

Forced Emigration of the Jews of Burgenland¹

Test Case

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Two issues that are of much concern in historical research regarding the Holocaust are the extent of Hitler's personal influence² and the extent to which specific Nazi leaders were responsible for the annihilation of the Jews.³ These questions are also the focal point of this article, although they are confined to a discussion of the occurrences in Burgenland between March 11, 1938, when the persecution of Jews in this Austrian *Land* began, and October of that year, when their expulsion from Burgenland was completed. The expulsion policy, carried out unofficially and without legal backing, was considered the desired solution, from the Nazis' standpoint, at that time.⁴ It was the early stage in the Nazis' quest for a way to ensure that "the Jewish Question ... be summed up and coordinated once and for all and solved one way or another."⁵

¹ This article is based on a chapter from Milka Zalmon, *The Community of Deutschkreutz (Zelem) in Burgenland (Austria): A Small Central-European Jewish Community's Struggle for Perseverance and Preservation of its Unique Character in the Early Modern and Modern Era (1672–1938)*, Ph.D. dissertation (Hebrew), Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel, 1999.

² Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) Martin Broszat, "Hitler and the Genesis of the 'Final Solution': An Assessment of David Irving's Theses," *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 13 (1979), pp. 73-126; Czeslaw Madajczyk, "Hitler's Direct Influence on Decisions Affecting Jews during World War II," *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 20 (1990), pp. 53-68; Hans Safrian, *Die Eichmann Männer* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1993) pp. 13–22; Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1–133; Leni Yahil, "Some Remarks about Hitler's Impact on the Nazis' Jewish Policy," *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 23 (1993), pp. 281-294.

³ See proceedings of historical symposium in Stuttgart in 1984: Eberhard Jäckel and Jürgen Rohwer, eds., *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1985).

⁴ See Jacob Toury, "From Forced Emigration to Expulsion - the Jewish Exodus over the Non-Slavic Borders of the Reich as a Prelude to the "Final Solution," *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 17 (1987), pp. 51-92; Broszat, "Hitler and the Genesis of the 'Final Solution'," p. 85.

⁵ Remarks by Göring at a meeting on November 12, 1938; Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Abraham Margalio, *Documents on the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), p. 108.

The expulsion of Jews from Burgenland was discussed at the well-known meeting chaired by Göring in Berlin on November 12, 1938, and was part of a discussion about the “Jewish question” after *Kristallnacht*. At this meeting Göring noted that the Gestapo was operating in Burgenland “[in conjunction] with the local leader of the ‘green border’.”⁶ This statement raises several questions: Which officials were behind the expulsion of the Jews of Burgenland? How deeply involved were the various echelons of the Nazi hierarchy—local and central—in setting forth the expulsion policy? And the main question: why were the Jews of Burgenland driven out before the rest of Austrian Jewry; and what goals was this policy trying to achieve?

In attempting to answer these questions, we must discuss the geopolitical situation of the Burgenland area, its Jewish inhabitants, and the process of their expulsion. We must also relate to several background factors related to the Nazi party: its ascendancy, its antisemitic manifestations, and its rapid takeover of Burgenland. Finally, the article explains the forced-emigration policy and identify its initiators and perpetrators.

Burgenland

The area defined as Burgenland at the end of World War I⁷ was a border zone of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, located at the convergence of borders between Slovakia in the west and the Balkans in the east. After the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated at the end of World War I, Burgenland was appended to Austria in exercise of the self-determination principle that was set forth in the basic guidelines of the Treaty of Versailles—a measure that led to conflict between Austria and Hungary. Once the conflict was settled, with international intervention, Burgenland was incorporated into the Federal Austrian First Republic (1921) as one of its nine Bundesländer (federal states)

⁶ *Documents on the Holocaust*, p. 109. The “green border” was a border zone that could be crossed clandestinely because it was not demarcated by guard stations; Gerhard Wahrig, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1978), p. 1623; See also Jacob Toury, “From Forced Emigration to Expulsion – the Jewish Exodus over the Non-Slavic Borders of the Reich as a prelude to the ‘Final Solution’,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 17 (1986), p. 60.

⁷ Eisenstadt was designated the capital; Elizabeth (De) Weis, “Dispute for the Burgenland in 1919,” *Journal of Central European Affairs*, III (1943), pp. 147–166.

in the inter-war period. The same was done after World War II,⁸ Burgenland was incorporated into the Federal Austrian Second Republic as one of nine Bundesländer (1945).

In the course of the twentieth century there were twelve Jewish communities in Burgenland. Seven—Eisenstadt, Mattersburg, Lackenbach, Deutschkreutz, Kobersdorf, Frauenkirchen, and Kittsee—were located in the northern part of the state and known as the “seven communities”; and five—Güssing, Rechnitz, Schlaining, (Oberwarth from 1929), Oberpullendorf, and Gattendorf—were in the southern part.⁹ These were long-standing communities that served mainly as commercial centers for surrounding villages.

From the Jewish standpoint, these communities were known as centers of Torah study that maintained stable social and educational patterns amidst certain acculturation adjustments to the general way of life. Most of the communities were Orthodox in complexion and interacted in various ways with the Orthodox community of Vienna. For centuries the Jews of Burgenland had coexisted amiably with their non-Jewish neighbors, and as a result of the change in the general European attitude toward the Jews in the late nineteenth century. In 1934, there were 3,632 Jews in Burgenland (4,000 if converts to Christianity and offspring of mixed marriages were also counted).¹⁰

Ascendancy of the Nazi Party in Burgenland and Nazi Antisemitic Manifestations During the Republican Era

Three years of international struggle after World War I over the incorporation of Burgenland into Austria (1918–1921) led to a heightening of German national consciousness in the region. At the same time even the other Austrian Bundesländer did not develop a particularistic Austrian national consciousness in the inter-war era. After the defeat in World War I, most

⁸ Wolfgang Dax, “Burgenländisches Landesrecht,” *50 Jahre Burgenland*, Burgenländische Forschungen Sonderheft III (Eisenstadt: Burgenländischen Landesarchiv, 1971), p. 50. On Burgenland’s Status under Nazi rule, see note 77 below.

⁹ Additional Jews lived in small localities that did not maintain autonomous community life, such as Forchtenau, near Mattersburg; these Jews received religious and educational services from the community nearest them. Shmuel Hirsch, *Mattersdorf Community Memoir* (Hebrew), (Bnei Brak: Machon Zikaron, 2000), pp. 119–121.

¹⁰ Zalmon, *The Community of Deutschkreutz*, p. 13.

Austrians did not believe that Austria could remain viable without its Slavic and Hungarian provinces; they thought it could survive only as part of Germany. Thus, they considered unification with Germany a crucial and inevitable goal, and the idea of a “Greater Germany” became increasingly favored from 1919 on.¹¹

Support for this idea was especially prevalent in Burgenland. Much of the Burgenland civil service and police force had originated in the non-German areas of the erstwhile Habsburg Empire. These people, driven from their homes because they had been raised on German culture, became fervent supporters of the Greater Germany idea. In view of the grim economic situation in Burgenland, the inhabitants of the state believed that annexation to Germany was the only solution to their problems.

Identification with Germany was perceptible from the early days of the Austrian Republic, as evidenced on January 4, 1924, when, despite the economic problems, the Burgenland legislature decided to grant 100 million kronen to needy Germans. On October 1, 1927, to mark the eightieth birthday of the German president, Paul von Hindenburg, the legislature sent its congratulations while adding its desire to annex its state to Germany. Furthermore, leading German and Burgenland government officials exchanged visits.¹²

This was the soil into which the National-Socialist party sank its roots in Burgenland. As the global economic crisis that began in 1929 caused economic hardship and unemployment to worsen, the party’s strength grew. In the aftermath of Hitler’s post-accession success in solving the unemployment problem and assuring sources of livelihood for tens of thousands of workers who had returned to Germany, the party became even more popular.

The Nazi party had divided Austria into eight provinces (*Gaue*; sing., *Gau*) for party activity on August 26, 1926, in the course of a day of discussions in Munich. The party did not define Burgenland as a *Gau* and, thus, did not

¹¹ Radomir Luza, *Österreich und die grossdeutsche Idee in der NS-Zeit* (Vienna, Köln, Graz: Hermann Bölaus Nachf., 1977), p. 295.

¹² Felix Tobler, “Zur Frugeschichte der NSDAP in Burgenland 1923–1933, Hans Chelmar, ed., *Burgenland 1938*, Burgenländische Forschungngen, vol. 73 (Eisenstadt: Burgenländischen Landesarchiv, 1989), p. 82.

assign a party leader to it. Its northern districts were attached to the Niederösterreich province and the southern ones to the Styria province. In 1935, after it was outlawed in Austria, the Nazi party decided to strengthen its status in Burgenland by creating a Burgenland *Gau*, headed by Dr. Tobias Portschy.¹³

Portschy was born on September 5, 1905, the ninth of twelve children of a poor peasant family in Unterschützen, in the Oberwarth district of Burgenland—“a little Protestant German village in Oberwarth district,” as he was wont to explain.¹⁴ Eight of his brothers emigrated to the United States because of a “shortage of land,” as Portschy regularly explained to justify the German nation’s need for *Lebensraum*. Portschy, attracted since his youth to the Volkisch outlook, began his academic studies at the University of Vienna in law and political science. In the summer of 1928, he attended the University of Göttingen where, according to his testimony, one of the lecturers initiated him in the Nazi party platform. When he returned to Vienna, he embarked on party activity and disseminated the Nazi ideas among fellow students in Vienna and to members of his community. On June 21, 1931, he officially joined the Nazi party (card no. 418511) as a member of the SA and a leader of the Hitlerjugend. In 1931, he completed the bar examinations and began to practice law in Oberwarth. Concurrently, he held various posts in the Nazi party there, including leader of the Hitlerjugend and the first chief of the SA in southern Burgenland. In 1933, when the Nazi party in Austria was outlawed, he was imprisoned. In April 1935, after the (illegal) establishment of the Burgenland *Gau*, Portschy was named the local *Gauleiter*. He was imprisoned again because of his illegal activity in the Nazi party and spent a total of about eighteen months behind bars.¹⁵

In June 1938, after the decision to terminate his service as state governor (following his March 12 appointment) and as chief of the Nazi province of

¹³ Gerhard Botz, *Die Eingliederung österreichs in das Deutsche Reich* (Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1972), p. 82.

