

Probing the Depths of German Antisemitism

German Society and the Persecution of the Jews,
1933–1941

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Violence against Jews in Germany, 1933–1939

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On 10 April 1933 Victor Klemperer noted in his diary: "...surrounded by baiting, misery, trembling fear. A cousin of Dember, physician in Berlin, picked up in the middle of office hours, brought to the Humboldt Hospital, in his shirt sleeves and badly beaten, died there, 45 years old."¹ Immediately after the Reichstag elections on 5 March 1933, which marked the starting point of the National Socialist *Machtergreifung*, throughout Germany, the SA and other NSDAP organizations gave free rein to their antisemitic hatred.

What followed was a litany of arbitrary and vicious attacks against Jews. In Breslau, SA men kidnapped the theater director Paul Barnay and beat him with rubber clubs and dog whips so severely that he had to be hospitalized. In Straubing, a Jewish wholesaler who had been abducted was later found, his corpse ridden with bullets. In Königsberg, after a synagogue had been set on fire and arson attacks carried out on several Jewish shops, a Jewish businessman was also kidnapped and so brutally mistreated that he later died in the hospital. In Wiesbaden, several troops of young people marched through the city, breaking the shop windows of Jewish businesses and beating the owners. In Magdeburg, National Socialists attacked a small hotel that was frequented by Jewish guests, fired several shots and injured a number of them with knives. Disturbances on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin on 6 March escalated into bloody hunts. The German correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* reported on 10 March: "Many Jews were beaten by the brown shirts until blood ran down their heads and faces.

¹ Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten. Tagebücher 1933–1941*, Berlin, 1995, vol. I, p. 20.

Many fainted and were left to lie in the streets, until they were picked up by friends or passersby and brought to hospitals."²

It has become common to adopt Raul Hilberg's scheme — definition-expropriation-concentration-extermination³ — and assume a purposive development of National Socialist policy against the Jews, a development which progressed through a series of discrete, well-defined and unambiguous phases. This leads, first, to the problematic impression that there was an equally well-defined and linear antisemitic policy of the National Socialist regime.⁴ Second, this scheme reflects a "top-down" perspective, which characterizes the persecution of Jews as a series of repressive acts perpetrated by the state and defines politics as actions of the state, at the same time it disregards the practice of societal antisemitism, the antisemitism of neighbors, co-workers, clients, acquaintances, and relatives. Third, and most importantly, this perspective loses sight of the antisemitic violence to which the Jewish population of Germany was subjected from the very start of the National Socialist regime.

Physical violence is not one of the preferred themes of historiography, in particular since influential theories of modernization and civilization such as those of Norbert Elias and Max Weber have assumed that the role of physical violence will wane with the spread of civilization.⁵

- 2 On the cases mentioned here cf. Comité des Delegations Juives, ed., *Das Schwarzbuch. Tatsachen und Dokumente. Die Lage der Juden in Deutschland 1933*, Paris, 1934, pp. 495–499.
- 3 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Chicago, 1961.
- 4 For a critical perspective on this question, see: Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933–1939*, Urbana/Ill., 1970. Essential analyses of antisemitism and National Socialist persecution of the Jews are provided by: Uwe Dietrich Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich*, Düsseldorf 1972; Hermann Graml, *Antisemitism in the Third Reich*, Oxford, 1992; Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945. Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft*, Munich, 1988; more recently, the excellent book by Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*. Vol. 1: *The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939*, London, 1997.
- 5 On this topic, see in particular Thomas Lindenberger and Alf Lüdtke, eds., *Physische Gewalt. Studien zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main, 1995. Note also Bernd Hüppauf, ed., *War, Violence and the Modern Condition*, Berlin, 1997; and Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, ed., *200 Tage und 1 Jahrhundert. Gewalt und Destruktivität im Spiegel des Jahres 1945*, Hamburg, 1995.

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However, in contrast to the notion of modernity as an age increasingly free of violence, not only the seventeenth and eighteenth but also the nineteenth and, in particular, the twentieth century must be viewed, as Thomas Lindenberger and Alf Lüdtke have asserted, "on a worldwide scale as virtually pervaded and 'saturated' with violence."⁶ Violence directed against Jews was not an invention of National Socialist rule. Antisemitic acts of violence occurred under German Imperial rule — one example is the anti-Jewish riots in Berlin's *Scheunenviertel* — as well as in the Weimar Republic.⁷ Nonetheless, the National Socialist takeover in 1933 was a watershed, since it marked the end of the German government's adherence to legal norms which had offered Jews some measure of protection in the preceding years. Of central importance was the Presidential Decree for the Protection of the Nation and the State, which issued on 28 February 1933, abolished all basic rights laid down by the Weimar Constitution. The state's antisemitic policies not only disenfranchised the Jews, they also aimed to stigmatize and isolate them socially. Jews were outlawed, considered free game (*vogelfrei*), and protected by neither the Code of Civil Law nor criminal law; they were a minority that could be subjected to violence with no threat of punishment to the perpetrators.

In this essay, I will trace the increasing constriction of the walks of life of the Jewish population, the constant threats, and the daily antisemitic violence in the years before the war, by describing events in Treuchtlingen, a small town in Franconia for which an unusually rich collection of sources is available.⁸ I will focus not only on the physical mistreatment and attacks initiated by the SA and the HJ, but,

6 Lindenberger and Lüdtke, *Physische Gewalt*, p. 19.

7 Dirk Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt in der Weimarer Republik*, PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Freiburg, 1997.

8 Both extensive reports of former Jewish citizens and official documents pertaining to Treuchtlingen are available. My own research in Treuchtlingen uncovered various files in the municipal archives which supplement the information provided by official regional and federal sources. Thus, this especially dense collection of source material provides an opportunity of reconstructing the history of violence against the Jewish residents of one locality. Moreover, the study appears to be of broader significance, since examples from other regions and localities confirm that Treuchtlingen was not a "special case." This contribution is thus a preliminary study for a larger research project which I have begun, focusing on day-to-day antisemitic violence in Germany in the years 1933 to 1939. I wish to thank Christine

no less important, on the bystanders and observers who increasingly became participants and perpetrators. Contrary to the impression created by sweeping hypotheses such as that postulating an "eliminationist antisemitism" (Goldhagen), inherent in the Germans, we still know little about the intensity and the violent nature of antisemitism in the German population.⁹ Instead of providing facile explanations, I feel it is essential to first analyze the actual, concrete, daily practices: Who participated in violence against Jews? What were the prerequisites for the disintegration of civil values and legal norms in daily life? Who was the driving force, who heated things up, who attempted to stem the tide? How did violent actions spread, taking hold of bystanders and transforming them into perpetrators? How does violence change when limits are no longer set? When does murder become "normal"?

*Treuchtlingen in the Early Years of the
National Socialist Regime*

Today, the small town of Treuchtlingen in middle Franconia uses advertising to attract guests to its thermal spa. Situated in the Altmühl Valley not far from Nuremberg, its population in 1933 numbered about 4,200, 119 of whom were Jews. The history of Treuchtlingen's Jews reaches back to the Middle Ages, with the first document mentioning Jewish residents dated 1349. The first synagogue was built early in the eighteenth century and furnished with precious Torah shrine curtains and other valuable ritual artifacts; a ritual bathhouse was added in 1780. At the same time, the Jewish community bought farmland at the foot of the Schlossberg for use as a cemetery, which also served the

von Oertzen, Gesine Krüger, Karin Orth, Axel Dossmann and Ulrich Prehn for suggestions, comments and criticisms.

⁹ See the work of Werner Jochmann, especially: *Gesellschaftskrise und Judenfeindschaft in Deutschland 1870-1945*, Hamburg, 1988; also the studies of Ian Kershaw, "The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich," *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, 26 (1981), pp. 261-289; David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution. Public Opinion under Nazism*, Oxford, 1992; and Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"*, Princeton, 1984.

