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The Fate of ‘Protected’ Groups during the Last Years of the War

Deportations from Vienna’s Nordbahnhof –
a Largely Unknown Site of the Shoah

Abstract: After the end of mass deportations in Austria in October of 1942, the Jewish Community in Vienna was officially dissolved by Nazi authorities and re-organized as the so-called Council of Elders, who was put in charge of all remaining people defined as Jewish by Nazi racial laws, independent of their denomination. The majority of the people left behind were protected from deportation because they were members of an intermarried family with a non-Jewish spouse or parent. A small fragment of the Jewish population was able to remain in Vienna as employees of the Council, working as doctors, nurses, cooks, caregivers, cleaning staff, or clerical workers in the remaining institutions of the former Jewish Community. In addition, a tiny fraction of the remaining Jewish population was protected by foreign citizenship. The protection of this heterogeneous group was often temporary, since diplomatic considerations regarding foreign citizenship were subject to changes and the number of Council employees was continuously reduced by orders of the authorities. This article focuses on the deportations of previously protected groups from Vienna’s Nordbahnhof – until recently a largely unknown site of deportations.

Introduction

On January 5, 1943, a small transport of about 100 people left Vienna’s Nordbahnhof for Theresienstadt.¹ It was the first one of a total of 33 deportation transports from this railway station until the end of the war. In the years before, during the time period of 1941/1942, the majority of the Austrian Jewish²

1 Jonny Moser: “Österreich”, in Wolfgang Benz (ed.): *Dimension des Völkermords: Die Zahl der jüdischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991, 67–93, here 81; Alfred Gottwaldt and Diana Schulle: *Die “Judendeportationen” aus dem Deutschen Reich 1941–1945: Eine kommentierte Chronologie*, Wiesbaden: Marix, 2005, 347.

2 In this paper, the term ‘Jewish population’ will be applied to all people defined as Jewish by Nazi racial laws, who faced persecution by the National Socialist regime, independent of their denomination.

population – approximately 45,527 people³ – had been deported in mass deportation transports from Vienna's Aspangbahnhof. Among the 100 people on the transport early January 1943 was 14-year-old Gerty Taussig, who had been left behind in Vienna after falling sick shortly before the deportation of her family:

I myself stayed very long [in Vienna], because just before they sent my parents away, which was in September of 1942 / October 1942, I got sick [...] I think it was Diphtheria [...]. And they sent me to a hospital, so I shouldn't infect the rest of the people. And while I was in the hospital, they shipped my parents to the concentration camp. And they forgot me. They forgot that I existed. [...] And I was there until January of 1943. [...] I was sent to Terezín. And... it was a very small transport. It was the left-over Jews, and I was one of them, you know. Just like a hundred of us. There were very few transports after the time that I went. Because we were just the last few Jews that were still around.⁴

At the end of October 1942, the Jewish Community in Vienna was officially dissolved by Nazi authorities and reorganized as the so-called Council of Elders, who was put in charge of all remaining people defined as Jewish by Nazi racial laws, independent of their denomination.⁵ The majority of the people left behind were protected from deportation because they were members of an intermarried family with a non-Jewish spouse or parent. Thus, the composition of the former Jewish Community changed significantly, since more than half of the Council's members were, in fact, not Jewish by religious denomination.⁶

A very small fragment of the Jewish population was able to remain in Vienna without the protection of non-Jewish family members. They worked as doctors, nurses, cooks, caregivers, cleaning staff, or clerical workers in the remaining institutions of the former Jewish Community, because those protected from deportation – as anyone defined Jewish – were barred from general hospitals and nursing facilities. Therefore, the Jewish Community and its successor organiza-

3 Moser, Österreich, 67–94; Dieter J. Hecht and Michaela Raggam-Blesch: "Der Weg in die Vernichtung begann mitten in der Stadt: Sammellager und Deportationen aus Wien 1941/42", in Dieter J. Hecht, Michaela Raggam-Blesch and Heidemarie Uhl (eds.): *Letzte Orte: Die Wiener Sammellager und die Deportationen 1941/42*, Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2019, 20–75, here 74–75.

4 Gerty Meltzer (née Taussig), Interview 1686, Visual History Archive (VHA), USC Shoah Foundation, 24.03.1995. Gerty Taussig was reunited with her family in Theresienstadt. They were deported to Auschwitz together in the fall of 1944. She is the sole survivor of her family.

5 Aktennotizen, 10.10. and 01.11.1942, Joseph Loewenherz Collection, IKG Wien Memos 1941–1945, AR 25055, Leo Baeck Institute (LBI), New York.

6 Dieter J. Hecht, Michaela Raggam-Blesch and Eleonore Lappin-Eppel: *Topographie der Shoah: Gedächtnisorte des zerstörten jüdischen Wien*, Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2018², 484–490; Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Ältestenrates der Juden in Wien, January 1944, A/W 117, Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP), Jerusalem, 31–34.

tion, the Council of Elders, was made responsible for their care.⁷ A tiny fraction of the remaining Jewish population was protected by foreign citizenship.⁸ The protection of this heterogeneous group, however, was often only temporary and employees of the Council were continuously reduced on orders of the authorities. In addition to these groups, a sizeable number of Jews in Vienna tried to survive in hiding. When they were caught, they were deported immediately. Against this backdrop, smaller deportation transports continued until the end of the war.