¹⁴ Reinhard Pohanka, *Pflichterfüller. Hitlers Helfer in der Ostmark* (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 1997), p. 125. The area was depopulated during the Turkish Wars (seventeenth century) and repopulated by Protestant peasants who had been driven out of Germany.

¹⁵ In 1936 he was also awarded an LL.D. degree in Vienna; Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW), 13.020.

Burgenland and to appoint him as *Gauleiter pro tem* of Styria,¹⁶ Portschy gave a speech to his party comrades in which he stressed his absolute allegiance to the *Führer* and even justified the decision to divide Burgenland between two states. In his opinion, the greatness of “Greater Germany” transcended the agony of parting from Burgenland. He considered the relentless thousand-year struggle for Germany’s greatness a personal mission. As a Nazi and in the footsteps of his revered leader, he called for continual struggle for the building of the Reich (“*Kampf, Kampf und wieder Kampf*”).¹⁷

Portschy also expressed his opinion about the Jews in various speeches. Speaking at the “Adolf Hitlerplatz” in Oberwarth on March 29, 1938, he termed the Jews and the Gypsies “parasites in the body of the nation that must be purged from its midst” and described the good relations that prevailed among Croats, Hungarians, and Germans in Burgenland.¹⁸ In a speech on April 2, 1938, Portschy listed the three problems of Burgenland: the agrarian problem, the Gypsy problem, and the Jewish problem. The newspaper *Grenzmark Burgenland*¹⁹ quoted him as saying, “Since the Third Reich was established, the Jews and the Gypsies have become insufferable. Believe us, we’ll solve this problem with National Socialist determination.”²⁰

From the very beginning of their presence in Burgenland, the Nazi cells made use of antisemitic propaganda. On November 29, 1925, Jews in Mattersburg clashed with participants in a Nazi rally who chanted antisemitic slogans.²¹ The focal point of a party rally in Eisenstadt on October 19, 1930, was the “Jewish question.” The Social Democratic newspaper *Burgenländische Freiheit*²² quoted Dr. Walter Riehl, a Nazi leader in Vienna, as having urged the Jews to “emigrate to Palestine,” asserting that “The National Socialists will not acquiesce in the equalization of the rights of Jews in Austria with those of Aryans.” The newspaper also stated that signs were waved at the rally with

¹⁶ Botz, *Die Eingliederung österreichs*, p. 83.

¹⁷ Herbert Steiner, “Das Schicksal der Juden, Kroaten und Zigeuner im Burgenland nationalsozialistischen Annexion im März 1938,” Chelmar, ed., *Burgenland 1938*, p. 113.

¹⁸ Gerald Schlag, “Der 12 März 1938 im Burgenland, und seine Vorgeschichte,” *ibid.* p. 111.

¹⁹ *Grenzmark Burgenland*, April 5, 1938.

²⁰ DöW, 11532.

²¹ Tobler, *Zur Frugeschichte*, p. 86.

²² *Burgenländische Freiheit*, October 21, 1930, vol. 10, no. 44.

the message “Entrance to Jews Forbidden” in boldface.²³ Two party journals that appeared in the 1930s, *Der Kampf*²⁴ and *Volksstimme für Niederösterreich und Burgenland*,²⁵ published belligerent articles about the Jews in Burgenland that called, for example, for a boycott of Jewish-owned shops. “Stay away from the Jews’ shops! Aryan, do your shopping at Aryan shops!”²⁶ or “Let no Jewish book be found in your home.”²⁷

In late 1936, Portschy sent all local officials a memorandum instructing them to draw up lists of Jews in the vicinity, to note the names of community activists, and to attach their photographs.²⁸ This stipulation was the opening shot, so to speak, for the systematic policy that Portschy would implement during his year-long tenure as *Land* governor and *Gauleiter*.

March 11, 1938—the Nazi Takeover of Burgenland

On February 12, 1938,²⁹ members of the Austrian Nazi party were granted clemency. Portschy was among those released from prison, and he immediately joined the other party members in heightened activity. On March 10, after the Austrian prime minister, Kurt Schuschnigg, chose March 13 as the date of a plebiscite on Austrian independence, Hitler decided to move up his invasion of the country. The Austrian Nazi party was put on immediate alert, and the *Gauleiters* and SA cadre leaders convened in Vienna. Although they took oaths of silence, most of the *Gauleiters*, including Portschy, announced that they had the power to take over their *Gaue* at any time. However, Hubert Klausner, the head of Austrian Nazi party, was loath to take any step without explicit instructions from Hitler. Nevertheless, codes for a

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Der Kampf* was published between March 7, 1931, and June 22, 1933.

²⁵ *Volksstimme für Niederösterreich und Burgenland* was published between September 5, 1931, and September 22, 1932.

²⁶ Ibid., December 5, 1931, p. 4.

²⁷ Ibid, November 14, 1931, p. 2.

²⁸ Otto Fritsche, “Die NSDAP im Burgenland 1933–1938” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Vienna, 1993), p. 211.

²⁹ The report on Hitler’s meeting with Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden on February 12, 1938, and the clemency that Seyss-Inquart proclaimed, on February 19, for all imprisoned Nazi party members—including conspirators in the failed putsch of July 1934—inspired the Burgenland Nazi party, too, to embark on vigorous activity, amid hopes that Germany would annex Austria; Schlag, “Der 12 März,” p. 100.

possible action in the coming hours and days were determined. Portschy headed to Eisenstadt to plan for the next steps.³⁰

On the night of March 10–11, *Gauleiter* Odilo Globocnik³¹ came to Vienna from Berlin and announced that Hitler had given the Austrian Nazi leadership *carte blanche* to take action. On the morning of March 11, the go-ahead was given in all Austrian states. Now the party members could take to the streets overtly, terrorize the population, and prepare for the *Anschluss*.

In Burgenland, Portschy was the leading figure in this activity. He organized a demonstration in which 14,000 persons paraded toward Eisenstadt chanting, “Stop the plebiscite! Annexation to Germany!”³² Since Austrian Interior Minister Artur Seyss-Inquart was a Nazi, the central administration in Vienna did not instruct the local police to take action against the demonstrators. Portschy and the other SA leaders, dressed in uniforms of sorts and clutching swastika flags, marched at the head of the demonstration. They demanded the demonstration permit that the members of the Vaterländische Front had received, as a sign of the equalization of their status with the other parties in Burgenland.

As the matter was being discussed, it was reported that Schuschnigg had succumbed to the German ultimatum, cancelled the plebiscite, announced his resignation, and appointed Seyss-Inquart as his successor. With this, the governor of Burgenland also yielded to the Nazis’ demands. Portschy took over the administration building and arrested the governor, Hans Sylvesters. On the night of March 11–12, Seyss-Inquart officially appointed Portschy as Sylvesters’ successor. Thus, even before the *Anschluss* became official on March 13, Burgenland had already gone over to Nazi rule, the first Austrian state to do so.³³ Portschy cabled Hitler, informing him proudly that “At this historical moment, Burgenland, the eastern bastion of the German *Lebensraum*, German national land since the time of Charlemagne, congratulates the *Führer*, who has rescued it from extreme distress

³⁰ Schlag, “Der 12 März,” p. 104.

³¹ Odilo Globocnik (1904–1945), head of the Austrian Nazi party from 1931, and a passionate supporter of the annexation of Austria; Pohanka *Pflichterfüller*, pp. 64–75.

³² According to Portschy in testimony given at his trial, August 13, 1946, in Eisenstadt, 20,000 persons took part in the demonstration; DÖW, Dok. 13020.

³³ August Ernst, “Auflösung und Aufteilung des Burgenlandes im Jahre 1938,” Chlemer, ed., *Burgenland 1938*, p. 119; Schlag, “Der 12 März,” pp. 105–108.

[Burgenland] hopes that it will be able to express its gratitude and allegiance to him” [emphasis added, M.Z.].³⁴

By order of the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, Gestapo offices were established in Eisenstadt and Neusiedel.³⁵ Otto Bovensifpen of Halle was appointed Gestapo chief in Eisenstadt, and *Kommissar* Otto Koch was placed in charge of the Gestapo’s *Judenreferat* (Jewish Affairs Office). Knissel of Bad Homberg was named *Gauinspektors für das Burgenland* (Inspector for Burgenland *Gau*).³⁶ On March 13, 1938, 300 Sipo men were sent to Eisenstadt to make the Gestapo operational. Most Gestapo personnel in Eisenstadt were Germans who did Himmler’s bidding; thus, Himmler secured direct control of the area.