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¹³ Babette Gutn
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neighboring Jewish communities of Ellingen, Pappenheim, and Markt Berolzheim.¹⁰

Immediately after Hitler's takeover in 1933, the police searched the home of the head of the local branch of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (C.V.), and confiscated money, documents, and membership lists.¹¹ In June of the same year, the town council of Treuchtlingen ordered that the Jewish community vacate the schoolhouse at very short notice. The community took legal action against the town's decision but was forced to vacate in early 1935 and ordered to build a new schoolhouse.¹² Treuchtlinger Jews were the victims of physical attacks as early as 1933. Babette Gutmann, the Christian wife of Leo Gutmann, a Jewish livestock dealer, recounted after the war that armed SA watchmen were deployed in front of the couple's house shortly after the *Machtergreifung*: "From that time on, we were constantly boycotted, not only in business matters but also in private life. Windows were often smashed at night. The personal attacks escalated from year to year, we couldn't show ourselves in public, were molested in public with curses like 'Yid' (*Jud*), Jewish pig (*Judensau*), etc."¹³ Hermann Kahn, who left Treuchtlingen in 1935, reported that he was attacked in his own home by members of the Hitler Youth in

10 Cf. Baruch Z. Ophir and Falk Wiesemann, eds., *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Bayern 1918-1945. Geschichte und Zerstörung*, Munich, 1979, pp. 232-234; also Michaela Schrötle, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Judengemeinde von Treuchtlingen*, thesis in pedagogy submitted to the University of Augsburg, 1974, pp. 52-82.

11 On the C.V. cf. Arnold Paucker, *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik*, Hamburg, 1969; Avraham Barkai, "Der C.V. im Jahre 1933: Neu aufgefundene Dokumente im Moskauer "Sonderarchiv," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, 23 (1994), pp. 233-246; Hans Reichmann, "Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens," in: *Festschrift zum 80. Geburtstag von Rabbiner Dr. Leo Baeck*, London, 1953, pp. 55-73.

12 The new school was in fact never built, but the Jewish community attempted to provide regular lessons for the Jewish children, who were forced to leave the town's school in December 1936. In the spring of 1937 the Jewish community's teacher Salomon Frank was still teaching 13 pupils, cf. Ophir and Wiesemann, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Bayern*, p. 232.

13 Babette Gutmann to Bayrisches Landesentschädigungsamt, 24 April 1954; Treuchtlingen Municipal Archives (hereafter TMA), 063/27.

December 1934. All his furniture was demolished and he was beaten, sustaining two knife wounds.¹⁴

In April 1934, the Treuchtlinger *Sanitätsrat* Dr. Goppelt sent a long letter to the *Landkreisamt* (Rural District Office) of Weissenburg, decrying the anti-Jewish attacks in his town. He reported on several cases in which the windows of Jewish homes and shops were broken, the hat of an 89-year-old man was knocked from his head, and antisemitic signs had been put up at the town's borders. The *Sanitätsrat* emphasized the fact that he was by no means "a friend of the Jews" (*Judenfreund*), and described these events as "mischief" and "silly boys' pranks" but went on to convey his concern about the morals of young people and the prosperity of local businesses.¹⁵ Goppelt may have emphasized conservative disquiet about the potential loss of values expressly for those he assumed would be reading his letter, while he was in fact more concerned about the dignity and well-being of his Jewish fellow citizens. Nonetheless, he chose to formulate his warning such that it would not be considered an expression of sympathy for Jews which would put him in danger of being branded a "friend of the Jews." The *Bezirksamt* Weissenburg passed Goppelt's letter on to the *NSDAP Kreisleiter*, enclosing a comment about the difficulties encountered in replacing Jewish livestock dealers with Christian ones. The *NSDAP* officer answered vehemently: "All of these honorable circles have apparently thought it in keeping with the dignity of a cultivated state when year in, year out, tens of thousands of German farmers have lost their homes and farms. No one got up and lamented, 'these poor German people.' But if someone touches a hair on the head of a Jewish pig, a cry goes up from every nook and cranny, 'Our poor Jews!'"¹⁶

14 Paul Schanz, attorney of Hermann Kahn, to Bürgermeisteramt, 4 February 1957; TMA, 063/26.

15 Goppelt's letter is quoted from Steven M. Lowenstein, "The Struggle for Survival of Rural Jews in Germany 1933-1938: The Case of Bezirksamt Weissenburg, Mittelfranken," in: *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. The Jews in Nazi Germany*, Arnold Paucker, ed., Tübingen 1986, p. 117.

16 Lowenstein, "Struggle for Survival," p. 118. In fact, the boycott of Jewish livestock dealers in Bavaria, which the NSDAP pursued vehemently and in part with physical force, was only successful when enforced with governmental measures. The traditional trading relations were lucrative for the farmers and there was a lack of sufficient and competent Christian dealers to replace the Jewish traders: Falk Wiesemann, "Juden auf dem Lande: die wirtschaftliche Ausgrenzung der jüdischen

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As far as we can ascertain from the files, Goppelt received no answer to his letter.

The possible disclaimer that the acts of violence which Goppelt reported were everyday village rowdiness and could hardly be termed antisemitic must be taken seriously. However, the fact that Goppelt found these events significant enough to warrant writing a long letter of complaint elevates them above the level of daily village life. These actions were directed not at any old man on the street but at Jews in general. Thus these early actions were antisemitic in nature and their brutality beyond the usual village roughing about, at least as far as Hermann Kahn's report is concerned. A second possible disclaimer — namely that SA attacks were by no means unusual or worthy of notice, violence as such being a unifying and constitutive element of the SA,¹⁷ — is unconvincing. The violence that Treuchtlinger Jews faced was not directed at political rivals who were more or less on an equal footing, as in the street battles with Communists. The cases of antisemitic violence reported by Babette Gutmann, Hermann Kahn and Goppelt were attacks against defenseless persons who had been declared a threat, a "cancer in the body of the German people." Jews were not rivals who had to be defeated, they were "pests" who should be "eliminated." Violence against Jews met unarmed civilian victims, whose possibilities of defending themselves were increasingly limited due to state disenfranchisement.

Murder was, from the outset, a part of antisemitic violence as the examples cited at the beginning of this paper illustrate. On 1 April 1933 during the boycott against Jewish shops, the son of a Jewish businessman in Kiel shot an SS man, gave himself up to the police and was imprisoned; an enraged mob forced its way into the prison and killed the boy in his cell with thirty shots.¹⁸ The series of murders of SA leaders on 30 June 1934 also offered an occasion for antisemitic

Viehhändler in Bayern," in: *Die Reihen fast geschlossen. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags unterm Nationalsozialismus*, Detlev Peukert and Jürgen Reulecke, eds., Wuppertal, 1981, pp. 381-396.

¹⁷ On violence by the SA cf. the work of Thomas Balistier, *Gewalt und Ordnung. Kalkül und Faszination der SA*, Münster, 1989, especially pp. 146-160; Sven Reichardt, *Gewalt im SA-Milieu. Sozialhistorische Untersuchungen zum Berliner SA-Sturm Charlottenburg, 1926-1932*, Berlin, (MA thesis), 1994.

¹⁸ Dieter Hauschildt, "Vom Judenboykott zum Judenmord. Der 1. April 1933 in Kiel,"

violence, including murder. In the Silesian town of Hirschberg, Jewish shops were attacked, the shop windows shattered, and the owners dragged from their homes and beaten. SS men arrested a lawyer who had participated in court cases against National Socialists, as well as a businessman and a married couple, and shot all of them at night, supposedly "while trying to escape."¹⁹ A pogrom that took place in Gunzenhausen, less than twenty kilometers from Treuchtlingen, illustrates how quickly and fatally antisemitic violence could break out and, like in Kiel, take hold of a crowd in the early years of the National Socialist rule.

On Palm Sunday, 26 March 1934, the local SA leader Kurt Bär made an inflammatory speech, that incited a number of Gunzenhausen citizens to march to the homes of their Jewish neighbors, use brutal force to drag more than thirty of them to the local jail, and there savagely beat them. One Jewish man was reportedly found hanged in a shed, another purportedly drove a knife into his own heart before the mob got hold of him.²⁰ For weeks the anti-Jewish climate in Gunzenhausen remained at such a fever pitch that the police reinforcements brought in were not released until early May. In the meantime Jewish businesses, in particular the Strauss tavern where the pogrom had started, were repeatedly attacked and demolished at night. Kurt Bär was found guilty of disturbing the peace by the Regional Court Ansbach and in July 1934 shot the Jewish tavern owner Strauss and his son, apparently in revenge for his arrest. Strauss died soon after from the gunshot wounds.²¹

In Kiel as well as in Gunzenhausen, violence was initiated by SA and/or SS men but soon spread to crowds and sometimes culminated in murder. The disposition to violence was apparently so high among those who were initially only bystanders that only a spark was needed to

in: "Wir bauen das Reich." *Aufstieg und erste Herrschaftsjahre des Nationalsozialismus in Schleswig-Holstein*, Erich Hoffmann and Peter Wulf, eds, Neumünster, 1981, pp. 335-360.