This article focuses on the late stage of deportation transports from Vienna's Nordbahnhof – until recently a largely unknown site of deportations.⁹ These transports have often been neglected in Holocaust research in Austria, since they were much smaller in scope and size: Between January 1943 and March 1945 a total of 1,760 Austrian Jews¹⁰ were deported in 33 transports from Nordbahnhof.¹¹ Among them were former employees of the Council, individuals with foreign citizenship, people who had tried to escape deportations by going into hiding as well as members of 'mixed families' who lost their protection. In addition, about 151 Jewish and 55 non-Jewish Gestapo prisoners as well as presumably about 2,000 Roma and Sinti¹² were deported from Nordbahnhof station to Auschwitz.¹³

7 Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Ältestenrates der Juden in Wien, January 1943, A/W 116, CAHJP, Jerusalem, 18, I–III; Michaela Raggam-Blesch: "Survival of a Peculiar Remnant: The Jewish Population of Vienna During the Last Years of the War", in *Dapim. Studies on the Holocaust*, 29/3, 2015, 197–221.

8 Statistics from 15.04.1943 listed 235 members of the Council with foreign citizenship. Aufstellung betreffend Zugehörigkeit der in Wien lebenden Juden zu folgenden Gruppen: privilegierte Mischehe, nicht privilegierte Mischehe, Geltungsjuden, Ausländer, 15.04.1943, A/W 414, CAHJP, Jerusalem.

9 While the Nordbahnhof has been known as a site of deportation in research since the studies of Jonny Moser, there is no commemoration or memorial to date.

10 This definition not only includes people of different denominations persecuted as Jews but also Jews of different citizenship with residence in Austria.

11 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 456–467.

12 Regarding the deportation of Roma and Sinti, there is little documentation available. The majority of the 2,760 Austrian Roma and Sinti registered in Auschwitz in 1943 were presumably deported from Vienna's Nordbahnhof. Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma, Heidelberg (eds.): *Gedenkbuch. Die Sinti und Roma im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau*, Munich: Saur, 1993; Volkshochschule der burgenländischen Roma: "Nationalsozialismus". Available at: <https://www.burgenland-roma.at/index.php/geschichte/nationalsozialismus>. Last accessed: 18.09.2021.

This article is situated in microhistorical studies, which have made a significant contribution to Holocaust research in recent years.¹⁴ Microhistory encourages us to take a closer look at particularities and unusual cases in order to gain a deeper understanding not only of regional differences, but also of the multilayered realities of the Holocaust.¹⁵ The Nordbahnhof as a site of deportations is connected to spatial studies, which have gained increasing importance in Holocaust research by demonstrating how the destruction of Jewish life also had a profound geographic dimension.¹⁶ During deportation transports, Jewish victims were violently relocated from their homes to unknown destinations. The overwhelming majority of the deportees did not survive.¹⁷

Deportations from Nordbahnhof

The mass deportation transports in the years 1941 to 1942, which left from Vienna's Aspernbahn station, had been organized by the *Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung* (Central Office for Jewish Emigration). Originally founded by Adolf Eichmann in August of 1938 to speed up the process of appropriation and expulsion, the *Zentralstelle* had been the central authority for the implementation and coordination of the anti-Jewish policies in Austria and had also been in charge of deportations.¹⁸

13 According to Jonny Moser, all transports from Vienna to Auschwitz left from Nordbahnhof station. Moser, Österreich, 86–87. I would like to thank Wolfgang Gasser and Wolfgang Schellenbacher (Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, DÖW) for their estimate on the number of non-Jewish prisoners deported to Auschwitz.

14 See e.g.: Omer Bartov: *Anatomy of a Genocide. The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018; Tim Cole: *Holocaust City. The Making of a Jewish Ghetto*, New York/London: Routledge, 2003; Jan Tomasz Gross: *Neighbors. The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, Princeton: Oxford University Press, 2001.

15 Claire Zalc and Tal Bruttman (eds.): *Microhistories of the Holocaust*, New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2017, 1–13.

16 Anne Kelly Knowles, Tim Cole and Alberto Giordano (eds.): *Geographies of the Holocaust*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014; Natalia Aleksun and Hana Kubátová (eds.): *Places, Spaces, and Voids in the Holocaust*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021, 9–20.

17 Simone Gigliotti: *The Train Journey. Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust*, New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2009, 1–5; Hecht and Raggam-Blesch, *Weg in die Vernichtung*, 74–75.

18 Doron Rabinovici: *Instanzen der Ohnmacht: Wien 1938–1945. Der Weg zum Judenrat*, Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2000, 60–92; Gabriele Anderl and Dirk Rupnow: *Die Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung als Beraubungsinstitution*, Vienna/Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004, 112–119; Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 177–180.

After the last mass transport with more than 1300 persons had left Vienna's Aspernbahnhof on October 9, 1942, for Theresienstadt,¹⁹ smaller transports were organized from Nordbahnhof until the end of the war. This railway station had previously been used by the Gestapo for the deportation of 'Schutzhäft' ('protective custody') prisoners to Auschwitz.²⁰ The euphemistic term 'protective custody' applied to opponents of the Nazi regime and other 'undesired persons', who were imprisoned solely on the basis of police orders. While many of these prisoners were not Jewish, the majority of 'protective custody' prisoners deported to Auschwitz were Jews, who often had been arrested for imputed crimes. Among them were also persons who had tried to evade deportations by going into hiding.