All public positions were now filled by Nazis. Bureaucrats, teachers, police, and members of the gendarmerie who favored Austrian independence and had not been arrested were fired or pensioned. Members of the civil service, the police, and the gendarmerie swore allegiance to the *Führer*.³⁷ High-ranking German administrators visited the province. Minister of the Interior Dr. Wilhelm Frick, State Secretary at the Ministry of Justice Dr. Roland Freisler, and *Gauleiter* of Stettin Franz Schwede-Coburg³⁸ attended a gala event before a crowd of 62,000 in Eisenstadt at which party, SA, SS, Hitlerjugend, and Austrian Legion personalities appeared. The climax of the event was the appearance of Interior Minister Frick and the man behind the event, *Gauleiter* Portschy.³⁹

The Forced-Emigration Policy

“March 11–April 18, 1938: National-Socialist takeover of Austria. Emigration [*Abwanderung*] of the Jews, transfer of their businesses to *Kommissar* administration.”⁴⁰

³⁴ Schlag, “Der 12 März,” p.108, emphasis mine.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³⁶ These were members of Bürckel’s staff; see Peter Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt 1969), p. 143.

³⁷ Schlag, “Der 12 März,” p. 107.

³⁸ Some time later Schwede-Coborg attempted to have the Jewish population in his area removed to the East. He was the first to take this action within the confines of the “Old Reich.” Toury, “From Forced Emigration to Expulsion,” p.

³⁹ Schlag, “Der 12 März,” pp. 108–111.

⁴⁰ DÖW, 11278.

This laconic statement from the *Gendarmeriepostenkommando* (gendarmerie headquarters) in Lackenbach, Burgenland, denotes the explicit and systematic policy of the forced emigration and deportation of the Jews in this area. The persecution of the Jews began on March 11, 1938, immediately after Portschy seized power. At this initial phase, violent riots swept Burgenland at the instigation of people returning home from the mass demonstration in Eisenstadt—a demonstration that Portschy had initiated, had been the main speaker and at which passionate support of the *Anschluss* had been expressed.⁴¹ The riots were accompanied by burglary and looting of Jews' homes and businesses.

As the mob erupted in spontaneous violence during those first days, the central bureaucracy also began to apply institutionalized terror. Although the speed at which the expulsions of the Jews from Burgenland progressed varied from one community to the next,⁴² the goal was clear: “to cleanse Burgenland of Jews in very short order.”⁴³

The first to be deported and dispossessed were members of the Jewish community administrations in northern Burgenland. On Friday night, March 11, stones were thrown at the homes of Jews in Deutschkreutz. Afterward community dignitaries were arrested and taken to a lockup in Oberpullendorf. The Jews of Deutschkreutz were told that they must leave their community within two weeks and might take only old furniture and whatever they could carry physically. During that period the detainees were released after they signed a statement attesting to the fact that they were leaving their communities of their own volition. By early May all members of the community had left town and moved to Vienna.⁴⁴ The Jews of Kobersdorf were also

⁴¹ Stones were thrown at Jews' homes in the northern communities of Eisenstadt, Mattersburg, Deutschkreutz, and Frauenkirchen; testimony of a member of the Jewish community council, Jonny Moser, “Die Juden,” in *Widerstand und Verfolgung in Burgenland 1934-1945, Eine Dokumentation* (Vienna: Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes, 2.Auflage, 1979), p. 304, Dok. 13; and testimony of the chairman of the Frauenkirchen Jewish community administration, *ibid.*, p. 313. Dok. 12.

⁴² As evidenced in a statistical table produced by the Jewish community administration of Vienna, which notes the number of Burgenland Jews who stayed in Vienna between June 17 and July 31, 1938; Central Jewish Historical Archives in Jerusalem (CJHA), KAU 384/8.

⁴³ Herbert Steiner, “Das Schicksal der Juden, Kroaten und Zigeuner im Burgenland nach der nationalsozialistischen Annexion im März 1938,” Chlemer, ed., *Burgenland 1938*, pp. 113–114.

⁴⁴ According to the statistical table drawn up by the Vienna community, on June 17, 1938, 262 Jews from Deutschkreutz were staying in Vienna, as opposed to thirty-five from Mattersburg.

forced to leave in this same fashion.⁴⁵ The Jews of Lackenbach were loaded aboard trucks and driven to Vienna.⁴⁶

Hostilities in Mattersburg began on Saturday, March 12.⁴⁷ Stones were thrown at Jews' homes, expressions such as "Jews, Drop Dead!" were shouted, and a Nazi anthem was sung ("When Jewish blood drips from the knife, it's twice as good for us!"). A new provincial administration was appointed on March 15; it ordered the confiscation of all Jews' bank deposits, the closure of Jewish businesses, and the prohibition of the sale of foodstuffs or the restitution of debts owed to Jews. The administration also directed that Jewish shops be transferred to *kommissars*.

After the Gestapo office in Eisenstadt was set up, Koch made frequent visits to Mattersburg to issue orders for the humiliation and beating of Jews in that town. The women of the community were summoned to Eisenstadt and were put to work in cleaning various places. The men were ordered to sweep streets and clean the offices and cars that had been confiscated. The Jews' money was stolen by members of the SA who looted their homes and by the town authorities who, on March 29, ordered the Jews to remit all taxes on pain of arrest.⁴⁸ On April 4, the mayor summoned stateless and alien Jews and gave them three days to leave the Reich.⁴⁹ On April 28, after they were

This indicates that Jews were expelled more quickly from Deutschkreutz than from Mattersburg. At that time only 537 of 3,199 Jews in the other communities were staying in Vienna; CJHA, KAU 384/8. The last person to leave was David Weiner, a teacher whom the Nazi authorities forced to stay until the Gestapo gave an order to the contrary. Interview by the author with Mrs. Esther Gazit, December 24, 1993, Tel Aviv. The events were described in detail in David Wiener's statement about forfeiture of his property. See Zalmon, *Community of Deutschkreutz*, Appendix 12, and interviews by the author with members of the community: Jehoshua Neubauer, June 1997, Jerusalem; Wolf Spiegel, summer 1993, Bnei Brak. "All the Jews in Frauenkirchen and Deutschkreutz ... were arrested by the Gestapo, their property was confiscated Most of them had been affluent businessmen and wine merchants. They were forced to declare their property and state where they wished to emigrate to", as reported by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in New York, March 31, 1938. Moser, "Die Juden," p. 301, Dok. 5. On April 4, the JTA reported the imprisonment of Jewish women, children, and the elderly in Fraunkirchen, Deutschkreutz, Kittsee, and Eisenstadt on March 26, and an explicit order to them to leave the German Reich within three days; *ibid.*, p. 302, Dok. 10.

⁴⁵ According to the Vienna community administration, eighty-seven of the ninety-five Jews in this community were in Vienna at the end of July; Herbert Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung. Die Juden in Österreich 1938-1945* (Vienna, Munich: Herold, 1978), p. 88.

⁴⁶ Interview by the author with Mordechai Grünsfeld of Lackenbach, January 4, 1994, Tel Aviv.

⁴⁷ Interview by the author with Josef Wissberger, Tel Aviv, and Shmuel Hirsch, October 20, 1998, Bnei Brak. See also Hirsch, *Mattersdorf Community Memoir*, pp. 46–48.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

deported, about ten of the most respected and affluent families in the community were summoned to the district administration, ordered to sign a waiver to all their property, and informed that they had until May 20 to leave the confines of the “German Reich.”⁵⁰ By September 1938, the last Jews left Mattersburg.

In Eisenstadt, too, the community dignitaries were arrested and taken to the Gestapo offices. There, under torture, they were forced to turn over the keys to their businesses, sign waivers to their property, and promise to leave the Reich by a stipulated deadline.⁵¹ By October 1938, the remaining Jews in Eisenstadt had also left. Thus, the only Jewish community in Europe that had held autonomous Jewish township status since 1732 was now dissolved.⁵²

At the demand of the archives in Vienna, the central archives of the Jewish communities in Eisenstadt-Unterbург were shut down and sealed on March 26, 1938.⁵³ The keys to the archives were handed over to Dr. Heinrich Kunnert; the archival documents were filed diligently; and a bureaucrat drew up a list of their contents for future research about Jewish communities in the German-speaking areas.⁵⁴ Dr. Sandor Wolf’s collection of archeological artifacts and Jewish works of art⁵⁵ was also confiscated and transferred to the government museum.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 83.

⁵¹ See testimony of Adv. Dr. Josef Hoffer of Eisenstadt, Moser, *Die Juden*, p. 300 Dok. 4: “I was arrested on March 13, 1938. Policemen from the police station in Eisenstadt visited me, accompanied by two SA men. I was taken to a prison cell that was meant for five people. Twenty men, members of the civil service and the government, were in detention there. I was held for about fifteen days. SS and Gestapo men beat and tortured the prisoners.” The particular reason for harassing him becomes clear in Dok. 40, *ibid.* p. 316: the villa where he lived was worth an estimated 40,000 marks.

⁵² The community was known as Unterburg-Eisenstadt; Jacob Toury, “Jewish Towns in the Austrian Empire” (Hebrew), *Zemanim*, II, Winter 1980, pp. 4–15.