¹⁹ *Der gelbe Fleck. Die Ausrottung von 500,000 deutschen Juden*. With an introduction by Lion Feuchtwanger, Paris, 1936, pp. 40-43.

²⁰ Ian Kershaw, "The Persecution of the Jews."

²¹ Halbmonatsbericht Regierungspräsident von Ober- und Mittelfranken, 21 July 1934, documented in: *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich and Falk Wiesemann, eds., Munich, 1977, p. 440.

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²² Staatspolizeist August 1935; On antisemitic and the Jews, ²³ Lowenstein, "

in flame them. The National Socialist state intervened in Gunzenhausen, sent police reinforcements and put Kurt Bär to trial, but apparently with the intention mainly of reiterating its monopoly on the use of force rather than the desire to protect the life and well-being of Jews. Antisemitic riots in Berlin in the summer of 1935 — in the course of which the SA and HJ attacked Jewish ice-cream cafés, chased away customers, and pasted boycott flyers on the windows — also brought the police to the scene. According to the report of the Berlin Gestapo, the police attempted to “energetically nip [these actions], in the bud” and posted individual policemen in front of “especially threatened businesses.” However, these policemen were in a difficult position, as the chronicler noted with regret, since “most of the population did not understand” their activities. The police were reportedly greeted with expletives such as “Jew-slave” (*Judenknecht*), and the like.²²

In March 1936, youths in Treuchtlingen disrupted a Jewish funeral singing loudly and throwing stones at the mourners. The youths were warned by the local gendarme and their teacher following a police complaint filed by the Jewish community, but no punishment was meted out.²³ The fact that — three years after the Nazis came to power and two years after the pogrom in the neighboring town of Gunzenhausen — the Treuchtlinger Jews appealed to the local authorities to restore law and order is characteristic of the trust that many German Jews still had, if not in the reign of constitutional law then at least in the state’s ability to guarantee “public order.” Perhaps from a local perspective, the hope that appeals to state powers would prove successful was not as illusory as an analysis of the national development would make them appear. The devaluation of the codes of criminal law may have proceeded more slowly in the minds of local officials than the new National Socialist rulers wished — especially when these officials were older experienced civil servants in rural communities who were generally used to doing their jobs on their own. Without a doubt, the reaction of the Jewish community can be viewed as proof that the Treuchtlinger Jews did

²² Staatspolizeistelle Berlin to Reichs- und preussische Ministerium des Innern, 22 August 1935; Osobyi Archives Moscow (hereafter OAM), 500/1/379, fol. 108-113. On antisemitic violence in the summer of 1935 see also Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, pp. 125-128, 137-139.

²³ Lowenstein, “Struggle for Survival,” p. 118.

not consider themselves helpless victims but in fact tried to defend themselves. "Until early 1938, complaints to the gendarmes led to brief periods of peace," wrote Moritz Mayer, a Jewish businessman, in a report written in 1939, "later on, complaints were also useless."²⁴

Despite the short-term success of these petitions, they were, in the long run, ineffective in checking increasing National Socialist pressure. Acting on a suggestion of the National Socialist mayor Andreas Guntner, the town council of Treuchtlingen voted to prohibit Jews from moving to Treuchtlingen, declared the Christian cemetery off-limits to them, and denied Jewish livestock dealers access to the markets in Treuchtlingen.²⁵ At a public rally, Guntner threatened the Jews: "I won't rest until the whole pack is brought to its knees." He publicly denounced Treuchtlinger citizens who were employed by Jews as "*Judenknechte*."²⁶ In September 1936 the windows of the synagogue and of a house in which Jews resided were smashed; a month later train passengers pushed Jewish travelers from Treuchtlingen and Gunzenhausen off the train and used force to stop them from riding the train.²⁷ Moritz Mayer recounted in his memoirs that for years before the pogrom of 1938 "it was nearly impossible to let the children walk down the streets by themselves. And adults were also subjected to abuse by school children."²⁸

24 Moritz Mayer's as yet unpublished report, which was written in 1939 after his emigration to Palestine and can be found in the Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter YVA), Record Group 033/80, is a very unique source. Mayer describes in detail and with reference to a specific locality the increasing persecution from the perspective of the victims. His perspective is thus diametrically opposed to the standpoint from which the antisemitic politics of the Nazi regime is usually described, i.e., using the regime's own documents and sources.

25 Extract from the *Beratungsbuch der Stadt Treuchtlingen*, 20 December 1935, and *Bekanntmachung*, 24 December 1935; TMA, 063/5.

26 Judgement of the Landgericht Nürnberg-Fürth, 9 Mai 1946 (KLs 16/46); TMA 063/19.

27 Ophir and Wiesemann, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Bayern*, pp. 232-233.

28 Memoirs of Moritz Mayer, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

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29 Max Domar I, p. 729.

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31 Cf. Adam, *Deutschlana Frankfurt an*

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33 Memoirs of

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At the NSDAP party convention in Nuremberg in September 1937, Hitler gave a demagogic, incendiary speech, assailing the "rulers of Jewish Bolshevism" and invoking his racist worldview, according to which the Jews were "neither mentally nor morally superior but rather in both respects an inferior race, through and through."²⁹ Two months later he revealed to a small circle of his high-ranking military leaders that he was determined to wage war, and planned, his first goal, to subjugate Czechoslovakia and Austria in a Blitz action.³⁰ It is against this background that the increasingly brutal course was taken against German Jews: With the preparations for war in Germany, the Jews became "natural" enemies who supposedly intended to undermine this German venture.³¹ Furthermore, Jewish assets were coveted as a resource for financing armaments; "Aryanization" and preparations for war were closely interconnected. In early 1933 there were approximately 50,000 Jewish businesses in the German Empire; in July 1938 only 9,000 remained, 3,600 of them in Berlin.³²

The Colonial Trading Company A. Meyer & Co. in Treuchtlingen, owned in part by Moritz Mayer, was also a victim of this expropriation campaign. The boycott promoted by the Nazis took effect as early as 1933.³³ In late 1937, the public salt factory in Munich (*Salinen München*), made known that it would no longer deliver salt to the Jewish-owned firm and the Southern German Sugar Factory (*Süddeutsche Zuckerfabrik*), sent a similar letter in mid-1938. Customers took advantage of the situation; many who had previously bought on credit refused to pay, arguing that the NSDAP had banned

29 Max Domarus, *Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Munich, 1965, vol. I, p. 729.

30 Minutes of a meeting in the Reichskanzlei on 5 November 1937, in: *Internationaler Militärgerichtshof (IMG), Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher in Nürnberg 14.11.1945-1.10.1946*, Nuremberg 1948, vol. 25, pp. 403-413.

31 Cf. Adam, *Judenpolitik*, pp. 166-203; Ludolf Herbst, *Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945. Die Entfesselung der Gewalt: Rassismus und Krieg*, Frankfurt am Main, 1996, pp. 200-217.

32 Avraham Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation. The Economic Struggle of German Jews*, Hanover, N.H., 1989, pp. 67-69.

33 Memoirs of Moritz Mayer, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

purchases in Jewish shops. It was reported that in the neighboring town of Pleinfeld a Jewish clothing dealer was beaten and chased out of town after he tried to collect money from debtors.³⁴ Josef Engl, a resident of Treuchtlingen who worked at the Jewish owned Neuburger Hardware Store, recalled the situation after the war:

SA men were posted in front of the shops, they even photographed people who went in and out of the Jewish stores. I am thinking in particular of the A. Neuburger Hardware Store, across from the town hall. It caused me personally a lot of trouble, I was declared a Jew-slave. (...) Certain gentlemen from the police had at the time no qualms about occasionally roughing one up."³⁵

Every purchase in a Jewish shop, every greeting from a Christian neighbor, every chat with a Jewish citizen was reported to the mayor, who, as Moritz Mayer writes, "immediately ordered such "offenders" to his office. They were then denied public contracts, subsidies, etc. In May 1938, all barbers and hairdressers in the town decided to stop serving Jewish customers. A few tradesmen had already done so earlier."³⁶

The year 1938 has quite appropriately been termed the "year of fate" for German and Austrian Jews.³⁷ On 12 March 1938, the eve of the invasion by German troops, Austrians in Vienna and elsewhere launched brutal antisemitic rampages. Jewish businesses were looted, Jewish citizens were arbitrarily arrested, driven from their homes and beaten, and looting and stealing of Jews was the order of the day.³⁸ As documented by well-known photographs, Viennese Jews were forced to scrub a sidewalk with their toothbrush jeered by a mocking crowd. In

34 Norman Klinger, *Die Geschichte der jüdischen Gemeinde Ellingen von 1933-1938*, Schülerwettbewerb Deutsche Geschichte 1980/81, Körber-Archiv 000448.