In March of 1943, the *Zentralstelle* was being dissolved and its staff sent off to other operation sites in Europe, where their expertise was used for the deportation of other local Jewish communities.²¹ In Vienna, the Gestapo headquarters (*Gestapo-leitstelle*) took over the agendas of the *Zentralstelle*. By early April 1943, the last assembly camp located in a former Jewish girl's school in Vienna's Second district (Malzgasse 7) was closed down. From this time onwards, Jewish victims were usually picked up directly from their homes before their deportation and transferred to the Nordbahnhof station by open trucks.²²

Larger transports from Nordbahnhof mostly went to Theresienstadt, smaller transports and 'protective custody' transports were sent to Auschwitz. All trains belonged to the former Austrian Federal Railways, which had become part of the German Reichsbahn. The deportees usually left Vienna in passenger coaches, guarded by the Vienna police forces ('*Schutzpolizei*'). Transports of 'protective custody' prisoners to Auschwitz were conducted in prison cars. The number of deportees of these prison transports was usually in single-digits.²³

Between January 1943 and March 1945, about 1,303 Austrians who were defined as Jewish were deported in 22 transports to Theresienstadt.²⁴ In contrast to

19 Moser, Österreich, 80; Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 454.

20 Moser, Österreich, 87.

21 Hans Safrian: *Die Eichmann Männer*, Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1993, 225–319.

22 Aktennotizen, 29.03.1943, LBI; Hecht and Raggam-Blesch, *Weg in die Vernichtung*, 73.

23 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 390–391, here 347. Raul Hilberg: "The Bureaucracy of Annihilation", in Christopher R. Browning, Peter Hayes and Raul Hilberg (eds.): *German Railroads, Jewish Souls: The Reichsbahn, Bureaucracy, and the Final Solution*, New York: Berghahn, 2020, 1–18; Winfried Gronwald (ed.): *Kursbuch für die Gefangenenzüge (Gültig vom 06.10.1941 an). Dokumente zur Eisenbahngeschichte*, Mainz: Dumjahn, 1979.

24 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 456–467; Jonny Moser indicated the total number of deportees to Theresienstadt during the years 1943–1945 with 1,299. Moser, Österreich, 81–82.

the 13 mass transports to Theresienstadt during the previous year, these transports were smaller in size, as customary in other cities of the German Reich.²⁵ Until then, all deportation transports from the *Ostmark* had departed exclusively from Vienna, where the majority of the Austrian Jewish population had been concentrated. From June 1943 onwards, a number of small transports from Austrian provinces to Theresienstadt were enforced. A total of 47 people were deported from cities and towns such as Graz, Linz, Kremsmünster and Waidhofen, often consisting of less than five people, most of whom were spouses of dissolved 'mixed marriages'.²⁶

Theresienstadt was considered a 'privileged destination' for the elderly, former employees of the Jewish Community and the Council of Elders, war veterans and members of dissolved 'mixed marriage families'. The alleged 'privilege' was short-lived, since a large number of the people deported to Theresienstadt were later transferred to Auschwitz and other killing sites. Others, especially elder persons and former residents of the old people's homes, perished soon after arriving in Theresienstadt due to the catastrophic living and poor hygienic conditions.²⁷

Auschwitz was the main destination for Jewish and non-Jewish Gestapo prisoners. During the years 1943 to 1944, about 151 individuals defined Jewish were deported to Auschwitz in '*Schutzhaft*' transports from Vienna's Nordbahnhof.²⁸ In addition, about 457 Jewish Austrians were deported in a total of 11 'regular' Auschwitz transports during the years 1943 to 1944.²⁹

25 Smaller transports were in conformity with the deportation guidelines for Theresienstadt issued in May 1942. Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 271, 347.

26 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 458–467; Jonny Moser indicated the number of deportees of this transport with 46. Moser, *Österreich*, 81–82; Hecht and Raggam-Blesch, *Weg in die Vernichtung*, 74.

27 Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 473–483; Anna Hájková: "Mutmaßungen über deutsche Juden: Alte Menschen aus Deutschland im Theresienstädter Ghetto", in Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková (eds.): *Alltag im Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941–1945*, Munich: De Gruyter, 2013, 179–198; Wolfgang Benz: *Theresienstadt: Eine Geschichte von Täuschung und Vernichtung*, Munich: C.H.Beck, 2013.

28 For these transports hardly any further documentation (such as dates and numbers of deportees for each transport) is available. Moser, *Österreich*, 86.

29 These transports were documented with deportation lists. Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 456–465; Moser, *Österreich*, 86; Transports 47 a–h: 8 deportations to Auschwitz, 03.03.1943–01.09.1944, 1.2.1.1/11204193–11204204/ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

'Mixed Families' and their Precarious Respite from Deportations

After the dissolution of the Jewish Community in the fall of 1942, about 8,000 people defined as Jewish still remained in Vienna. The vast majority of them were intermarried spouses with a non-Jewish partner.³⁰

Intermarriages between Jews and non-Jews, as well the presence of their 'half-Jewish' children, were perceived as a threat to the professed racial homogeneity of the Nazi regime. In conjunction with the so-called Final Solution, this 'unsolved problem' played an important role in the discussions during the infamous Wannsee Conference in January 1942 and its follow-up meetings in March and October of the same year. Internal disagreements within the Nazi party and concerns that 'Aryan' family members would cause public unrest ultimately spared this group from the full force of the radical measures applied to the rest of the Jewish population, even if plans for the ultimate inclusion of 'half-Jews' and Jewish partners of 'mixed marriages' in the Final Solution were never abandoned.³¹