⁵³ Announcement from the *Kommissar* of Eisenstadt police to the State Administration with regard to sealing the Central Archives of the Jewish Communities in Eisenstadt-Unterbург, March 31, 1938; Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 312, Dok. 27.

⁵⁴ After studying the documents and the captions within the lists that he prepared for the Central Archives in Eisenstadt, I found that this bureaucrat had done his work devotedly throughout World War II. The archives administration, Dr. J. Zeedoch, and Dr. H. Prickler, confirmed my assessment in August 1996; Kunnert, the director of the Burgenland archive under the Nazis (1938-1945), was a Nazi ideologue who made anti-Semitic speeches even after all the Jews had been expelled from Burgenland. His speeches were published in Tobias Portschy’s newspaper, *Grenzmark Burgenland*, on March 23, 1940, and February 5, 1942. See Zalmon, *Community of Deutschkreuz*, chap. 5, p. 17.

⁵⁵ One of the Eisenstadt community dignitaries, Heft; J. Klampfer “Das Eisenstadter Ghetto,” *Burgenlaendische Forschungen*, Heft, 88 (Eisenstadt: Burgenländischen Landesarchiv, 1965), p. 51.

The Gestapo's operating methods in Frauenkirchen were especially brutal. All Jews in this town—men, women, children, and the elderly—were interned. After they were forced to surrender all their personal possessions, they were placed in a corral for an entire day without food and water, enduring beatings and torture. Dr. Aharon Ernst Weiss, the community physician and chairman *pro tem* of the community administration, was ordered to ensure the swift departure of all members of the community to a special temporary concentration camp that had been established for them a short distance away.⁵⁶ To expedite their departure, direct expulsion over the “green border” was attempted. On March 26, several families (thirty-six persons) were taken to the Czech border. However, the border guards refused to let them cross, and so they languished for several days in no-man's-land at the Czech-Hungarian border. Four days later the Hungarian authorities allowed them to enter, but they were arrested at the police station in Oroszvár. Eventually they found shelter, illegally, in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.⁵⁷

In early April, Jewish owners of shops and workshops were dispossessed of the keys to their properties, and late that month sixty Jewish families in Frauenkirchen were given two weeks to leave town. Since they had not obtained entrance visas to other countries, they could not obey the order and were taken to Vienna. According to an announcement by the chairman of the Frauenkirchen Jewish community administration, most Jews in the community left by June 30, 1938.⁵⁸

Jews in other communities were taken to the border. At midnight on April 16, the Jews of Kittsee and nearby Pama were awakened and arrested by SA men. After their property was looted, they were taken to the Danube and placed aboard a barge that delivered them to the Czechoslovak border, where they were given assistance. After they recovered slightly, they were driven toward the Hungarian border, back to the Austrian border, and so on for several months.⁵⁹ The affair reverberated in the world press and, as noted

⁵⁶ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 304, Dok. 13.

⁵⁷ Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung*, p. 46.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Several of them were arrested in Bratislava, transferred to Hungary and Austria, and housed in barracks. A few others were placed aboard a French vessel and Jewish organizations furnished them with entry visas to various countries; Moser, “Die Juden,” pp. 307–310, Dok. 16, 17, 20–24.

above, was mentioned at the November 12, 1938, meeting at Göring's office about anti-Jewish policy.⁶⁰

A similar fate awaited the Jews of Parndorf. They were driven to the Hungarian border, spent a night in Sopron, and then were taken back to the border of the Reich. For four days they were moved around in this fashion and were finally taken to Eisenstadt, where they undertook to forfeit their property, leave their community within fourteen days, move to Vienna, and leave Austria.⁶¹

The same patterns of action occurred in the southern communities. Between April 8 and April 12, the Jews of Rechnitz were taken to the Yugoslav border. The Yugoslav authorities refused to admit them, so they were forced to shift about for weeks in the no-man's-land between the borders until they found shelter in Belgrade.⁶² The Jews of Güssing were dispossessed; several of them were trucked to the Yugoslav and Hungarian borders, and the others were taken to Vienna.⁶³ The Jews of Oberwarth were also ousted on short notice.⁶⁴

The forced emigration of all Jews in Burgenland was completed by the end of the summer of 1938.⁶⁵ In October 1938, the leaders of the Jewish community in Vienna informed Adolf Eichmann that the Jewish communities in Burgenland no longer existed.⁶⁶ In December 1938, *Grenzland Zeitung* also gave its readers the happy news that all the Jews in Burgenland had emigrated.⁶⁷

Most of these Jews stopped first in Vienna, where the Jewish community was made responsible for their care. Until 1940, it was still possible to emigrate to

⁶⁰ "In the first night the Jews were expelled to Czechoslovakia. Next morning the Czechs caught them and pushed them across into Hungary. From Hungary they were returned to Germany and then to Czechoslovakia. That way they traveled around and around. In the end they finished up on an old barge on the Danube. They stayed there and wherever they tried to land they were turned away again.... For two weeks, in effect, a number of Jews emigrated every midnight. That was in Burgenland." *Documents on the Holocaust*, p. 109.

⁶¹ Jonny Moser, "Die Vertreibung der Burgenländischen Juden," *Das Jüdische Echo*, no. 356 (1987), p. 80.

⁶² Moser, "Die Juden," p. 296, Dok. 18, 21, 35, 36.

⁶³ Hugo Gold, Güssing; idem, ed., *Gedenkbuch der untergegangenen Judengemeinden des Burgenlandes* (Tel Aviv: Olamenu, 1970), p. 81.

⁶⁴ Moser, "Die Juden," p. 319, Dok. 49, 50.

⁶⁵ On August 11, 1938, the head of the Gestapo in Eisenstadt, Bovensifpen, gave his superiors in Vienna a report to this effect; *ibid.*, p. 319, Dok. 48.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 319, Dok. 49.

Palestine, Shanghai, and the United States. The Gestapo covered their travel expenses by selling off confiscated property.⁶⁸ In all, 1,286 Jews from Burgenland managed to emigrate.⁶⁹ The others, unable to do so, remained in Vienna under Gestapo surveillance. Eugen Lindenfeld⁷⁰ was required to furnish the Gestapo with a list of all Jews in Burgenland who had not emigrated and were living in Vienna.⁷¹ The men were arrested and sent to Dachau in order to expedite their emigration. After they were arrested, their wives pressured the Jewish community institutions in Vienna to give preference to Burgenland Jews in granting entrance visas to foreign countries.⁷² Those who had no emigration options were transported to the East by *Kommissar* Otto Koch, who had since moved from Eisenstadt to the Gestapo offices in Vienna. The Jews perished there.⁷³ On *Kristallnacht*, November 9–10, 1938, several synagogues in Burgenland were bombed and torched.⁷⁴

The forced emigration of the Jews of Burgenland began shortly after the Nazi takeover of the area. The dispossession of the Jews, the looting of their property, and the destruction of their economic existence was a crucial element of the expulsion policy that the Nazis had adopted. These measures were meant to place the Jews under increasing pressure to emigrate and thus hasten the attainment of the Nazis' main ideological goal—cleansing Burgenland of Jews as quickly as possible, even before their actions were given a legal foundation in Nazi law.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326, Dok. 67.

⁶⁹ To Palestine, the United States, China, other European countries, and South America; *ibid.*, p. 320, Dok. 51.

⁷⁰ Eugen Lindenfeld, born in Mattersburg, had taught at the Jewish school in Eisenstadt. He mediated between the Gestapo and the Jews in his community after the rabbi and ritual slaughterer refused to do so. Interview by the author with his brother-in-law, Yehuda Steiner, Oct. 26, 1998, Ra'anana, Israel.

⁷¹ Moser, "Die Juden," p. 322. According to this document, the Gestapo in Eisenstadt gave Lindenfeld a verbal order to hand over this list.

⁷² Interview by the author with Wolf Spiegel, June 1997, Bnei Brak; and Jehoshua Neubauer, June 1997, Jerusalem.

⁷³ Moser, "Die Juden," p. 316, Dok. 40; *DöW*, 130/47.

⁷⁴ The synagogue in Mattersburg, for example, was bombed in 1938; Hans Paul, *50 Jahre Stadtgemeinde Mattersburg* (Mattersburg, 1976), p. 204. The synagogue in Deutschkreutz was unscathed until early 1941; Alfred Zistler, "Geschichte der Juden in Deutschkreutz," Hugo Gold, ed., *Gedenkbuch*, p. 63.

⁷⁵ At the November 12, 1938, meeting in Göring's bureau, Heydrich stated explicitly that the expulsion of the Jews of Burden had been "illegal"; *Documents on the Holocaust*, p. 109.

The publication of such legislation in Burgenland began in March. An order handed down on March 23, 1938, revoked the Jews' citizenship. A circular from the Office of the Prime Minister to all district-level authorities forbade Jews to take part in the plebiscite that had been scheduled for April 10, 1938.⁷⁶ The citizenship of the Jews of Vienna was revoked under a statute enacted on May 24, 1938.⁷⁷

On March 26, 1938, the Oberwarth district administration issued an order for all Jews in Burgenland to fill out questionnaires. The questionnaires were to be arranged in alphabetical order and forwarded to the gendarmerie stations. (The Jews were warned not to provide incorrect details.)⁷⁸ In these questionnaires, the Jews had to give a detailed account of all their property: real estate, businesses, bank accounts in Austria and abroad, insurance policies, jewelry, and other valuables, according to their value as of April 27, 1938.⁷⁹ They had to cede all their property in Austria and abroad to a fund meant to finance the emigration of poor Jews and had to undertake to leave the country within a specified period of time.⁸⁰ The order, dated March 26, 1938, sealed the fate of the Jews of Burgenland.⁸¹ A similar edict was handed down in Vienna in late April.⁸² Thus, Burgenland served as an initial model for a policy invoked later against the Jews of Vienna.