35 Quoted from Schröttle, *Beiträge*, pp. 104-105.

36 Memoirs of Moritz Mayer, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

37 "The year 1938 represents an historical turning point for the fate of Jews." These were the opening words of the working report of the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland* published in early 1939. Quoted from Avraham Barkai, "Schicksalsjahr 1938," in: *November 1938. From "Reichskristallnacht" to Genocide*, Walter H. Pehle, ed., New York, 1991, p. 95.

38 Cf. Hans Safrian and Hans Witek, *Und keiner war dabei. Dokumente des alltäglichen Antisemitismus in Wien 1938*, Vienna, 1988. The memoirs of the famous writer Carl Zuckmayer entitled "*Als wär's ein Stück von mir*" include a moving account of this evening of 11 March 1938.

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Berlin, antisemitic activities also flared up again in the early summer of 1938. In early May, Jewish businesses were smeared with paint during the night, a local synagogue was damaged, and shop windows were broken in several neighborhoods. On 10 June, Goebbels called on the police to "persist in constantly harassing the Jews,"³⁹ a day later violent attacks on Jewish businesses swept through Berlin, accompanied in part by looting. Jewish-owned businesses in Magdeburg were also smeared with paint, and in Frankfurt am Main shop windows were smashed, synagogues damaged and Jewish shop owners physically assaulted.⁴⁰

In general local police did not intervene against the perpetrators, and the police central office in Berlin chose to exploit the violent climate to its own ends. In early June the *Reichskriminalpolizeiamt* (Federal Criminal Police Bureau), issued a decree signed by Heydrich stating that, in the week of the 13th to 18th June, every district office of the Criminal Police (*Kriminalpolizeileitstelle*), had to "arrest and keep in preventive custody at least two hundred able-bodied (*arbeitsfähige*), male persons (asocial persons)," as well as "all male Jews in the District of the Criminal Police (*Kriminalpolizeileitstellenbezirk*), who had previously been sentenced to a prison sentence of more than one month."⁴¹ In the course of this June campaign, more than 10,000 people, including 1,500 Jews, were arrested and hauled to concentration camps. One of the victims was Louis Freimann, a Jewish businessman from

39 Goebbels noted on 11 June 1938: "Spoke to 300 police officers in Berlin about the Jewish question. I am really heating things up. Away with all sentimentality. Our motto ist not law but persecution." Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels, Sämtliche Fragmente, Teil I Aufzeichnungen 1924-1941*, Munich, 1987, vol. III, p. 452.

40 Fernschreiben SD Leipzig to SD-Hauptamt, 22 June 1938 and SD-OA Fulda-Werra to SD-Hauptamt, 23 June 1938; OAM 500/1/645, Bl. 10, 11. — Hitler apparently halted further rampages personally with an eye to foreign policy considerations. A note from the SD Main Office states that a decision of the *Gauleitung* and the *Polizeipräsident* of Berlin, which was preceded by "a personal message of the Führer from Berchtesgaden," prohibited further activities starting with 21 Juni, 5 p.m. Stabskanzlei SD-Hauptamt to Abteilung II 112, 22 June 1938; OAM, 500/1/645, as well as the corresponding notes in Goebbels' records dated 21 June and 22 June 1938; cf. Fröhlich, *Tagebücher*, vol. III, pp. 461-463.

41 Reichssicherheitshauptamt — Amt V, ed., *Vorbeugende Verbrechensbekämpfung — Erlassungssammlung*, n.p. n.d. [Berlin 1943], pp. 81-82; cf. Wolfgang Ayass, "Asoziale" im Nationalsozialismus, Stuttgart, 1995, pp. 139-165.

Treuchtlingen who was taken to Dachau and released only after he promised to leave Germany.⁴² According to a letter from Güntner to the commander's office at the Dachau concentration camp, Freimann wanted to emigrate to Palestine "which would be welcomed by the local police."⁴³ The June action thus revealed the intentions of the police and the SS, intentions that were pursued on a much larger scale a few months later in November 1938: namely to utilize terror and concentration camp detention as a means to force Jews to emigrate and relinquish their property to Aryans, so-called *Arisierung*.

For Moritz Mayer and his brother Albert, the pressure on their business increased so drastically that by early 1938 they began to consider giving it up and leaving Treuchtlingen. The archives of the town include a contract between Moritz Mayer and the town of Treuchtlingen dated 13 April 1938, documenting the sale of farmland (0.245 hectare), to the town for a price of RM 2,485, the payment of which Mayer confirmed with a receipt on the same day.⁴⁴ The projected sale of the Mayers' business together with the entire property at 16 *Hindenburgstrasse* (today *Hauptstrasse*) to the Rüdiger & Cirus company of Mittelgründen in the summer of 1938 was not finalized however because the Trade Association for Oils and Fats (*Fachgruppe Öle und Fette*), in Berlin refused to transfer the consignment of oil, it had previously delivered to the Jewish businessman Mayer, to the proposed "Aryan" owners.⁴⁵

42 In the case of the Jewish horse dealer Hermann Lang, who was also singled out for arrest, the *Bezirksamt* Weissenburg first requested an order from the criminal police (*Kriminalpolizei*), stating that the 65-year-old Lang should be arrested in spite of his advanced age. Although Mayor Güntner termed both men "capable of working," the police apparently refrained from arresting Lang; *Bezirksamt* Weissenburg to *Bürgermeister* Treuchtlingen, 16 June 1938 with note of the *Schutzpolizei* Treuchtlingen, 18 June 1938; TMA 063/5.

43 Güntner to *Kommandantur* KZ Dachau, 22 July 1938; TMA 063/5. Louis Freimann emigrated in 1939 to Philadelphia in the USA.

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The November Pogrom in Treuchtlingen

After the wave of riots and arrests in June 1938, the climate in Germany remained charged with violence. On 20 and 22 September in Beveringen, Neuenkirchen and Fürstenau, synagogues were broken into, their furnishings destroyed and Jewish cemeteries desecrated.⁴⁶ Also on 20 September, NSDAP members forced three Jewish families to leave Bechhofen in Central Franconia. The SD reported: "They [the Jews, M.W.] were brought out of their houses, kicked and driven through the village, some of them barefoot. After being called upon to do so, the children also participated in the demonstration."⁴⁷ In early October, the SD *Oberabschnitt Süd-West* reported antisemitic rallies in various localities in Württemberg, during which windows were shattered and Jews threatened.⁴⁸ In Vienna in mid-October, SS gangs also attacked hundreds of Jewish businesses and destroyed and looted schools, synagogues, and houses.⁴⁹

In Nuremberg, Munich, and Dortmund, the synagogues were demolished and the act made into a public spectacle; the Jewish communities were obliged to pay the costs of demolition. Of note is the reference contained in a telegram from the SD *Oberabschnitt Süd*:

Due to the remark a Jew made to a Sudeten German, to the effect that the whole world was being mobilized because of the negligibly small group of Sudeten Germans, disturbances broke out in Melrichstadt during the night of 30 September / 1 October 1938. Investigations to date reveal that, following the complete demolition of the synagogue, windows of Jewish houses were smashed and one Jewish shop window was looted.⁵⁰

It almost appears as if the extreme tension that the threat of war evoked among the German population was vented in local pogroms against Jews. The Munich agreement neither calmed the violent climate nor resolved the tense situation or broke the will of the National Socialists

46 Meldung SD-Oberabschnitt West, 24 September 1938; OAM, 500/1/630, fol. 3.

47 Meldung SD-Oberabschnitt Süd, 11 October 1938; OAM, 500/1/630, fol. 6.

48 Meldung SD-Oberabschnitt Süd-West, 6 October 1938; OAM, 500/1/630, fol. 5.

49 David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution. Public Opinion Under Nazism*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 82-3.