After the November Pogroms and the surge of anti-Jewish legislation, Nazi authorities decided to provide privileged treatment to certain 'mixed marriages' in order not to evoke objections from broad non-Jewish circles. Privilege depended on gender and the religious denomination of their offspring. Families, where the non-Jewish spouse was male (head of the household) were declared 'privileged'. 'Mixed marriages' with children, who were categorized as '*Mischlinge*'³²

30 A report from 01.01.1943 lists 7,989 people defined as Jewish. Among them, 5,564 individuals were married to a non-Jewish partner and 334 persons were protected through their employment at the Council of Elders. Bericht, A/W 116, CAHJP, 18. The demographics from April 1943 also list 1,151 '*Geltungsjuden*' and 235 persons who were protected by a foreign citizenship. Aufstellung betreffend Zugehörigkeit der in Wien lebenden Juden, 15.04.1943, A/W 414, CAHJP.

31 Cornelia Essner: *Die "Nürnberger Gesetze" oder: Die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933–1945*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002¹⁰, 384–442; Raul Hilberg: *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, volume 2, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer TB, 2007, 436–445; Jeremy Noakes: "The Development of Nazi Policy Towards the German-Jewish '*Mischlinge*' 1933–1945", in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 34, 1989, 291–354.

32 The *First Supplementary Decree of the Nuremberg Laws*, issued on 14.11.1935, defined individuals with a Jewish and an 'Aryan' parent either as so-called *Mischlinge* of the first degree or as '*Geltungsjuden*' – depending on their religious denomination. Children of 'mixed marriages' who were either baptized or non-denominational were classified as '*Mischlinge*' by the Nazi regime. They were neither considered 'Aryan' nor Jewish and literally personified the status of being 'in between'. Joseph Walk (ed.): *Das Sonderrecht für die Juden im NS-Staat: Eine Samm-*

by the Nazi regime were also ‘privileged’ – regardless whether the father or the mother was ‘Aryan’. They received the same food ration cards as the general non-Jewish population and were usually able to remain in their apartments.³³

Intermarried families who, together with their children, were members of the Jewish Community, were declared ‘non-privileged mixed marriages’ and therefore subjected to a similar treatment as the general Jewish population. Their children, even though technically also ‘half-Jews’ according to Nazi ideology, were classified ‘*Geltungsjuden*’ (‘de facto Jews’) due to their religious denomination.³⁴ Together with the Jewish population, ‘non-privileged’ families were gradually excluded from staple foods and evicted from their homes.³⁵ From September 1941 onwards, Jewish spouses of ‘non-privileged mixed marriages’ and their children had to wear the yellow star on their outer garment, thereby publicly identifying them as Jews and making them vulnerable to assaults in public.³⁶

In the course of the mass deportations between February 1941 and October 1942, the majority of the Austrian Jewish population had been deported from Vienna. Jewish spouses of ‘mixed marriages’ as well as their children were deferred from these transports, as long as the marriage remained intact. If the marital bond was dissolved due to divorce or death of the non-Jewish spouse, this protection ended. While Jewish spouses of dissolved ‘privileged mixed marriages’ – according to deportation guidelines – were deferred from deportations ‘to the East’, they were designated for deportation transports to Theresienstadt starting in June of 1942.³⁷ The same applied to adult ‘*Geltungsjuden*’, who lost their protection if they were not living in the same household as their ‘Aryan’ parent.³⁸ Jewish spouses of dissolved ‘non-privileged mixed marriages’ as well as dis-

lung der gesetzlichen Maßnahmen und Richtlinien – Inhalt und Bedeutung, Heidelberg: Müller, 1981, 127, 139–140.

³³ ‘Privileged mixed marriages’ were also exempt from some of the anti-Jewish laws and taxes. Noakes, Development of Nazi Policy, 337.

³⁴ ‘Half-Jews’, who were registered with the Jewish Community at the time of the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws were considered ‘*Geltungsjuden*’. Walk, Sonderrecht, 139–140, 347.

³⁵ Ibid., 312, 318–319, 346, 378, 380.

³⁶ Noakes, Development of Nazi Policy, 337; Walk, Sonderrecht, 347–348.

³⁷ Childless ‘privileged mixed marriages’ were also included in deportations ‘to the East’, since deportation guidelines only exempt Jewish spouses of dissolved ‘mixed marriages’ who did not have to wear the yellow star. This privilege ended when the ‘mixed marriage’ had been childless. “Polizeiverordnung über die Kennzeichnung der Juden, 01.09.1941”, in RGBL. I, 547; Deportation guidelines of 11.10.1941, 31.01.1942 and 15.05.1942, in Gottwaldt and Schulle, Judendeportationen, 56–58, 140–144, 268–275.

