagner this was the only amount he ever paid, as Ida Karfiol emigrated on 28 May 1939. Wagner had in effect purchased a department store in a prime retail location for RM 1,000.¹⁴⁴ Documentation detailing Ida Karfiol’s destination and fate has not been located.

The second case concerns the previously discussed Jakob Wurmser, who was also pressured into selling his leather and shoe repair business ‘*Elsaß*’. When Wurmser finally relented and agreed to sell, the solicitor Max Abraham lodged the application for the approval of the sale to the master cobbler Fritz Güssau on 30 June 1938. The price of the business in the contract of sale was RM 4,000.¹⁴⁵ When the contract reached the *Gauwirtschaftsberater* of the Nazi Party for

¹⁴³ For a comparative case study see L. M. Stallbaumer, “Big Business and the Persecution of the Jews: The Flick Concern and the ‘Aryanization of Jewish Property before the War,’” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 13, number 1, 1993, pp. 1–27.

¹⁴⁴ Report by Hans Levy, Chairman of the Synagogen-Gemeinde zu Magdeburg, undated, Bestand Oa, Signatur Nr. 46, ASGM, pp. 1–3.

¹⁴⁵ Antrag auf Genehmigung eines Vertrages betreffend Veräußerung eines gewerblichen Betriebes nach der Anordnung auf Grund der Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden vom 26. April 1938, 30. Juni 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, pp. 296–300.

Magdeburg-Anhalt on 20 August 1938, he declined to approve the sale. He stated that the sale price was far too high and requested that the contract be revised and include all of the business's equipment and stock in the revised price.¹⁴⁶ By 7 October 1938 Wurmser had organised his emigration and that of his wife Betty and fifteen-year-old daughter Hannelore and wished to have his affairs finalised by 14 October. Without the sale of the business he could not receive certification from the Ministry of Finance, nor a passport. On the same day the head of the Cobblers' Guild of Magdeburg, having visited and taken a thoroughly documented inventory of Wurmser's premises, recommended that the sale price of the same business be reduced to RM 1,251.50.¹⁴⁷ The second contract was drawn up on the same day for the second price, and after its submission to the local authorities it was approved by the *Gauleiter* on 3 November 1938.¹⁴⁸ Not dissimilar to the predicament of Ida Karfiol, although on a smaller scale, Jakob Wurmser simply had to accept the reduced offer, knowing full well that he was absolutely defenceless and that he was being swindled. Evading arrest after the *Reichskristallnacht*, Wurmser, together with his family, left in the last week of November 1938 and emigrated to Australia.¹⁴⁹

Deflated sale prices were not the only problems that Jewish vendors faced, as the siblings Joachim and Lilli Freiberg experienced when they also finally bowed to pressure to sell their leathersgoods shop '*Taschen-Freiberg*', located at *Breiter*

¹⁴⁶ Arisierung der mechanischen Schuhbesohlanstalt nebst Lederhandlung Jakob Wurmser, Magdeburg, 20. August 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 301.

¹⁴⁷ Betrifft: Übernahme des Schuhmachereibetriebes Wurmser/Güssau, 7. Oktober 1938, ibid., pp. 308–309.

¹⁴⁸ Betrifft: Übernahme der mechanischen Schuhbesohlanstalt nebst Lederhandlung Jakob Wurmser, Magdeburg, Breiter Weg 147, durch den Schuhmachermeister Fritz Güssau, Magdeburg, 3. November 1938, ibid., p. 315.

¹⁴⁹ Personal interview with H. B. (recorded), Sydney, 19 November 1997.

Weg 73–74. They had taken over the business from their father Gustav (Moses) Freiberg many years earlier.¹⁵⁰ On 22 July 1938, a contract for the sale of the business to Alfred Claus was lodged with the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce.¹⁵¹ The estimated price was to have been between RM 10,000 and RM 12,000 and an additional RM 2,500 for the shop's fittings and inventory.¹⁵² After much correspondence between the *Gauleiter*, the mayor and the provincial government, the contract was refused and Claus's application to take over the business rejected on account of the view held that he was an unsuitable applicant, based on political grounds.¹⁵³ No details of why he was objectionable were documented. Claus was duly informed of this decision in writing from the mayor's office on 3 December 1938¹⁵⁴ and the Freiberg siblings were left without a purchaser.