50 SD-Oberabschnitt Süd to SD-Hauptamt Berlin, 4 October 1938; OAM, 500/1/630, Bl. 7.

to wage war. Until today, the vehemence and brutality of the November pogroms remain inexplicable. Riots on such a scale do not occur on demand unless the pent-up energy required for a pogrom already exists, awaiting a command to be unleashed. Perhaps the violent atmosphere of the year 1938 and the international tensions that brought Europe to the brink of war were vented in the November pogrom.

In Treuchtlingen, signs of the approaching November pogrom were already perceptible weeks earlier. According to Moritz Mayer, the animosity of local residents increased discernibly during the September crisis:

Jostling from young and old, stone-throwing, window-shattering, dismantling of the window shutters during the day were not uncommon. Restlessness and nervousness increased when we heard from several Jewish communities (Leutershausen, Ellingen, etc.) that the Jews had been forced to leave their homes on sacred holidays, abandoning all their possessions, and to sell the synagogues for ridiculous prices (sometimes just a few marks).⁵¹

The mayor of Treuchtlingen declared that it was forbidden for the Jewish community to celebrate the *Hoschana Rabba* feast with the reading of religious texts — the traditional *Tikkun* — in the home of a community member.⁵² In Leutershausen the windows of a house in which Jews lived and the windows of the synagogue were broken and cow dung piled in front of the synagogue door. Two days later a group of town citizens forced its way into Jewish homes, demolished all the household contents, and assaulted the residents. About fifty people broke into the synagogue and destroyed everything inside.⁵³ The local NSDAP chapter in the neighboring village of Windsbach reacted to the violence in Leutershausen with a specially prepared flyer:

In the past few weeks the Jew has been determined to bait some of the peoples of the world into engaging in an awful war. The German nation was to be wrestled to its knees and destroyed. Millions of people were to be slaughtered

51 Memoirs of Moritz Mayers, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

52 Ophir and Wiesemann, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Bayern*, p. 233.

53 Report SD-Oberabschnitt Süd to SD-Hauptamt Berlin, 20 October 1938; OAM, 500/1/630, fol. 15-17; see also Ophir and Wiesemann, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Bayern*, pp. 195-196. Most of the approximately 20 Jewish citizens of Leutershausen then fled in panic from the village. Of those remaining, seven left Leutershausen by mid-December and in February 1939 the last Jewish resident moved to Munich.

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and murdered. Cities and villages of the German *Gaue* were to be destroyed. More than one hundred thousand German families would have thus experienced unspeakable suffering. That was the will of the Jew. (...), This is our undaunted will: Windsbach must be free of Jews in short order.⁵⁴

The pogrom in Treuchtlingen began in the early morning hours of 10 November 1938.⁵⁵ Shortly before midnight, the SA *Standartenführer* Georg Sauber of Weissenburg was instructed by telephone to report to Nuremberg where he was to receive from SA *Gruppenführer* von Obernitz the order to destroy the synagogues and arrest all male Jews. Sauber then drove to Treuchtlingen to personally convey the relevant orders to the local *Sturmabteilungsführer* Peter Engelhardt. The SA men of Treuchtlingen were woken after which they reported between 3:00 and 4:00 A.M. to the assigned meeting place — the fire company, which was close to the synagogue. While the men were still being divided into groups and receiving orders from Engelhardt to drive the Jewish citizens of Treuchtlingen out of their homes and demolish their belongings, other SA members were already setting fire to the synagogue. One witness recalls how the men stood in front of the house of the cantor Moses Kurzweil, which was attached to the synagogue, and shouted: "Jew, open up, come out, we're setting fire to your house, otherwise we'll burn you up!" They broke down the door and forced their way into the synagogue, which was soon in flames. The fire company arrived at the scene but their efforts went into protecting the surrounding "Aryan" houses, leaving Treuchtlingen's synagogue to burn to the ground.

Awakened by the noise and the fire alarm, more and more citizens of the town gathered in front of the burning synagogue and marched with the SA gangs to Jewish homes. Although SA men formed the core group

54 Quoted from Report SD-Oberabschnitt Süd, 25 October 1938; OAM, 500/1/630, fol. 31.

55 The following description of the pogrom in Treuchtlingen is based on the investigation results, evidence and eyewitness reports found in the court records of the trial before the Landgericht Nuremberg-Fürth, Mai 1946 (KLS 16/46), TMA 063/19. For summaries of the events of the November pogrom, see: Wolfgang Benz, "Der Novemberpogrom 1938," in: Benz, *Die Juden in Deutschland*, pp. 499-544; Hermann Graml, *Antisemitismus*; Peñle, *November 1938*; Dieter Obst, "Reichskristallnacht." *Ursachen und Verlauf des antisemitischen Pogroms vom November 1938*, Frankfurt am Main, 1991.

of the rampaging mob, the citizens of Treuchtlingen participated in the destruction, inciting the SA attackers, verbally abusing their Jewish neighbors, and looting the shops. After the war, in 1946, fifty-two women and men were tried before the *Landgericht* in Nuremberg-Fürth for deeds committed that night in Treuchtlingen. Thirty-nine were found guilty of disturbing the peace, some in connection with theft, intimidation, deprivation of liberty and dangerous bodily injury, and sentenced to prison sentences of up to two years; among them were five women who received sentences of between three months and two years.⁵⁶ The November pogrom in Treuchtlingen was not the work of isolated SA gangs but rather the rampage of an entire town. Those who did not become perpetrators looked the other way and did not find the courage to resist. The reports mention only a few people who tried to help the victims.⁵⁷

Moritz Mayer reports in his memoirs:

On 10 November between 4 and 5 A.M. I heard footsteps in the garden. When I looked out of the window, 8 to 10 men (S.A.), heavily armed with axes, hatchets, daggers, and revolvers were standing there. By the time I had awakened my wife and my 11 year old son, there was already a man in the bedroom, ordering us to go to the cellar and starting to smash everything to bits: the washbasin, mirror, window, furniture, doors etc. After we (including my sister-in-law and daughter), had been in the cellar for a short time, I was called upstairs. My

⁵⁶ The heavy sentences for women may reflect a patriarchal view of women, equating womanhood with nonviolence. Thus, violent women deserve especially severe punishment, since, according to this male perspective, they act contrary to their "feminine nature." The court opinion asserts that: "The defendants [Mrs. A. and Mrs. H.] lack not only the innate sensitivity of feminine emotion, they have, on the contrary revealed a coldness of feeling, even an emotional coarseness, which precludes a milder judgement of their deeds and demands strict punishment." On the topic of the treatment of female Nazis defendants, see Insa Eschebach, "Ich bin unschuldig." Vernehmungsprotokolle als historische Quellen. Der Rostocker Ravensbrück-Prozess 1966," *Werkstatt Geschichte*, 12 (1995), pp. 65-70.

⁵⁷ One such experience is related by Bernhard Tachauer, who later emigrated to Canada, and who was forced to flee head over heels and without a penny in his pocket from the antisemitic mob in his home in Marktbreit, in the rural district of Kitzingen. On his way to Munich, he had to wait at the train station in Treuchtlingen: "My thanks go to the station chief on duty during the night of the 9 November 1938. He didn't betray me to the police but instead let me board the train without a ticket and even made arrangements with the train conductor to allow me to ride all the way to Munich." *Treuchtlinger Kurier*, 19 and 20 November 1988.