³⁸ “Deportation guidelines, 15.05.1942”, in ibid., 270; “Deportation guidelines for Theresienstadt, 20.02.1943”, in Wolf Gruner: *Widerstand in der Rosenstraße: Die Fabrik-Aktion und die Verfolgung der “Mischehen” 1943*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer TB, 2005, 50–52.

solved childless 'privileged mixed marriages' were included in the deportations to ghettos, camps and murder sites in the 'East', as Max Strnad has shown with his recent publication on 'mixed marriages' in Germany.³⁹ Jewish spouses of dissolved 'mixed marriages' were only exempt from deportations altogether, if they had under-aged children classified as '*Mischlinge*'.⁴⁰

Deportation Transports of Previously Protected or Eluded Groups during 1943

Given the significantly smaller scale of the deportations from Nordbahnhof with previously protected groups, these transports provide the opportunity to add personal stories to transport numbers and dates. In the following chapters, the precarious conditions of protection and the occasional arbitrariness of Nazi authorities will be analyzed on the basis of exemplary cases, which will be shown chronologically during the last years of the war. They also give an overview of the different groups that enjoyed protection for varying periods of time – among them foreign citizens, residents of old people's homes, people of mixed descent and Council employees.

On January 8, 1943, the second deportation transport from Vienna was leaving Nordbahnhof station for Theresienstadt.⁴¹ Among the people in that transport was Hildegard Gutfreund with her son Kurt, who had turned five just two days before their deportation. The two of them had been living in hiding for several months, before they were arrested by the Gestapo in December 1942.⁴² Life underground was difficult, as the non-Jewish population rarely was ready to take the risk of hiding Jews. Food was rationed and hard to obtain, and there always was the danger of being betrayed by informers.⁴³ The Gestapo reports in the

39 Max Strnad: *Privileg Mischehe? Handlungsräume "jüdisch versippter" Familien 1933–1945*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021, 262–276.

40 The guidelines specify '*Mischlinge* of the first degree' under the age of 14 in the same household. Deportation guidelines, 15.05.1942, in Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 268–275.

41 Up to that time, only 'protective custody' transports had left from Nordbahnhof.

42 Both of them survived in Theresienstadt. Kurt Gutfreund, Interview 12716, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 08.03.1996.

43 Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 417–418, 531–543.

years 1943 to 1944 are full of arrests and many were deported from Nordbahnhof. Only a few managed to remain under cover until the end of the war.⁴⁴

Among the people in hiding were also some persons, who had been deported in the course of the early transports from Vienna in the spring of 1941 to open ghettos in the Generalgouvernement and who had managed to return to Vienna, in order to escape the catastrophic living conditions they had encountered there.⁴⁵ The sisters Deborah and Brandel Feuer had been deported to Kielce on 19 February 1941. After their 'illegal' return back to Vienna they were hidden by Clara Daler, a 70-year-old widowed Jewish woman, who presumably had been protected by a prior intermarriage.⁴⁶ All three of them were arrested by the Gestapo on October 12, 1942. At that time, mass deportations from Vienna had just been concluded. Clara Daler was transferred in a 'protective custody' transport to Auschwitz, where she was murdered on January 12, 1943.⁴⁷ Deborah and Brandel Feuer remained in custody until their deportation on March 3, 1943 – the first 'regular' Auschwitz transport leaving from Nordbahnhof. They did not survive.⁴⁸

A few weeks later, Hertha Pollak was deported together with her daughters Helga and Elisabeth. Hertha had been able to evade deportation the year before due to her non-Jewish father Clemens von Pronay, who had connections to higher Nazi circles. While having been baptized after birth, she was defined as '*Geltungsjüdin*' on account of her marriage to the Jewish physician Paul Pollak.⁴⁹ After the escape of her husband to Italy, Hertha was left behind with her two

⁴⁴ Of about 1,600 people who are known to have tried to survive 'underground', about a third was arrested and deported. The historian Brigitte Ungar-Klein estimates the total number of failed attempts, however, to be considerably higher. Brigitte Ungar-Klein: *Schattenexistenz: Jüdische U-Boote in Wien 1938–1945*, Vienna: Picus, 2019.

⁴⁵ Hecht and Raggam-Blesch, *Weg in die Vernichtung*, 24–26; Walter Manoschek: "Februar/März 1941: Die frühen Deportationen aus Wien in das Generalgouvernement", in Hecht, Raggam-Blesch, and Uhl, *Letzte Orte*, 95–109.

⁴⁶ Gestapo, Tagesbericht (TB) daily report 5, 13.–15.10.1942, 8479, DÖW, 7; Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 269–270, 364.

⁴⁷ While the exact date of her deportation is not known, her death was recorded in Auschwitz. Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW): Database of Austrian Shoah and Gestapo Victims (DBSHOAH). Available at: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁴⁸ List of the deportation transport 47a to Auschwitz on March 3, 1943, A/VIE/IKG/II/DEP/Deportationslisten/3/13, VWI; Gestapo, TB 5, 13.–15.10.1942, 8479, DÖW, 7; DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁴⁹ According to the 'First Supplementary Decree of the Nuremberg Laws', '*Mischlinge*' who were married to people defined Jewish were also considered '*Geltungsjuden*'. After the onset of deportations, they lost the protection from their non-Jewish parent. See RGBL I, 125, 14.11.1935, 1334.