On 10 December 1938, a further contract was drawn up with a new purchaser, Hermann Semmelhaack. In this contract the new estimated price was to have been between RM 6,000 and RM 8,000 and an additional RM 500 for the shop's fittings and inventory.¹⁵⁵ The ensuing correspondence and resolution mirror that of the situation of Jakob Wurmser. Inventories were taken and a flurry of correspondence occurred between the *Gauwirtschaftsberater*, the mayor's office and the provincial government. The main aim was to ensure that the applicant was

¹⁵⁰ Name withheld, op. cit., 18 June 1999.

¹⁵¹ Kaufvertrag Freiberg/Claus, 22. Juli 1938, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., pp. 291–293.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 291.

¹⁵³ Betrifft: Antrag des Alfred Claus, Magdeburg, Tischlerbrücke 1 auf Übernahme der Verkaufsstelle Freiberg, Magdeburg, Breiter Weg 73/74, 11. November 1938, ibid., p. 289. The cited quotation is the author's paraphrasing of the original German which reads: 'Gegen den Antragsteller bestehen politische Bedenken.'

¹⁵⁴ Betrifft: Übernahme der Verkaufsstelle Freiberg, Magdeburg, Breiter Weg 73/74, Inhaber: Freiberg, 3. Dezember 1938, ibid., p. 295.

¹⁵⁵ Kaufvertrag Freiberg/Semmelhaack, 10. Dezember 1938, ibid., pp. 165–166.

not politically objectionable. Certifications confirmed that he was not. On 23 January 1939, the Freibergs received RM 8,500 for their business.¹⁵⁶ On 4 April 1939, the mayor's office considered the matter and transfer finalised.¹⁵⁷ The experience of Joachim and Lilli Freiberg followed the same pattern as for Ida Karfiol and Jakob Wurmser. Yet, in this third example there was also the added tension for the Freibergs when the first contract was voided.

Forced reduced prices in contracts of sale and contracts being voided on the grounds of the unsuitability of the applicant were not the only difficult circumstances Jewish vendors found themselves in, as seen with the musical instrument shop owned by Heinrich and Bertha Silbermann. Their shop '*Parlophon-Haus Silbermann*' was located at *Breiter Weg* 10. In December 1938 a request from Erhard Dietrich to purchase the business was lodged. In January 1939 the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce reported to the mayor's office that this action was clearly not in the interests of other local businesses, as two other musical instrument shops were also located in the vicinity.¹⁵⁸ This position was further endorsed by the *Gauleiter* on 11 February 1939.¹⁵⁹ Dietrich lodged an official complaint over this, but was eventually pacified when he purchased a local lamp and lighting shop. Given the perceived oversupply of musical instrument shops in the locale, a further application was made to liquidate the business and to develop the site. When this occurred in March 1939, it came to

¹⁵⁶ Remittance advice from Hermann Semmelhaack, Quedlinburg, 23 January 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 2, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁵⁷ Betrifft: Übernahme der Verkaufsstelle Taschen-Freiberg, Magdeburg, 4. April 1939, *ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁵⁸ Betrifft: Erhard Dietrich auf Übernahme des jüdischen Musikwarengeschäftes Silbermann, Breiter Weg 10, 23. Januar 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 5, LHASA MD, p. 99.