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daughter wanted to accompany me but was shoved back. I was screamed at. "You scoundrel, you know that you've been free game since 12 o'clock tonight, give us your documents." Before I could unlock the desk, I was hit so hard in the face that my eyeglasses fell and broke, my right eye swelled up and the pupil damaged. The doctor later explained that I could have lost my vision by this blow. I was then thrown into the corner and pieces of furniture were thrown at me at random. The fact that I retained only three minor wounds and was not seriously injured must be termed extreme good fortune. In the meantime, the entire house was being laid in ruins as described above. In the kitchen, the dishes were smashed down to the last piece; in the cellar, my wife had a full tin can thrown at her head; the women were themselves forced to smash wine bottles and canning jars. After the SA came the plebs, then the school youths; each party continued destroying and stealing.⁵⁸

Other Jewish citizens of Treuchtlingen suffered similar treatment at the hands of the mob. According to the findings of the *Landgericht* Nuremberg, an SA man entered the home of the Gutmann family and threatened one of the sons with a pickaxe. The other men wrecked the furnishings of the rooms on the groundfloor, over turned cupboards and smashed dishes. Gutmann's non-Jewish wife and sons appealed for help to Mrs. A. and Mrs. H. pointing out that they were Christians, but the two women laughed derisively. These women later had to stand trial for their crimes. The mob charged into Albert Neuburger's hardware store, which was close to the burning synagogue, and looted the shop. As a witness later reported in court, everything was destroyed, the shop windows completely plundered, items inside had been thrown helter skelter and the witness and other residents of Treuchtlingen had to climb around and over the merchandise. Laundry baskets full of wine bottles were dragged out of Neuburger's cellar. Personal belongings, especially clothes and hats were thrown down the steps of the home of the Weinmann family. According to the evidence collected at the later trial, HJ youths trampled on the furniture and battered away at an overturned laundry cupboard in a frenzy. People stole cloth, suits, and the like from the shelves of the Bacharach's textile store. The sum of RM 3,000 was stolen from the Hänlein family. A horde of residents of Treuchtlingen gathered in front of the house of Dr. Meyerson, an ophthalmologist, and cheered on the SA rowdies inside. One women reputedly called out: "That is not nearly enough, bring him out, the

⁵⁸ Memoirs of Moritz Mayers, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

Jew-pig!" The home of the Meyersons was also ransacked and Dr. Meyerson was accused of having clandestine contact with a radio broadcasting station in Strassbourg, taken to the town hall and beaten. He committed suicide a few days later; his wife died shortly afterward in early 1939.

Albert Meyer was stabbed in the cellar of his house, and SA men shoved a bottle with a broken neck into the mouth of his young daughter and demanded that she drink from it. An old man was so badly beaten that he and his wife reported to the local police station in Treuchtlingen on the morning of 11 November and asked to be placed in protective custody as they feared further assaults.⁵⁹ Many Treuchtlingen Jews, especially women and children, fled in panic to the train station to escape the inferno, some only scantily dressed and with only as much as they could carry. On the way there they were pursued and beaten. Moritz Mayer and his wife were allowed to pack some linen and clothing and then "had to go through a cordon formed by the mob, accompanied by its derisive laughter, to the train station. Numerous members of the community were already there, others had already left on earlier trains."⁶⁰ On the morning of 10 November, the mob was still not satisfied and attempted to prevent the husband of Mrs. G. — a woman who worked as a housekeeper for the Meyersons — from going to work, shouting: "Pull him off his motorcycle, the Jew-slave." The pogrom finally subsided at about ten o'clock.⁶¹

There are still no exact figures on the extent of the destruction, looting, rape and murder in Germany during those few days.⁶² Certainly,

59 Gendarmeriestation Treuchtlingen to Bezirksamt Weissenburg, 11 November 1938; YVA, M1DN/203, fol. 295. The two elderly people were in fact transferred to the prison in Weissenburg and released a week later on 19 November.

60 Memoirs of Moritz Meyers, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

61 Judgement of Landgericht Nürnberg-Fürth, 9 May 1946 (KLs 16/46), TMA 063/19.

62 Heydrich himself estimated the damage in a letter to Göring on 11 November, naming totally unrealistic figures of 815 wrecked businesses, 29 department stores which were set fire to or otherwise sacked, 171 demolished residential homes, 191 synagogues that had been set fire to, 76 of which were completely destroyed. Furthermore, 11 buildings of Jewish communities were set fire to, 36 Jews killed and an equal number injured. Heydrich to Göring, 11 November 1938; documented in, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Washington, D.C., 1946, vol. V, p. 854 (3058-PS). One day later, Heydrich was already reporting more than 7,500 wrecked businesses; Stenographic, fragmentary minutes of the meeting in the *Reichsluftfahrtministerium*,

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many more than a hundred people were murdered,⁶³ not including the many Jews who died in concentration camps in the subsequent weeks and months. The mayor of Treuchtlingen reported to the Fire Insurance Office in Eichstätt on 15 November that the synagogue and the attached house of the cantor Moses Kurzweil were completely destroyed by fire and that all Jewish properties, altogether twenty-one houses or apartments, had been destroyed.⁶⁴ The *Bezirksamt* Weissenburg reported on 11 November that of ninety-three Jews who had been residents of Treuchtlingen, only three people who were over sixty years old (two men and a women) remained in the town. Four Jews were under arrest, the others had left the town.⁶⁵

Reports from other localities indicate that the events in Treuchtlingen were by no means unique. In Lünen, SA and SS men even drove the Jews they arrested directly through the fire into the burning synagogue. In Saarbrücken, the 130 Jewish men who had been arrested were lined up in marching formation, one had a drum hung around his neck, another was given a kettle-drum, and they were forced to parade through the streets, singing and drumming as they went. Upon arrival at the synagogue, they were made to dance and kneel and sing religious songs. On the way back to the train station the men, clad only in pyjamas, nightshirts or trousers, were sprayed on this November morning with water from the municipal street sprinkler until they were soaking wet. In Meppen, Jewish men were driven through the streets, ordered to lie on the street in front of the SA *Standartenhaus* and kiss the ground, while the SA men kicked them and walked on them.⁶⁶ This type of

12 November 1938, documented in: *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Washington, D.C., 1946, vol. IV, pp. 425-457 (1816-PS).

⁶³ Arno Hamburger reports that in Nuremberg alone 26 persons were murdered or were so terrified that they committed suicide; Arno Hamburger, "Die Pogromnacht vom 9. auf den 10. November 1938 in Nürnberg," in "Niemand war dabei und keiner hat's gewusst." *Die deutsche Öffentlichkeit und die Judenverfolgung 1933-1945*, Jörg Wollenberg, ed., Munich, 1989, pp. 21-25.

⁶⁴ *Bürgermeister* Treuchtlingen to *Brandversicherungsamt* Eichstätt, 15 November 1938; TMA 063/9.

⁶⁵ *Bezirksamt* Weissenburg to *Staatspolizeileitstelle* Nürnberg, 11 November 1938; YVA, MIDN/203, fol. 293.

⁶⁶ Obst, *Reichskristallnacht*, pp. 284-285.

brutal cruelty occurred publicly; in smaller localities the local party functionaries staged the rounding up of Jews for deportation as parades through the town or village. The victims often had to carry signs or banners with slogans such as "We are the murderers of vom Rath," "We are wretched Jews and have betrayed the Fatherland," and "The exodus of the Jews." They also had to sing folk songs, like "*Muss i denn zum Städele hinaus*," "*Nun ade mein lieb Heimatland*" or "*Das Wandern ist des Müllers Lust*." The procession was usually accompanied by a horde of onlookers; for the victims the march to the train station was like running the gauntlet. In Frankfurt, the Jewish captives arrived at the South Train Station to find themselves awaited by a jeering crowd which proceeded to chase them with clubs and sticks. In some places entire school classes were summoned to witness the spectacle and spit at or beat the victims.⁶⁷

Detention in Concentration Camps

The Mayer family of Treuchtlingen fled to Munich. Moritz and his brother were arrested there and sent to the Dachau concentration camp. During the night of 9 November, Heydrich and Gestapo head Müller, had ordered the arrest in concentration camps of thirty thousand particularly well-to-do, Jewish men. By 16 November about thirty-six thousand Jewish men had been subsequently arrested throughout the German Reich and most of them sent to the concentration camps in Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen.⁶⁸

The former attorney of the CV, Hans Reichmann, who was arrested on 10 November in Berlin and deported to Sachsenhausen, describes in his memoirs the "welcome" that the SS members had prepared for the Jewish prisoners:

Forty or fifty of these fellows are lurking around the gate, grinning. "Get off the truck! Will you get moving! You skunks, you pack of scoundrels, you

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 297-307.

⁶⁸ The arrests and concentration camp detention of the "November Jews" have hardly been researched to date. Cf. in particular Heiko Pollmeier, *Die Inhaftierung deutscher Juden im November 1938*, MA thesis submitted to the Technische Universität, Berlin, 1995.