Fig. 1: Herta Pollak (left) with her daughter Helga (born 1929) and her mother-in-law Ernestine Pollak (1869–1942 Treblinka), Vienna 1934, private collection.

daughters, who were raised in the Jewish faith. They were deported to Theresienstadt on March 30, 1943, where all three of them survived. In an interview, her daughter Helga Feldner-Busztin (née Pollak) described their transfer to the assembly camp in Malzgasse 7 only weeks after her 14th birthday. There she met a group of Slovakian Jews, who had been caught hiding on coal cars, trying to cross the Austrian border to Switzerland. In the assembly camp she first found out what was happening in Auschwitz, since the Slovakian captives were already well informed about the ongoing mass murder. Helga recalled that neither she nor any of the adults could believe this and dismissed it as scare stories.⁵⁰ Her account is confirmed in a Gestapo report, which mentioned 30 Jews from Bratislava, who had been caught on January 12 and 15, 1943, at the Swiss border and transferred to Vienna Gestapo headquarters.⁵¹ They were recorded on the deportation list and deported together with other Austrian Jews on March 3, 1943 to Auschwitz.⁵²

⁵⁰ Helga Feldner-Busztin, Interview 48947, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 20.12.1998; Anna Goldenberg: *Versteckte Jahre: Der Mann, der meinen Großvater rettete*, Vienna: Zsolnay, 2018.

⁵¹ Gestapo, TB 1, 29.01.–01.02.1943, 8479, DÖW, 4–6.

⁵² List of the deportation transport 47a to Auschwitz on March 3, 1943, A/VIE/IKG/II/DEP/Deportationslisten/3/13, Archive of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI), Loan from the Archive of the Jewish Community Vienna (IKG-Archiv Wien).

Foreign citizenship only provided temporary protection from deportation and was subject to changes in diplomatic considerations throughout the war years.⁵³ The majority of the people on the second ‘regular’ Auschwitz transport from Nordbahnhof on March 31, 1943, were individuals who had been protected by their Romanian citizenship up to the change of deportation guidelines for foreign Jews in February 1943.⁵⁴ They were arrested in a round-up on March 25, 1943, which was followed by a sweep of Croatian, Slovakian and Romanian Jewish citizens in Berlin less than two weeks later on April 6, 1943.⁵⁵ This led to protests of the Romanian legation in Berlin and Vienna, demanding German authorities to provide Romanian Jews the same treatment given to Hungarian Jews. Political considerations moved the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to comply – under the condition that Romanian Jews returning from occupied territories would subsequently be transferred to Transnistria. On April 30, 1943, arrests of Romanian citizens were largely halted.⁵⁶ For the approximately 60 Romanian Jews in Vienna, who had been arrested in the round-up, those diplomatic changes came too late. Among the people deported was 50-year-old Dora Katz, whose son Martin managed to evade the transport by hiding.⁵⁷ Most of the people in this transport, among them Dora Katz, were killed upon arrival.⁵⁸

One of the larger transports in 1943 left Vienna’s Nordbahnhof station on May 25, 1943, with a total of 205 individuals for Theresienstadt.⁵⁹ Most of the people deported were inhabitants of the last two Jewish old people’s homes in Seegasse 9 and 16, which were closed down soon afterwards.⁶⁰ This was the only

53 Beate Meyer: “Protected or Persecuted? Preliminary Findings on Foreign Jews in Nazi Germany”, in Aleksiu and Kubátová: *Places, Spaces, and Voids*, 87–114.

54 Up to this time, only stateless persons and citizens of Poland and Luxembourg had been included in the deportations from the German Reich. Meyer, *Protected or Persecuted?*, 110–111; Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 56–58, 140–144, 148–155, 170–177, 268–275, 318, 376.

55 Akim Jah mentions a deportation transport from Berlin with a total of 30 Romanian citizens on 19.04.1943. Akim Jah: *Die Deportation der Juden aus Berlin. Die nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik und das Sammellager Große Hamburger Straße*, Berlin: be.bra, 2013, 470.

56 Radu Ioanid: *The Holocaust in Romania. The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000, 259–270. I would like to thank Julie Dawson for referring me to this publication.

57 Martin Katz was arrested in April 1943 and was saved by the Romanian consul general Konstantin Mareş, who organized a last-minute conscription for military labor employment in Romania. Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 300–302.

58 DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

59 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 357. Jonny Moser indicated the number of deportees of this transport with 203. Moser, *Österreich*, 81.

60 Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 240–260.

transport, where one of the homes – the former building of the Swedish Mission at Seegasse 16 – seemed to have functioned as an assembly camp.⁶¹ The fact that this particular deportation transport was one of only two documented transports leaving Vienna in boxcars instead of passenger coaches appears all the more unsettling, considering the composition of the transport with frail and elderly persons.⁶² Among the other people in the transport was Alfred Kocian (born 1927) with his mother Paula, who had been divorced from his 'Aryan' father since the early 1930s. Due to the fact that Alfred had been registered with the Jewish Community at birth, he was defined as '*Geltungsjude*' and therefore could not provide protection from deportation.⁶³



Fig. 2: Selma Gmerek (born 1920), mug shot index of the Vienna Gestapo, 23 July 1943, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, WStLA.

The Nordbahnhof also served as a deportation site for Roma and Sinti, who were deported from there to Auschwitz starting in 1943.⁶⁴ While documentation and lists of these transports have not yet surfaced, one specific case was recorded in the Gestapo daily reports following an arrest. On July 9, 1943, 15 people were detained after attempting to cross the border to Hungary illegally. Among them, 14 were categorized '*Zigeunermischlinge*' (people of Roma or Sinti decent),

⁶¹ This is indicated in survivor testimonies: Alfred Kocian, Interview 26579, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 29.01.1997; Susanne Vybiral, Interview 26960, VHA, USC Shoah Foundation, 11.12.1996.