¹⁵⁹ Betrifft: Antrag Erhard Dietrich auf Übernahme des jüdischen Musikwarengeschäftes Silbermann, Breiter Weg 10, 11. Februar 1939, *ibid.*, p. 97.

the knowledge of the mayor's office that Bertha Silbermann had in fact already left Magdeburg between 27 and 29 October 1938.¹⁶⁰ Prior to these events, Heinrich Silbermann had died in Berlin.¹⁶¹ Bertha Silbermann did leave Magdeburg, and together with her son Horst and daughter Rita emigrated to Australia. Quite clearly, she left without having sold her business. Given the events leading up to Dietrich's application in December 1938, it must be assumed that earlier in 1938 Bertha Silbermann had unsuccessfully attempted to sell the family business. In this instance, even with a willing Jewish vendor and a non-Jewish purchaser, the Magdeburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce, together with the other parties, had effectively blocked any sale at all. This situation was possibly the worst of all scenarios, as Bertha Silbermann received absolutely nothing at all for her business. This incident also highlights the collective power and might of governmental and non-governmental bodies working co-operatively to remove Jews from the local economy and to reduce them to financial ruin in the process.

In the aftermath of the pogrom in November 1938, the approximately 30% to 40% of the remaining Jewish-owned businesses were 'aryanised' at an expedited pace, abandoned and/or eventually confiscated. On 24 October 1940, a memorandum from the provincial government declared that the removal of the Jews from the local economy had been achieved. Only two businesses remained to be dealt with administratively, as their former major Jewish shareholders had

¹⁶⁰ Betrifft: Bestellung eines Abwicklers für Musikhaus Silbermann, 11. März 1939, Bestand Rep. C 28 I f, Signatur Nr. 933, Band 5, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 103.

¹⁶¹ Prior to these events Heinrich Silbermann had died at the Jewish Hospital in Berlin on 21 February 1938 at the age of fifty-seven, Death Certificate of Heinrich Silbermann, 21 February 1938, Private Archive of Léa Rothberg, daughter of Rita White (née Silbermann).

emigrated to England.¹⁶² These businesses were ‘Max Brandus Pty. Ltd.’, located at *Gröperstraße* 2 and the pump factory ‘Hannach & Co.’, located at *Stolzestraße* 2–5.

In conclusion, the circumstances and the actual process of each particular ‘aryanisation’ had the potential to vary. Nevertheless, a number of observations can be made. In the initial years of the regime, businesses sold ‘voluntarily’ were still sold at greatly reduced prices. However, vendors did achieve better prices and generally without the same level of harassment as came in the later years. This is one explanation for the low figure of businesses sold up until the application of the Nuremberg Laws. The majority of Magdeburg’s Jews adjusted to the change in power and attempted to continue conducting their livelihoods, even though under difficult circumstances.

However, when racial classification and legal disempowerment came with the Nuremberg Laws, the ramifications were immediate. This is manifested in the statistics of ‘aryanisations’ from 1936 until 1938. During this period Jewish business owners were actively harassed not only through boycotts and the ongoing very public campaign of defamation, but by threats of breaching civil codes and of the accusations of embezzlement and ‘*Rassenschande*.’ Owing to the combined efforts of both governmental and non-governmental bodies acting in a co-operative manner, Jews were left in totally defenceless positions, even when they did agree to sell their businesses. At the centre of this activity must be placed the *Gauwirtschaftsberater* and *Gauleiter* of Magdeburg-Anhalt, whose counsel was

¹⁶² Betrifft: Entjudung der gewerblichen Wirtschaft, 24. Oktober 1940, Bestand Rep. C 20 I. I b, Signatur Nr. 2537, LHASA MD, op. cit., p. 211.

sought by all non-Jewish parties prior to any decision to purchase businesses owned by Jews.

If Jews were fortunate enough they achieved a sale at a deflated price. If they were not so fortunate they received nothing or simply abandoned their former businesses prior to emigration. In the wake of the pogrom of November 1938 'aryanisations' in the city were expedited as Jews grappled with the realisation of what had transpired. The removal of the Jews from the economic life of the city had now entered its final phase. This exclusion from the city's economic life also ran parallel to their exclusion in the public domain, where they had once enjoyed everything the city had to offer its entire population.