The Burgenland authorities continued to promulgate anti-Jewish legislation in subsequent months, even after most Jews had left the area. On August 4,

⁷⁶ DöW, 11151.

⁷⁷ After Josef Bürckel, who had been appointed as *Reichskommissar*, released a statement "about the reunification of Austria and the Reich" and the reconstitution of Austria; Hermann Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark* (Vienna, 1995), p. 225. The political structure of the Austrian Republic was totally transformed. The Austrian states (*Bundesländer*) were abolished, and the country was divided into seven districts that corresponded to the Nazi party's administrative partitioning of Austria back in the 1920s. Burgenland was divided between the Lower Danube District and Styria, thereby terminating its autonomous existence as an Austrian *Land*. Austria ceased to exist as an independent state and became the *Ostmark*, one of the provinces of "Greater Germany." Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte österreichs* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1979), p. 525.

⁷⁸ DöW, 11292.

⁷⁹ The form was to be filled out with details about place of residence, religion, marital status, and an itemized list of belongings; Burgenländisches Landesarchiv Eisenstadt, Jüdische Zentral-Archiv. B.L.A.E., J.Z.A, Arisierungsakten des nördlichen Burgenlandes Karton 67.

⁸⁰ DöW, 13013; Hirsch, *Mattersdorf Community Memoir*, p. 83. According to this testimony, about ten families were summoned to the district administration and ordered to sign the waiver form. "At the end, it was made clear to them that they must leave German Reich territory by May 20."

⁸¹ Moser, "Die Juden," p. 295.

⁸² Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark*, p. 225.

1938, an order was issued forbidding Jews to wear uniforms.⁸³ However, it was not until December 3, 1938 – after all the Jews had been dispossessed and deported – that a general order concerning the expropriation of Jewish property was published.⁸⁴

On October 23, 1941, about a month after it was introduced in Germany, an order was sent under the auspices of Dr. Hinterlechner, the advisor in the Oberwarth district, to all mayors concerning the introduction of markings for the Jews. The order stipulated that all Jews aged six and up must wear a yellow “Jewish star” (*Judenstern*), within which the word *Jude* against a black background must appear. The star was to be worn in public, on the chest, in a visible place. Violators would be imprisoned. The order further stated that Jews were forbidden to leave their community or to use public transport without permission of the local police authorities.⁸⁵ These facts confirm Steiner’s claim that the anti-Jewish policy in Burgenland was implemented even before it was given legal sanction in Nazi legislation.

Initiators of the Deportation

The mass deportations of Jews from Burgenland were the first evictions of Austrian Jews from the Greater Reich. The policy was described in the newspaper *Grenzmark Burgenland*⁸⁶ on December 4, 1938, as “cleansing the former Burgenland of the Jews” (*die Entjudung des ehemaligen Burgenland*).⁸⁷ Notably, the chief editor of the paper was Tobias Portschy.⁸⁸ Later similar notices appeared elsewhere in Austria.⁸⁹ These notices indicate how eager the *Gauleiters* were to deport Jews from peripheral towns to Vienna. The *Gauleiters* actually competed with one another to see which area could be “cleansed” of Jews first.⁹⁰

Herbert Steiner described Portschy’s role in persecuting the Jews:

⁸³ Announcement from Eisenstadt police, Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 317, Dok. 42.

⁸⁴ 1709 (RGL) Reichsgesetzblatt. I, *ibid.*, p. 327, Dok. 70.

⁸⁵ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 329, Dok. 76.

⁸⁶ The first edition of the newspaper appeared on March 26, 1938.

⁸⁷ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 316, Dok. 49.

⁸⁸ Hans Chmelar, “Warheit oder Propaganda? Die Zeitungen des Burgenland und ihr Anschluss” in *idem.* ed., *Burgenland 1938*, p. 69.

⁸⁹ “The district of Tyrol-Voralberg can be considered cleansed of Jews.” Announcement by the *Gauleiter* of the Tyrol district in January 1939; see Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark*, p. 230.

⁹⁰ The *Gauleiters* of Carinthia and Styria released similar statements; *ibid.*

The vengeful and ambitious Nazi *Gauleiter*, Tobias Portschy, *initiated and administered the antisemitic policy in Burgenland even before there was a legal basis for this in Nazi legislation* [italics mine-M. T.]. Nowhere in Germany proper were Jews persecuted so harshly as in Burgenland. As early as 1938, Portschy's antisemitic activities were directed toward the policy of the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem (as it was later known). Thus Portschy succeeded in cleansing Burgenland of Jews in the shortest time.⁹¹

However, when Portschy was placed on trial after the end of the war, the prosecution did not enumerate his role in deporting the Jews among the counts in the indictment. Portschy was tried as a war criminal for his role as the *Gauleiter* of Burgenland until the *Gau* was abolished and was sentenced to prison for treason for illegally seizing control of the state.⁹² Portschy was also accused of giving the order to kill ill and frail Hungarian Jews on the death marches as they passed through Graz at the end of World War II, when he was *Gauleiter pro tem* and for having enriched himself from Jewish property.⁹³ The prosecution's main charge—of persecuting the Jews—was leveled at *Kommissar Otto Koch*,⁹⁴ the head of the Gestapo Office for Jewish Affairs.

In an interview with the author, Portschy claimed that Otto Bovensifpen received the deportation order from Himmler.⁹⁵ One may also infer this from a summarizing statement in the *Grenzmark Burgenland*: "According to the steps

⁹¹ Steiner, *Das Schicksal der Juden*, pp. 113–114. Moser, too, expresses a similar opinion about Portschy's role in the persecutions; see Moser, "Die Juden," p. 295.

⁹² "Found guilty as a war criminal and a traitor to the Austrian nation in accordance with Paragraph 1(6) and 8 of the Law against War Criminals (of June 26, 1945). The trial was held in Eisenstadt on May 31, 1946, DöW, 30 020 Z: 22/Kr/46.

⁹³ Pohanka, *Pflichterfüller*, p. 131; including details of the accusations. For information on the death marches, see Eleonora Lappin, "The Death Marches of Hungarian Jews Through Austria in the Spring of 1945," *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. 28 (2000), pp. 203-242. I should note that although Portschy's testimony is given in the article on the death march, the author does not mention Portschy's trial itself and the fact that he was sentenced to prison for giving the order to kill the marchers.

⁹⁴ Otto Koch, born on September 29, 1908, in Halle a.d. Salle, was a Gestapo official who came straight from Germany to Eisenstadt; Moser, "Die Juden," p. 295.

⁹⁵ Interview with the author, July 1994, Rechnitz, Austria.

taken by the German authorities immediately after the *Anschluss*, the Jewish emigration (*Abwanderung*) was accomplished perfectly.”

I found support for this claim in a conversation between Adolf Eichmann and Odilo Globocnik on November 2, 1938, which suggests that the policy of concentrating the Jews of the *Ostmark* in Vienna was set forth by Himmler.⁹⁶ He gave the order to evict all Jews from peripheral towns in the *Ostmark* and to extend the deadlines for the Jews to leave for Vienna to October 31, 1938, and to emigrate from Austria by December 15, 1938.⁹⁷ This policy was explicitly meant to expedite the emigration process by uprooting Jews from localities throughout Austria and putting them under concentrated pressure in the place where the Central Office for Jewish Emigration was located. However, since the Jews of Burgenland had actually been evicted before the official eviction order was given, the question is, who instigated their immediate eviction?

In his attempt to absolve himself of responsibility, Portschy claimed that he had been a mere state governor and that the fate of the Jews had been in the hands of the Gestapo, an independent entity under Himmler’s command. This claim does not stand up to scrutiny, foremost because Portschy was both state governor and *Gauleiter* of Burgenland and had wielded many powers, including supreme power over all other government authorities.⁹⁸

Lessons from the annexation of the Saar district, in 1935, were also applied in the takeover of Austria. When the Saar was united with the Palatinate, Bürckel encountered obstacles created by the civil authorities. Accordingly, when he went to Austria, he obtained Hitler’s consent to organize the government in such a way that there would be no rivalries among civil and party authorities.⁹⁹ Indeed, civil and party authorities—the gendarmerie,¹⁰⁰ the

⁹⁶ Himmler regularly stressed that he “did nothing without the *Führer’s* knowledge.” Yahil, “Some Remarks about Hitler’s Impact Notes on Hitler’s Involvement,” p. 287. Based on this assumption, it seems to me that the decisions regarding the “encouragement” of emigration from Germany and Austria may be attributed to Hitler.

⁹⁷ Otto Dov Kulka, “Examining the SS Policy on Jews in the First Countries Occupied,” *Yalkut Moreshet* I, 18 (October, 1974), pp. 166–167, document 1.

⁹⁸ Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter*, p. 138.

⁹⁹ Ludwig Carsten, *Faschismus in Österreich: Von Schoenerer zu Hitler*, (Munich: W. Fink, 1977), p. 57.