⁶² The second documented transport leaving Vienna in boxcars was on 24.06.1943 for Theresienstadt. Moser, Österreich, 81, 83; Gestapo, TB 8, 22.–26.05.1943, 8479, DÖW, 10; Gestapo, TB 8, 24.–28.06.1943, 8479, DÖW, 3.

⁶³ Alfred and Paula Kocian survived in Theresienstadt. Alfred Kocian, 26579, VHA.

⁶⁴ This can be traced back to the 'Auschwitz edict' on 16.12.1942 by Heinrich Himmler, who decreed the deportation of the remaining Roma and Sinti within the German Reich to Auschwitz. Udo Engbring-Romang: *Die Verfolgung der Sinti und Roma in Hessen zwischen 1870 und 1950*, Frankfurt am Main: Brandes und Apsel, 2001, 342–347.

who had fled from Berlin in order to escape their impending forced sterilization procedure and/or their imminent deportation, as it was stated in the Gestapo report.⁶⁵ According to the report, they were three generations of two families, who were musicians by profession – among them 74-year-old Alexander Gmerek and 12-year-old Elisabeth Gmerek. The fifteenth person was Charlotte Alandt, fiancée of Jakob Gmerek, who was missing in the report. They were deported to Auschwitz with a ‘protective custody’ transport in September of 1943. The members of the Höpfner and Gmerek family were transferred to the ‘Zigeunerlager Auschwitz’ in Birkenau, where conditions were particularly abominable.⁶⁶ Only Auguste (born 1902), Andreas (born 1897) and 20-year-old Robert Höpfner survived.⁶⁷

Since the Council of Elders constantly had to reduce the number of its employees on orders of the authorities, many staff members kept a packed suitcase in their rooms in order to be ready for deportation at any time.⁶⁸ In November of 1943, two transports left to Theresienstadt. Many of the deportees had been employees of the Council. Among them was the cemetery gate keeper Josef Bäck together with his wife Hermine and their 23-year-old daughter Gertrude Bäck, who were deported with the transport on November 11, 1943.⁶⁹ The family had lived on the Jewish cemetery to take care of the grave sites and the cultivation of vegetables for the Council of Elders.

In fact, the cemetery had become an important recreation area for the remaining Jewish population, which was excluded from parks and woods. The Council used the space at the cemetery to grow much-needed vegetables for its institutions to supplement the meager food supplies the Jewish population received at that time. Children from the Jewish children’s home and other youth helped with the cultivation and harvest and used the time outside to

65 Gestapo, TB 8, 27.–29.07.1943, 8479, DÖW, 5–7.

66 Staatliches Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau und Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma: Gedenkbuch; Romani Rose (ed.): *“Den Rauch hatten wir täglich vor Augen”*. *Der Nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma*, Heidelberg: Wunderhorn, 1999.

67 Alexander (born 1869), Elisabeth (born 1931), Franz (born 1897), Maria (born 1894), Selma (born 1920) and Walter Gmerek (born 1922) as well as Lola (born 1927) and Robert Höpfner (1892) became victims of the Porajmos. The fate of four people remained unknown. DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

68 Hecht and Raggam-Blesch, *Weg in die Vernichtung*, 71–74; Maria König (pseudonym), in DÖW (ed.): *Jüdische Schicksale: Berichte von Verfolgten*, Erzählte Geschichte, volume 3, Vienna: DÖW, 1993², 245; Rosa Müller (pseudonym), in *ibid.*, 251; Franz Löw, in *ibid.*, 197.

69 The family was murdered in Auschwitz in the fall of 1944. DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

play.⁷⁰ Jewish youngsters used the cemetery as a place to get together and flirt with each other, while forgetting their precarious situation for a short while. Among them were Elizabeth Welt, who was protected by her Romanian citizenship⁷¹, and Herbert Neuhaus, whose father, Heinrich Neuhaus, was in charge of the laboratory at the Jewish hospital.

In her diary, Elizabeth confessed her growing infatuation with Herbert, who was something like a heartthrob for many of her friends.⁷² On November 11, 1943, the Neuhaus family was deported to Theresienstadt, after his father Heinrich had been denounced for harboring Jews who had escaped from Poland and were trying to cross the border into Hungary illegally.⁷³ In his unpublished memoirs, Herbert Neuhaus recalls his deportation from Vienna:

One month after our imprisonment, on Thursday, 11 November 1943 at 8 am, we were taken from our cell [...] and led to a fairly big assembly room where at last we saw my mother again. [...] After a tearful reunion we were driven in a police car to the detention center [at] Malzgasse 7,⁷⁴ across the street from the hospital, where we were told that we had been assigned to a transport to the K.Z. Theresienstadt, which was to leave in the afternoon. [...] As Vienna by that time was practically 'Judenrein' (free of Jews) there were no longer any mass transports, as in the past [...] but only small groups were deported, whenever a worthwhile number of victims had 'accumulated'. Thus, our group consisted of 91 persons and we were placed in regular 3rd class railroad cars and given lunchboxes by the *Ältestenrat* [Council].⁷⁵

Leopold Moses, chief archivist of the Jewish Community and the Council of Elders, was also involved in hiding the group of Polish Jews together with Heinrich Neuhaus.⁷⁶ As the Neuhaus family was deported to Theresienstadt, Moses was

70 Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 309, 506, 514.