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⁶⁹ Michael Wil
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⁷⁰ Memoirs of M
⁷¹ Wolfgang So
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Jew-pigs!" At the same time, blows rained down, everyone inside the dark truck tumbled head over heels and tried to jump off the truckbed. Energetic help was provided. Zealous arms reached into the truck and dragged out whoever they could grab. Whoever fell to the ground and got hurt was kicked. All the while there was jeering, screaming, tugging, beating and twenty or thirty times the cry was repeated: "Will you get moving, you skunks!" In this turbulent melee, bank director Lux of Beuthen took an unfortunate fall and broke his leg. (...), Immediately after this "reception" I saw a gaunt man whose face had a gaping wound from his eye to his chin.⁶⁹

Moritz Mayer reported from Dachau that when they arrived they were made to stand for hours in the cold, clad only in a shirt, socks, trousers, and a drill jacket: "SS men watched over us and if they saw that someone wasn't standing at attention properly, they would slap his face and poke him."⁷⁰

Thousands of new prisoners were crowded together in the existing barracks. In Dachau and Sachsenhausen, the beds had been removed and the floor was covered with straw on which the men had to lie like sardines next to each other. In Buchenwald, a provisional camp was hastily erected with five barracks, each of which was to house two thousand prisoners. Here there was neither straw nor blankets; there were only two provisional latrines and washing was nearly impossible. The daily labor duty for prisoners in Sachsenhausen was aimed more at degrading the prisoners and ruining their health than pursuing economic goals. "This labor," as Wolfgang Sofsky wrote, "was intended to disable the people and break their resistance. It was not a means of survival but rather one of absolute power and terror."⁷¹ In the Sachsenhausen camp, work in the dreaded brick factory in particular meant severe and senseless torment for the prisoners. The train lorries and the grading rollers, which weighed tons, had to be pulled by hand. Since there were neither wheelbarrows nor shovels, the prisoners were forced to button their jackets in the back and to carry sand in their

⁶⁹ Michael Wildt, ed., *Hans Reichmann, Deutscher Bürger und verfolgter Jude. Aufzeichnungen über Pogrom und Konzentrationslager, 1937 bis 1939*, Munich, 1997, pp. 121-122.

⁷⁰ Memoirs of Moritz Mayer, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

⁷¹ Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1997, p. 167.

aprons. When SS men appeared they purposely accelerated the work pace until the prisoners collapsed from exhaustion.

But the terror of the concentration camp lay not solely in such cruelty, equally important was the arbitrariness and the knowledge that one was at the absolute mercy of the captors. The punishments to which prisoners were subjected were not sanctions for transgressions against some code handed down by the SS, which at least would have offered some opportunity of avoiding punishment. In fact, the SS men made a joke of punishing prisoners for "misdeeds" that were unknown to them. Moritz Mayer recounted that in Dachau an old man was ordered to say his name but he forgot to add *Schutzhäftling*. He was slapped so hard that he fell and when he was released soon after, he died two days later. A sixty year old man with a bladder ailment asked to use the latrine and was beaten so severely by the SS that his lifeless body was carried from the *Appellplatz*. Another prisoner who had apparently died of a heart attack during roll call was left lying on the ground.⁷²

Dispassionate statistics speak an unambiguous language: from 1933 to 1936 the SS killed between 21 and 41 prisoners per year in Dachau; in 1938 they killed 276. In September 1938 twelve people died, in October 1938 ten. In November, following the internment of the Jewish captives, the number jumped to 115 and reached 173 deaths in December.⁷³ No other group of prisoners faced the drastic and brutal treatment as the Jews.⁷⁴

Expropriation

Initially, the detention of the Jewish men arrested in November 1938 was not intended to continue for a long period. Rather, the aim was to open the way for the expropriation of Jewish assets and pressure the Jews into leaving Germany. Müller and Heydrich emphasized in their telex to all Gestapo offices in the Reich that, above all, well-to-do Jews

72 Memoirs of Moritz Mayers, YVA, Record Group 033/80.

73 Statistics quoted from Karin Orth, *Die "Konzentrationslager-SS" — Sozialstrukturelle Analysen und biographische Studien einer nationalsozialistischen Funktionsschicht*, PhD dissertation submitted to Hamburg University, 1997, p. 155.

74 Cf. among others Falk Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft. Widerstand, Selbstbehauptung und Vernichtung im Konzentrationslager*, Hamburg, 1978, p. 94.

were to be arrested. be halted and that sick or handicapped at *Arisierungsverfu* to be released: "Ar preventive detentio "desirable *Arisierun*, Mayor Güntner : a Jewish prisoner i

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75 Heydrich to all Staj *Verfolgung, Vertrei* 1933-1941, Leipzi

76 Rundverfügung St Wolf-Arno Kropat 1938. *Eine Dokum.*

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were to be arrested. On 16 November Heydrich ordered that the arrests be halted and that all Jews over the age of 60 and those who were sick or handicapped be released.⁷⁵ Jews whose presence was required at *Arisierungsverhandlungen* (Aryanization negotiations), were also to be released: "*Arisierungsverhandlungen* must not be disrupted by preventive detention of business owners or partners. In the interests of desirable *Arisierungen*, such cases are to be dealt with liberally."⁷⁶

Mayor Güntner sent a letter to Karl Beck from Treuchtlingen, then a Jewish prisoner in the Buchenwald camp:

I hereby inform you that I will purchase your property at 30 *Kirchenstrasse* for the municipality. The purchase price for the property and the existing store furnishings has been set at RM9,000 by the *Kreisleitung*. (...). In order to complete the transaction with the signing of a notarized sales contract, you must name an authorized representative. *Stadtsekretär* Willy Röder has been appointed to transact the business of the local Jews. You are at liberty to also authorize him as your representative. Otherwise you must come here as soon as possible, to which end you may request leave at the commander's office of the concentration camp.⁷⁷

The wife of Moritz Mayer was warned that her husband would not be discharged from the Dachau camp until his brothers and sisters, who lived abroad, released their mortgages on the property. In fact, Moritz Mayer was released earlier than many others but had to sell the house, the property, and the warehouse shares which were owned by the trading company, his brother Albert, and himself. But Moritz and Albert Mayer did not return to Treuchtlingen. They lived with their families for a short time in Munich before leaving Germany in

⁷⁵ Heydrich to all Stapostellen, 16 November 1938, documented in: Kurt Pätzold, ed., *Verfolgung, Vertreibung, Vernichtung. Dokumente des faschistischen Antisemitismus 1933-1941*, Leipzig 1983, pp. 183-184 (Document no. 144).

⁷⁶ Rundverfügung Staatspolizeistelle Kassel, 17 November 1938; documented in: Wolf-Arno Kropat, *Kristallnacht in Hessen. Der Judenpogrom vom November 1938. Eine Dokumentation*, Wiesbaden, 1988, pp. 172-173 (Document no. 63).

⁷⁷ Güntner to Beck, 5 December 1938; TMA, 063/9. Presumably because of the police order of 12 December 1938, which ordered the release of all Jewish prisoners over 50 years of age, the 52-year-old Beck was set free and contacted Güntner on 16 December from Frankfurt where friends had taken him in. Güntner ordered him to appear on 20 December. Beck's property was finally "sold" in March 1939 to Heinrich Distler. Karl Beck succeeded in emigrating to the USA.

February 1939 for Palestine. Before their departure they authorized an "Aryan" businessman in Weissenburg to represent them in further sales transactions.

In the meantime, after the first attempts of local officials in the summer of 1938 to find a new "Aryan" owner for the Meyers' wholesale and retail food business had failed, Willi Schmidt of Duisburg announced his interest. In March 1939, the first sales contract was nullified on Schmidt's application and the value of the business reappraised, not surprisingly, the new figure was lower than the first. The *Landrat* in Weissenburg informed the parties concerned at the end of October 1939: "the reduction of the purchase price was justified due to the belated ascertainment of defects and the need for repairs on the buildings."⁷⁸ The purchase price was not paid in cash but instead transferred to a special, blocked account at an exchange bank; access was only possible with special permission of the *Oberfinanzpräsidenten* in Nuremberg. Moritz Mayer recounted that he was granted a sum of RM14,000, of which RM2,500 was immediately deducted for the damage caused on 10 November. Thus, Mayer was required after the fact to pay for the destruction of his own property by others. The *Regierungspräsident* in Ansbach decided in June 1939 that the "Aryan" buyer should pay the government a "compensation fee" of RM3,500⁷⁹ — a common token payment demanded by those in power in return for lucrative business takeovers.