¹⁰⁰ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 317, Dok. 43.

police,¹⁰¹ the Gestapo,¹⁰² and the SS and the SD¹⁰³—were perceptibly cooperative in Burgenland.¹⁰⁴ Various reports note that the Burgenland authorities (*Burgenländischen Behörden*) ordered the Jews to leave the state.¹⁰⁵ The phrase “Burgenland authorities” is a general term that evidently denoted civil authorities, such as the district administration (*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*).¹⁰⁶

According to this source, the order was forwarded by the district administration to the gendarmerie headquarters in Neusiedel district. A report from Apelton concerning the remaining Jewish property, dated August 15, 1938, was directed to the same address.¹⁰⁷ The order for the emigration of the Jews of Parndorf, about which the gendarmerie reported to the district administration, was also handled in this way.¹⁰⁸ On March 25, 1938, for example, the district administration of Neusiedel ordered the schools to celebrate the *Anschluss* by singing the Horst Wessel song and by raising hands in salute to Hitler at its end.¹⁰⁹ The order concerning the enrollment of Jewish children in school, dated April 23, 1938, was given by the same authority.¹¹⁰

The cooperation among all the authorities in implementing the antisemitic policy according to Bürckel’s plan disproves Portschy’s claim. Testimonies by Jews from Burgenland¹¹¹ also reveal that the SS, the Gestapo, and the leadership of the *Gau* worked side by side. And even after Burgenland was abolished, Portschy continued to implement the policy of persecution against

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Dok. 42.

¹⁰² Ibid., Doks. 59, 60, 61.

¹⁰³ DöW, 12535.

¹⁰⁴ In his memoirs, Shmuel Hirsch describes the appointment of the new district administration by the “new rulers.” The administration issued orders for the confiscation of all Jewish bank deposits, the closure of Jewish businesses, and the prohibition of payback of debts to Jews. Hirsch attributes the order to hand the Jewish shops over to the *Kommissars* to the district administration; Shmuel Hirsch, *Mattersdorf Community Memoirs*, pp. 46-48.

¹⁰⁵ DÖW., Dok. 13012.

¹⁰⁶ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 310. Dok 23. “According to an oral instruction given to us by the district governor (Bezirkshauptmann), Dr. Westner on May 23, 1938.”

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 317, Dok. 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 318, Dok. 45.

¹⁰⁹ Jüdische Zentral Archiv, Archiv der ehemaligen isr. Kultusgemeinde Deutschkreutz, A M 3 VII/1, 649.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 650.

¹¹¹ Hirsch, *Mattersdorf Community Memoirs*, pp. 46-48.

the Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) tribes in his capacity as *pro tem Gauleiter* of Styria.

Was it the mayors who initiated the deportation policy? To what extent did the mayors' political attitude affect their implementation of the policy? There is no clear-cut answer, as the example of Deutschkreutz proves. The Jews of Deutschkreutz were subjected to a tough policy within a short time. Between March 11, 1938, the day that Portschy seized power, and April 23, the day that the new council was appointed, the policy of expulsion and dispossession was aggressively implemented. A study of the list of mayors shows that Karl Strehn served as mayor for just one year, from March 26, 1937, to April 23, 1938. The fact that he was not mayor between 1938 and 1945 indicates his attitude toward the new regime. Since the mayor was not a Nazi, he and the eighteen members of his council were dismissed. The mayor of Mattersburg, Anton Schteiger, was dismissed immediately after the *Anschluss*, because he was a member of the Christian-Socialist party. He was replaced by Franz Giefing, who did the new government's bidding and implemented the expulsion policy enthusiastically.¹¹²

In the debates of the Deutschkreutz town council during Nazi rule (after April 23), there was a declaration that "the community [i.e., the non-Jewish residents of the town] and the Nazi party are one and the same [*Gemeinde und NSDAP waren faktisch dasselbe*]."¹¹³ The new mayor, Johan Krecht, and the eighteen members of the council remained in their positions throughout the period of Nazi rule and continued to expropriate Jewish property and transfer it to residents of the town.¹¹⁴ However, the Jews of Deutschkreutz had been expelled from the town under the previous municipal leadership, which did not identify with the Nazi regime and its policies. Thus, the political affiliation of mayors is not known to have had a decisive effect on the pace of expulsions or the way they were implemented. For example, while the

¹¹² Moser, "Die Juden," p. 313, Dok. 33 ; see also the testimony of Shmuel Hirsch: "The Nazis appointed the long-time antisemite Franz (Lanz) as mayor Giefing discovered a new way of tormenting the Jews The mayor now forbade them to go out in public (except for the Winkelgasse) Jews who disobeyed were arrested! It was the mayor's custom to 'deal with them' personally." Hirsch, *Mattersdorf Community Memoirs*, p. 47.

¹¹³ Adalbert Putz, "Der Werdegang von Deutschkreutz im Spiegel der Geschichte," in *Deutschkreutz* (Deutschkreutz: Gemeinde Deutschkreutz, 1995), p. 137.

¹¹⁴ Stefan Schöller, "Die politische Entwicklung der Gemeinde Deutschkreutz ab dem Jahr 1900," *ibid.*, p. 54.

expulsions from Deutschkreutz were performed swiftly, in Eisenstadt, which had an avowed Nazi mayor, Herwig Ilkow, they were carried out slowly. At the end of the summer of 1938, several Jewish families still remained there.¹¹⁵

This fact and the varying pace of events in each community still indicate that, although the methods varied from one community to another, the ultimate aim was clear—total expulsion. Most cases of persecution of Jews were not spontaneous, as they had been at the onset of Nazi rule in Vienna, but were ordered and organized in top-down fashion. In this matter, there is a substantive difference between the events in Vienna from the first day of the *Anschluss* and the policy adopted toward the Jews of Burgenland from March 11, 1938. As distinct from the planning of events in Burgenland, events in Vienna were chaotic in the first few weeks between the *Anschluss* and the middle of 1938. Anyone in SS uniform did as he pleased, confiscating property and tormenting and humiliating people with no clear guidelines from the new administration, in a popular eruption of antisemitism, greed, and abuse.¹¹⁶

Ostensibly, the initiative for administering the policy of forced emigration may be traced to Josef Bürckel, who, as *Reichskommissar*, was in command of the “reunification of Austria and the Reich.” Bürckel was experienced, having deported Jews from the western border areas (in the Saar district after it was annexed to Germany in 1935).¹¹⁷ In Vienna, he invoked a brutal policy of mass deportations in coordination with the Gestapo.¹¹⁸ In internal discussions on the “Jewish problem” in the autumn of 1938, Bürckel said, “Let’s not forget that if you want Aryanize and to deprive the Jews of their means to live, then you’ve got to solve the Jewish problem in an absolute

¹¹⁵ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 317, Dok. 41; see also statistical table, *ibid.*, p. 319, Dok. 50.

¹¹⁶ Safrian, *Die Eichmann Männer*, p. 34. During these weeks policy was inconsistent and riddled with contradictions. Three days after he arrived in Vienna, Eichmann gave instructions to close the community offices, arrest the leadership, and deport the president of the community and his two assistants to Dachau. In May 1939, he gave instructions to reorganize and reopen the community institutions as part of a new Jewish organization, which became the main implement of emigration as from the summer of 1938; Herbert Rosenkranz, “The Jews of Austria—between Forced Emigration and Deportation,” in Israel Gutman, ed., *The Image of the Jewish Leadership in Nazi-Ruled Countries* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1977), pp. 56-57; Doron Rabinovici, *Instanzen der Ohnmacht. Wien 1938-1945. Der Weg zum Judenrat* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2000), pp. 64-65.

¹¹⁷ See Toury, “From Forced Emigration to Deportation,” p. 68.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

fashion.”¹¹⁹ The Central Office for Jewish Emigration was set up in Vienna on his instructions. However, Bürckel was appointed *Reichskommissar* on April 23, after the evictions from Burgenland had begun.

Adolf Eichmann, another figure to whom the initiative for expelling the Jews of Burgenland may be attributed, did not arrive in Vienna until March 16, 1938, after the *Anschluss*, whereas the forced-emigration policy began on March 11. Eichmann’s involvement in what was done in Burgenland is unclear; Portschy does not implicate Eichmann in the emigration of the Jews of Burgenland.¹²⁰ Eichmann himself, in a letter to Herbert Hagen at the SD office in Berlin, mentions having visited Eisenstadt to close the archives there.¹²¹ In the testimonies of several expatriates from Burgenland, Eichmann was seen at the Gestapo office in Eisenstadt during the period of the expulsions.¹²² However, although Eichmann came to Vienna on March 16, 1938,¹²³ he did not establish the Central Office for Jewish Emigration there until August 20.¹²⁴ It was to this office, which supervised the Burgenland community, that the heads of the Jewish community in Vienna reported, in October 1938, that Burgenland Jewry no longer existed.¹²⁵ Thus, it seems that Eichmann oversaw the final stage of the expulsions and, in particular, “dealt” with those Jews who had moved from Burgenland to Vienna and forced them to emigrate.¹²⁶ However, be this as it may, Eichmann was not there at the start of the persecution.

¹¹⁹ Hans Safrian, *Die Eichmann Männer*, p.36.

¹²⁰ In my interview with him, Portschy made no mention of Eichmann as the person who ordered the deportation of the Jews of Burgenland.

¹²¹ Attorney General v. Adolf Eichmann, Office of the Prime Minister, Information Center, 1961–1963, letter dated April 23, 1938, testimony no. 1512; Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 294, note 6.

