Lowenherz, Josef

(1884--1946), Head of the Jewish community of Vienna during the Holocaust. A lawyer and Zionist activist, Lowenherz was elected annually from 1929 as deputy chairman of the city's Jewish community. In 1936 he became director of the Jewish community. In March 1938 Germany annexed AustriaA to the Reich (see also Anschluss). At that point, the Jewish community's offices were closed down, and Lowenherz and other Jewish leaders were arrested. Lowenherz, however, was spared deportation to Dachau due to his status as a paid, rather than honorary, official. In May 1938 SS leader Adolf Eichmann ordered Lowenherz to reorganize the community council. Between 1938 and 1940 Lowenherz focused on helping his constituents emigrate, and even convinced Eichmann to renew emigration after it had been halted in October 1939. However, from 1941 on, Lowenherz was forced to cooperate with the Nazis by providing names of Jews for deportation.

Lowenherz stayed in Vienna until the city was liberated by the Soviet army in 1945. After the war he was arrested and interrogated, but was ultimately released by his son, an officer in the United States army. Lowenherz and his wife immigrated to the United States soon thereafter, but less than a year later, Lowenherz died.