In early December 1938, the mayor of Treuchtlingen reported to the *Bezirksamt* in Weissenburg that there had been six Jewish businesses in the town until early November: three textile stores, Neuburger's hardware store, Meyer's food business, and Karl Beck's mothball factory. All businesses were shut down on 10 November.⁸⁰ Since *Arisierung* meant not only the expropriation of property but also the elimination of competition,⁸¹ the mayor proposed that the three textile

78 *Landrat* Weissenburg to Etschel, München, and Schmidt, Treuchtlingen, 27 October 1939; YVA, MIDN/198, fol. 586.

79 *Anordnung Regierungspräsident* Ansbach, 14 June 1939; YVA, MIDN/198, fol. 670.

80 *Bürgermeister* Güntner to *Bezirksamt* Weissenburg, 3 December 1938; YVA, MIDN/203, fol. 315.

81 Götz Aly and Susanne Heim have pointed out this aspect in: *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*,

stores be closed, but in their entirety in the owners.⁸² Meyer's g the supply of small b this is a wholesale b for numerous small Moreover, "An urge existence of the h owned by A. Neubu Fritz Ehrentreich, " and other tradesme fittings, cast iron, e were not available i Weissenburg." Karl from unimportant e in the entire Reich. plant and having ar

The town's wish to David Bacharach closed and their Treuchtlingen. Luc at a forced auctior Feistner from Tre Hans Lepp opened Bacharach; Bacha Dörner.⁸⁵ Albert N former employee J Meyerson was pu

Hamburg, 1991; cf in *Hamburg. Die V* 1997.

82 *Bürgermeister* to B 83 *Ibid.*

84 *Zuschlagsbeschluss*: MIDN/198, fol. 56

85 *Bürgermeister* Tre MIDN/198, fol. 68

stores be closed, but "the other three business [should be] maintained in their entirety in the interests of the town and the public" — with new owners.⁸² Meyer's grocery business was deemed "essential for securing the supply of small businesses in Treuchtlingen and surroundings, since this is a wholesale business of considerable size, which provides wares for numerous small businesses from Treuchtlingen and surroundings." Moreover, "An urgent public need" was established for the continued existence of the hardware and machine trading business formerly owned by A. Neuburger which had been bought by the hardware dealer Fritz Ehrentreich, "since even in recent times, mechanics, carpenters and other tradesmen were forced to purchase hardware such as metal fittings, cast iron, etc., in the Jewish store Neuburger, as these wares were not available in other stores, including those in Donauwörth and Weissenburg." Karl Beck's mothball factory was also seen as "a far from unimportant enterprise, which is supposed to be only (sic), unique in the entire Reich." The town was thus "interested in maintaining this plant and having an Aryan continue its operation."⁸³

The town's wishes were fulfilled. The textile stores that had belonged to David Bacharach, Wilhelm Bürger, and Ludwig Herz remained closed and their wares distributed among the "Aryan" shops in Treuchtlingen. Ludwig and Helene Herz' house and land were sold at a forced auction on 18 December 1940 to the shoemaker August Feistner from Treuchtlingen for a price of RM1,500.⁸⁴ The tailor Hans Lepp opened a new clothing store in the former shop of David Bacharach; Bacharach's real estate was bought by the baker Karl Dörner.⁸⁵ Albert Neuburger's house and property were acquired by his former employee Josef Engel. The house and property of Dr. Siegfried Meyerson was purchased by members of the Schuderer family from

Hamburg, 1991; cf. in particular pp. 21-49. See also Frank Bajohr, "Arisierung" in Hamburg. *Die Verdrängung der jüdischen Unternehmer 1933-1945*, Hamburg 1997.

82 *Bürgermeister to Bezirksamt*, 3 December 1938, YVA, M1DN/203, fol. 315.

83 *Ibid.*

84 *Zuschlagsbeschluss Amtsgericht Weissenburg*, 18 December 1940; YVA, M1DN/198, fol. 563.

85 *Bürgermeister Treuchtlingen to Landrat Weissenburg*, 21 June 1939; YVA, M1DN/198, fol. 686.

Nuremberg, who thanked the party for the lucrative transaction by transferring RM3,000 as a "*Arisierungsgabe*" to a special account of the NSDAP — Gau Franken, earmarked the *Judenkonto*.⁸⁶ The town itself eventually became the new owner of most of the land formerly owned by the Jewish community of Treuchtlingen. The neighboring community of Pappenheim bought the new Jewish cemetery, nearly one hectare in size, for RM800.⁸⁷ Those citizens of Treuchtlingen who did not manage to acquire one of the Jewish properties were also provided for. In early December the mayor announced that "on Thursday, 8 December 1938, starting at 2 P.M. in the afternoon, at the address 30 *Kirchenstrasse*, various pieces of used furniture will be sold at cheap prices."⁸⁸ Mayor Güntner could proudly report to the *Landrat* in Weissenburg "that Treuchtlingen has been Jew-free since 10 November 1938."⁸⁹

Conclusion

The murders and violent excesses of 9 and 10 November 1938 forced tens of thousands of German Jews to flee. From 1933 to the end of 1937 between 126,000 and 129,000 Jews had left Germany, in 1938 between 33,000 and 40,000 fled, in 1939 another 75,000 to 80,000.⁹⁰ Those who stayed behind were robbed of their last possessions. Unemployed and impoverished, they were then called up for forced labor. On 30 January 1939 Hitler threatened the Jews that if it came to war the result would not be the "Bolshevization of the earth" but the "extermination of the Jewish race in Europe." In March 1939, Germany invaded and occupied the rest of the Czechoslovak Republic, a clear breach of the

86 NSDAP Gau Franken to the Economics State Ministry, Munich, 12 October 1939; YVA, M1DN/198, fol. 727.

87 *Kaufvertrag*, Urk. Rolle Nr. 466, Notar Dr. C. Johanny, 14 May 1943; YVA, M1DN/198, fol. 610-612.

88 *Bekanntmachung*, 7 December 1938; TMA 063/4.

89 *Bürgermeister* Treuchtlingen to *Landrat* Weissenburg, 29 June 1939, YVA, M1DN/203, fol. 352.

90 Ino Arndt and Heinz Boberach, "Deutsches Reich," in: Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Dimension des Völkermords. Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, Munich, 1991, p. 34.

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Munich Agreement, followed six months later by the German invasion of Poland. In the shadow of war, the "solution of the Jewish problem" became systematic mass murder.

Physical violence, assault, and riots with fatal consequences were part of the practice of National Socialist politics against Jews — not only after but also before 1939. The "deregulation" of German society under the Nazi dictatorship and the unleashing (*Entgrenzung*) of violence, whose perpetrators did not fear punishment but on the contrary were encouraged by the Party when the victims were Jews, clearly fostered an antisemitism that had previously existed in many people's minds only. Terror "from above" was supported by increasing and expanding antisemitic violence "from below," violence that a growing portion of the population participated or at least tolerated. Antisemitism does not merely "happen," it must be thought of and then implemented. Even before the November pogrom the climate in German society was charged with violence. Attacking Jews, destroying their homes and synagogues, beating, injuring, or even killing people was no longer the work of only a few. The pogrom in Treuchtlingen gives us an idea of how many "normal Germans" were involved in the violent assaults against Jews in 1938.

Of the ninety-two Jews who still lived in Treuchtlingen in mid-1938, forty-eight were deported and murdered, among them the Bacharach, Hänlein, and Herz families. Fourteen Jews from Treuchtlingen managed to escape to the United States; these included Karl Beck, Louis Freimann, Siegfried Weinmann, and Albert Neuburger and his family. Wilhelm and Rosa Bürger emigrated to France and ten Jewish citizens of Treuchtlingen succeeded in emigrating to Palestine, among them Albert and Moritz Mayer and their families. The Christian-Jewish Gutmann family remained in Augsburg and survived the Nazi regime. There is to date no trace of other former Jewish residents of Treuchtlingen.

In the late fifties, following an initiative of then-mayor and Social Democrat Hans Döbler, the Jewish cemetery was restored. A memorial and a plaque recall the fate of the Jewish community of Treuchtlingen, a sign in the Uhlengasse marks the site where the synagogue formerly stood. None of the surviving former Jewish citizens of Treuchtlingen returned to the town. There is no Jewish community in Treuchtlingen today.