¹²² Interviews by the author with Shmuel Hirsch and Josef Weissberger, summer 1996. In an interview with the author on January 4, 1994, Mr. Gruensfeld of Lackenbach said that Eichmann had a special interest in presenting Hitler with a *Judenrein* Burgenland as a birthday present (on April 20). Father Alfred Zistler made the same claim, attributing it to Portschy in an interview with the author on August 13, 1996, in Eisenstadt. There is no concrete proof of this.

¹²³ This was in order to head Division II-112, the Judenreferat (Jewish Affairs Office).

¹²⁴ Safrian, *Die Eichmann Männer*, p. 41; Rosenkranz, “The Jews of Austria,” p. 59. Rosenkranz gives August 26 as the day on which the office was set up.

¹²⁵ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 297.

¹²⁶ According to Weissberger’s testimony (summer 1996), when he was staying in Vienna in 1938, Eichmann gave him an emigration grant after he “threatened” not to leave the country. He also gave him a one-way ticket to Liberia. The purpose of the ticket was to trick the British, who feared that the deportees from Austria would come knocking at the gates of Palestine. The ticket is in Mr. Weissberger’s possession.

So who initiated the policy of forced emigration—the local leaders or the *Führer* in Berlin? The laconic statement from the police in Lackenbach describes a tough policy.¹²⁷ The newspaper *Grenzland Zeitung* portrays this policy as “the cleansing of the former Burgenland of Jews ... by means of steps taken by the German authorities immediately after the *Anschluss* ... The emigration of the Jews has been executed to perfection.”¹²⁸

This first-hand testimony¹²⁹ reinforces a report by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency: “According to reliable sources, hundreds of Jews from the Austrian district of Burgenland have been deported on direct orders from Berlin.”¹³⁰

As for the Gypsies, whose “problem” Portschy grouped with the “Jewish problem,” on June 5, 1938, the *Reichskriminalamt* (Reich Office for Criminal Affairs) in Berlin issued an order to have all Gypsy men arrested and transported to Dachau and Buchenwald¹³¹—a matter that gives further evidence of direct orders from Berlin.

Testifying at his trial, Portschy bragged about his rapid takeover of Burgenland. He asserted that members of the Burgenland state administration were the first in all of the *Ostmark* to be arrested and that he was in control of all of Burgenland even before the arrests. “In each and every district, members of the district administration were in constant telephone contact with me, so that I was constantly up-to-date about what was going on throughout Burgenland.”¹³²

These remarks indicate that Portschy was in absolute control of the entire Burgenland. But did he also initiate the policy?

Jacob Toury wrestles with a similar problem in an attempt to answer the question who initiated the Gurs deportation.¹³³ After discussing the orders, testimonies, and accounts of conversations with those who conducted the deportations, Toury concludes, “On September 25, 1940, Wagner and Bürckel

¹²⁷ DöW, 11278.

¹²⁸ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 319, Dok. 49.

¹²⁹ The editor was, after all, Portschy.

¹³⁰ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 301, Dok. 7.

¹³¹ Portschy arrested and deported 232 men. The remainder, members of the Sinta and Roma tribes, were forced to do farm labor for 27 pfennigs per day; Pohanka, *Pflichterfüller*, p. 131.

¹³² Portschy’s testimony at his trial, August 13, 1996; Eisenstadt, DÖW, Dok. 13020.

¹³³ Jacob Toury, “The Chain of Command in an Anarchist-Totalitarian Regime,” *Yalkut Moreshet* (Hebrew), 40 (Dec. 1985), p. 45. See also Yehoyakim Cochavi, “The Final Stage in the History of German Jewry” (Hebrew), in Abraham Margalio and Yehoyakim Cochavi, eds., *The History of the Holocaust—Germany* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1998), p. 331.

(the *Gauleiters* of Baden and Saarpfalz) were together with Hitler and were given almost unlimited power for their Germanization policy ... i.e., the deportation of the Jews of Baden and Saarpfalz”¹³⁴

This account is based on information given by a SS man, Günther, a member of Eichmann’s department, to Bernhard Lösener at the Ministry of the Interior. According to Günther, on September 30, Himmler signed an order based on a directive from the *Führer*, after which the agencies of the Gestapo and the police were put to work in the deportation of the Jews, apparently from Baden, as Eichmann himself recalled and on the basis of an initiative by one *Gauleiter* who wished to be rid of his Jews, according to the same source himself.¹³⁵

At the conclusion of his article, Toury states that responsibility for the deportation of the Jews of Baden and Saarpfalz cannot be assigned to *any one individual* [italics added, M. Z.] but should be traced to the “chain of command in a totalitarian regime”—Hitler, who crafted the policy; Himmler, Heydrich, Eichmann, and Bürckel, who helped to implement it; and, in particular, to Robert Wagner, who felt it necessary to prove to himself and to the entire world that, by deporting the Jews of Baden, he remained loyal to the cause, and who also wanted to enhance his standing in his *Führer’s* eyes.¹³⁶

Toury’s finding applies here, too. The totality of Portschy’s statements and actions from his early days as the illegal *Gauleiter* of Burgenland until his final period of service in the Third Reich show his initiative in the persecution of Jews. This is despite the fact that he obstinately claimed in my interview with him in Rechnitz that he had had nothing to do with it and that Himmler had issued instructions for the expulsions and Otto Bovensifpen, the appointed Gestapo chief in Eisenstadt, had carried them out. Nevertheless, in late 1936, Portschy sent a memorandum to all municipal officials instructing them to produce lists of Jews living in the area and to note the names of the community activists. On March 29, 1938, he made a speech in Adolf Hitlerplatz in which he termed Jews and Gypsies “parasites in the body of the

¹³⁴ Ibid., *ibid.* p. 50.

¹³⁵ Ibid., note 55.

¹³⁶ Jacob Toury, “Chain of Command,” pp. 59-60.

nation that must be purged from its midst.” In April 1938, he declared that “the Jews and Gypsies have become insufferable” and promised to *solve* the problem with “National-Socialist determination.” He described the policy that was applied in Burgenland as a “cleansing [of] the (former) Burgenland of Jews.” On December 4, 1938, in an article published in the newspaper that he edited, he expressed total allegiance to the *Führer* and his ideas.¹³⁷ In the spring of 1945, he ordered the killing of sick and frail Hungarian Jews who were passing through Graz on a death march, despite an instruction from Himmler to make the evacuation “orderly.”¹³⁸

In his interview with the author, however, Portschy admitted that the *Führer* had appointed him *Gauleiter*.¹³⁹ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported: “According to reliable sources, hundreds of Jews from the Austrian district of Burgenland have been deported on direct orders from Berlin.”¹⁴⁰ Since we do not have an order signed by Hitler in this matter, it stands to reason that this was the “expulsion to which the *Führer* agreed.” Evidence of this may be found in Goebbels’ diary entry on November 30, 1937: “Long discussion [with Hitler] on the Jewish question ... *The Jews have to get out of Germany, in fact out of Europe altogether. It will take a little more time, but it must happen, and it will happen*” (italics added, M. Z.). According to Goebbels, “the *Führer* is absolutely determined about it.”¹⁴¹

Portschy may be considered a consummate example of a petty official who served the *Führer* and totally identified with him. He believed it necessary to demonstrate his loyalty to the cause by deporting the Jews of Burgenland

¹³⁷ To his last days, even at the price of conceding the existence of his fatherland and even after the total defeat of the Third Reich, Porschy professed absolute loyalty to Hitler and his doctrines, as I discovered in my interview with him in Rechnitz in July 1994. Further evidence of this loyalty surfaces in a videotape made at the initiative of DöW in Vienna. The subject is expanded in the chapter on the relations among the *Gauleiters*, Hitler, and Bormann; see Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter*, pp. 195-200.

¹³⁸ The meaning of an “orderly evacuation” was to keep the Jews alive as far as possible. In her article, Lappin describes the different interpretations of this directive and states that some *Gauleiters* gave orders to give food to the Jews and to carry the sick on stretchers, while others brutalized and murdered the marchers; see more in Lappin, “The Death Marches of Hungarian Jews,” pp 215-242.

¹³⁹ Hitler reserved the right to appoint and dismiss *Gauleiters*. All attempts to integrate them into the party apparatus failed; see Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter*, pp. 195-200.

¹⁴⁰ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 301, Dok. 7.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997) p. 177, based on Elke Fröhlich, ed., *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente*, Part I, *Aufzeichnungen 1924–1941*, 4 volumes (Munich: Saur, 1987), vol. 3, p. 351.

and wished to enhance his standing in the eyes of his *Führer*.¹⁴² The policy, conceived by Hitler, was implemented under orders from Himmler with the cooperation of all civil and party authorities in Burgenland.¹⁴³

Burgenland First—Motives and Goals of the Expulsion Policy

The Jews of Burgenland were the first to be evicted because, in Jonny Moser’s opinion, they had been there for generations (*alteingesessenen Bewohnern*). The expulsion of Jews who were deeply rooted and immersed in their environment was meant as a warning to the Jews of Austria at large and as a way to force them to speed up their emigration. The Nazis disapproved of the good relations between the Jews and the local population and sought to destroy them altogether.¹⁴⁴

Father Alfred Zistler has a different explanation:¹⁴⁵ Portschy saw an opportunity to please the *Führer* by speedily cleansing Burgenland of its Jews. Thus, he sought to prove his loyalty to the cause and hoped to solidify his status. Indeed, Portschy’s actions were appreciated: “With his action in Burgenland, he made an outstanding impression and was rewarded by being appointed *pro tem Gauleiter* of Styria.”¹⁴⁶

Another explanation may be found in the aforementioned report by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in New York on the deportation from Burgenland: “‘For strategic reasons,’ Jews will not be allowed to live within fifty kilometers of the border.”¹⁴⁷ This explanation, which Portschy repeated in my interview with him, is based on a pragmatic but false premise, since the Jews were forced to emigrate from interior areas of Austria at a later stage. In Stettin, too,

¹⁴² Portschy’s status in the party was not strong because of an internal struggle, in early 1938, between D. Josef Leopold of the SA and Hubert Klausner of the SD. After Hitler ruled in favor of the appointment of Klausner, Portschy was actually at risk of house arrest. He safeguarded his position by declaring his allegiance to Klausner. From then on he sought to prove his loyalty to the leader and his ways; Gerald Schlag, “Der 12 März 1938,” pp. 100–101.

¹⁴³ All opponents of the National-Socialist party were dismissed from their positions, and some were even sent to concentration camps, e.g., Governor Hans Sylvester, who died in Dachau; Ernst August, “Ausflösung und Aufteilung des Burgenlandes im Jahre 1938,” in *Burgenland 1938* (Eisenstadt, 1989), p. 120.

¹⁴⁴ Jonny Moser, “Die Katastrophe der Juden in Österreich, 1938–1945,” *Studia Judaica Austriaca V* (1977), p. 112.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with the author, Eisenstadt, summer 1996. Father Alfred Zistler wrote the history of the Jews of Deutschkreutz; See Zistler, “Geschichte der Juden in Deutschkreutz,” in Hugo Gold, ed., *Gedenkbuch*, pp. 57–75.

¹⁴⁶ Botz, *Die Eingliederung*, p. 156.

¹⁴⁷ Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 301, Dok. 7. News of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, New York, Bd. IV, Nr. 13, 14.4.1938

the authorities alleged the need to evacuate Jews from the coastal area in advance of the attack on Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1940.¹⁴⁸ Here again, however, the argument does not stand to reason, since had it been for strategic needs the evacuation should have covered a much larger area.¹⁴⁹

By comparing the expulsion from Burgenland with earlier and later deportations, we may find another explanation for this policy. After the defeat of France (1940), Hitler gave the leaders of the civil administration vast powers. He absolved them of administrative dependency on ministers and their ministries and stated that they were answerable to him alone.¹⁵⁰ Hitler gave full support to the rapid and complete Germanization of Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg, which had just been “restored” with fanfare to the Reich, from which they had been taken away in 1870. In this context, “Germanization” and “cleansing of Jews” may be considered synonymous. Hitler also planned to annex Alsace to Baden and Lorraine to the Saar so that eventually “the accepted historical names would disappear and be replaced by Westmark and Upper Rhine (*Oberrhein*).” The *Führer* went on to emphasize that “he (Hitler) would demand from his *Gauleiter* after 10 years only the single announcement that their territories were purely German and would not enquire about the methods used to bring this about.”¹⁵¹

Despite the differences in the time and circumstances, one can see similarities between Austria/Burgenland—the eastern border area—and Alsace-Lorraine—the western border areas of the “Old Reich”: The historic names of Austria and Burgenland were abolished; Austria was renamed *Ostmark*. Hitler did the same in the west, terming the border area between France and Germany “*Westmark*.”¹⁵² Burgenland was partitioned between two districts, Lower Danube and Styria, as would happen subsequently in Alsace-Lorraine on direct orders from Hitler in Berlin. Hitler, the supreme leader, ignored particular and local considerations. When the question of reshaping

¹⁴⁸ Cochavi, “The Final Stage,” p. 331.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Toury, “Chain of Command,” p. 49.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50. Cochavi, “The Final Stage,” pp. 341-342; and Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, p. 116, n. 85.

¹⁵² Hüttenberg, *Die Gauleiter*, p. 145. The same happened in the Netherlands. Even before the occupation, the local Nazi party had begun to use the term *Duitse Westmark* (the German western province); Dan Michman, *The Holocaust and Holocaust Research* (Hebrew) (Moreshet: Tel Aviv, 1998; English forthcoming), p. 85.

Austria's image and determining the fate of Burgenland arose, Hitler decided in favor of this partitioning against the views and recommendation of the *Gauleiters*, including *Reichskommissar* Bürckel and Portschy.¹⁵³

The terms “Germanization” and “cleansing of Jews” may be considered synonymous in Burgenland as well. The Germanization may also have been carried out as a defensive move against the irredentist aspirations of Hungary, which had expressed an intention to divide Austria between itself and Germany and to receive Burgenland as its own.¹⁵⁴

Thus, the fate of the Jews in Burgenland was sealed by Hitler's “Germanization” policy and his spirited and enterprising accomplice, Portschy. The resolve with which the Jews of Burgenland were expelled reinforces this argument, since “All random acts performed by officials vested with power, great and small alike, have proved to this day that only actions backed from above succeed.”¹⁵⁵

The forced-emigration policy, as implemented first in Burgenland and later in the other provinces of Austria, is a very important chapter in the development of the antisemitic policy that was ultimately directed at the destruction of European Jewry. All the elements of the antisemitic policy in the 1933-1938 period, including Aryanization and deportation, that were initially implemented in Germany – at times covertly and in roundabout ways, without an unequivocal declaration – were invoked in Burgenland overtly and with uncompromising determination. The policy was defined as “emigration” (*Abwanderung*)¹⁵⁶ before the term “Jewish emigration” (*Judenauswanderung*) was introduced until the summer of 1941.¹⁵⁷ The term “cleansing of Jews” (*Entjudung*) was also used before “*Judenrein*” came into vogue. Aryanization

¹⁵³ Rosenkranz, *Verfolgung und Selbstbehauptung*, p. 89; August Ernst, “Zur Auflösung des Burgenlandes im Jahre 1938,” in *Festschrift für Heinrich Kunnert*, Burgenländische Forschungen Sonderheft II (Eisenstadt: Burgenländische Landesarchiv, 1969), pp. 42–43.

¹⁵⁴ Ernst, “Auflösung,” pp. 124–125. The Burgenland SD also viewed the Hungarians as highly dangerous; See Luza, *österreich*, p. 50.

¹⁵⁵ Toury, “Chain of Command,” p. 47.

¹⁵⁶ The term *Abwanderung* appears in several documents; see Moser, “Die Juden,” p. 302, Dok. 11, p. 319, Dok. 49.

¹⁵⁷ The policy was defined as *Judenauswanderung* until the summer of 1941. On January 1942, Heydrich stated, “*Reichsmarschall* Göring's order has come into my possession as the *Führer* instructed, and instead of emigration, the *Führer* now authorizes only the transport of the Jews to the East.” Based on a record made by Undersecretary of State Martin Luther on August 21, 1942, Nuremberg Documents, NG 2586, quoted in Madajczyk, “Hitler's Direct Influence on Decisions,” p.49, no. 27.

patterns, such as dispossession on the basis of a statement of waiver, were crafted here. The Burgenland test case was applied more extensively elsewhere in Austria, particularly in Vienna, and served as a model for emulation in the “Old Reich.”¹⁵⁸

The events in Burgenland marked a significant departure from the “moderate” policy toward German Jews in 1933–1938 and the legal situation set forth by the Nuremberg Laws. In Burgenland a planned phase of expulsion of Jews was carried out.

During the period discussed here, the differences between forced emigration and deportation were blurred. However, the term “final solution,” as used by Heydrich and Pportschy in their speeches, did not denote the unmitigated annihilation of Jews as implemented from 1941. At this stage the antisemitic policy should be understood in its context and does not imply the existence of any total extermination plan in the years preceding the German invasion of the Soviet Union. However, as Saul Friedländer writes:

“No historian can forget the end of the road... The crimes committed by the Nazi regime were neither a mere outcome of some haphazard, involuntary, imperceptible, and chaotic onrush of unrelated events nor a predetermined enactment of a demonic script; they were the result of converging factors, of the interaction between intentions and contingencies, between discernible causes and chance. General ideological objectives and tactical policy decisions enhanced one another and always remained open to more radical moves as circumstances changed.”¹⁵⁹

The events in Burgenland were an important link in this development.

¹⁵⁸ Toury, “From Forced Emigration to Deportation,” p. 83. *Gauleiter* Franz Schwede-Coburg of Stettin was the first to transfer the Jewish population eastward; *ibid.*, p. 77. The Burgenland precedent of confiscating property also served as a model. On July 22, 1938, the Gestapo in Eisenstadt valued confiscated Jewish property at 800,000 marks, a much larger sum, proportionately, than that of the Jews of Vienna, whose property was valued on June 21, 1938, at 3,902,391.24 marks. According to the 1923 census, the Jewish population of Vienna was 201,513, forty-eight times greater than the 3,720 Jews counted in Burgenland at that time; Leo Goldhammer, “Von den Juden Österreichs,” in Löbel Taubes and Chajim Bloch, eds., *Jüdisches Jaarbuch für österreich* (Vienna, 1932), p. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Introduction, pp. 4-5.

Source: *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXXI, Jerusalem 2003, pp. 287-324.