71 During the March 1943 round-up (in her autobiography she dates it with June 1943), Elizabeth and her father had been hiding in the Romanian consulate. They both enjoyed the protection of the consul general Mareş, who provided them with false papers. Elizabeth W. Trahan: *Geisterbeschwörung. Eine jüdische Jugend im Wien der Kriegsjahre*, Vienna: Picus Verlag, 1996, 151–156.

72 Diary of Elizabeth Welt, 14.09.1943, AR 25038, Folder 5, LBI; Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 310–311.

73 Gestapo, TB 5, 15.–18.10.1943, 8479, DÖW, 2–4.

74 During this time, the assembly camp had already been closed and the building was used as an old people's home for the Council of Elders. According to several testimonies, a section of the building still seemed to have served as a Gestapo prison. See also: Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 246, 260, 412, 501.

75 Herbert Neuhaus, unpublished memoirs, transmitted via email to Dieter J. Hecht in February 2010. Heinrich, his wife Wanda and Herbert Neuhaus survived in Theresienstadt.

76 Gestapo, TB 5, 14.–16.03.1943, 8479, DÖW, 2–4.



Fig. 3: Elizabeth Welt (1924–2009) and her friend Lotte Freiburger (born 1923) at the Jewish cemetery, Vienna, presumably 1941, private collection.

kept in Vienna for a few weeks longer. On 1 December 1943 he was deported to Auschwitz, where he subsequently was murdered.⁷⁷ While the exact details of his or Neuhaus's involvement in the 'crime' were not mentioned in the Gestapo report, other sources reveal that Leopold Moses had a more leading role in the assistance of the Jews trying to cross the border to Hungary.⁷⁸ There was, nevertheless, often an aspect of the arbitrariness in the assignment of individuals to

⁷⁷ DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁷⁸ An article by Jonny Moser reveals that the historian Leopold Moses also had ties with the Aid and Rescue Committee (Vaada) in Budapest. Jonny Moser: "Flucht über Wien 1942/43", in *DÖW Jahrbuch 2011. Schwerpunkt: Politische Verfolgung im Lichte von Biographien*, Vienna, 2011, 264–271.

transports destined for Auschwitz or Theresienstadt on part of the Nazi authorities.

Dissolved 'Mixed Marriages' and Denunciations – Deportation Transports During 1944/1945

At the beginning of 1944, the RSHA deported Jewish spouses of dissolved 'mixed marriages' in a concerted operation throughout the German Reich.⁷⁹ Most deportees of the first Theresienstadt transport from Vienna in 1944, which left Nordbahnhof on March 10, 1944, therefore came from intermarriages, where the 'Aryan' spouse had previously died or divorced their Jewish partner.⁸⁰

The next transport to Theresienstadt followed on April 28, 1944, with a total of 80 people.⁸¹ The deportation list suggests that many of the people in this transport might have had protection through a foreign citizenship until that time.⁸² Among the other deportees of this transport were the seven Schwarz siblings, whose 'Aryan' mother had been eager to get rid of them. Four of the siblings, Margarethe, Maria, Anna and Kurt Schwarz, had been housed in the Jewish children's home because their mother Rosa Schwarz had started a relationship with a fanatical National Socialist, who would not tolerate them. She also denounced her older children Erwin and Hilda for not wearing the mandatory yellow star. As a result of these accusations, all seven siblings, including 16-year-old Berta, were deported to Theresienstadt in April 1944.⁸³ Their father, Michael Schwarz, had already been arrested in the previous year after having been denounced by his wife Rosa as an alleged communist. He was deported

79 This followed an RSHA edict from 18.12.1943, where these deportations of dissolved 'mixed marriages' were mandated. Walk, *Sonderrecht*, 401. In Berlin, the first one of these transports left already on 10.01.1944 with 329 persons, who were arrested after a coordinated round-up. Strnad, *Privileg Mischehe*, 269–270; Jah, *Deportation der Juden aus Berlin*, 530–532.

80 This was also mentioned in the Gestapo daily report: Gestapo, TB 5, 14.–16.03.1944, 8479, DÖW, 5.

81 Gottwaldt and Schulle, *Judendeportationen*, 463. Jonny Moser indicated the number of deportees of this transport with 79. Moser, *Österreich*, 82.

82 Almost half of the deportees (37 of a total of 80 people) had a birthplace outside of Austria, among them many with possibly Hungarian and Slovakian citizenship. This coincides with the German occupation of Hungary and the imminent deportations of Hungarian Jews.

83 Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 510; Herbert Dohmen and Nina Scholz: *Denunziert: Jeder tut mit: Jeder denkt nach: Jeder meldet*, Vienna: Czernin, 2003, 9–20.

to Auschwitz, where he perished in November 1943.⁸⁴ Maria Gabrielsen (née Schwarz), one of the younger siblings, described the roundup at the orphanage and their deportation from Vienna in her autobiography:

Now the others came from the children's home – both the children and the adults – and said goodbye to each of us. It was a very difficult moment for all of us. We were given some food parcels and later someone slipped us some sweets to take with us on the trip. Everyone was crying quietly. [...] At an appointed time, a truck drove up. A few men in uniform directed us to board the platform. Then we were driven to a railway station. There everything was busy. Constantly new trucks with people arrived. In the end, everything was full with Jewish people. The yellow stars were glaring at us. A few were standing there and discussing something. Others appeared quite despondent and had seated themselves on their suitcases. [...] Men in uniforms were shouting and calling out commands in all directions, while their dogs with their sharp barking joined in. The entire scene made us scared.⁸⁵

The seven Schwarz siblings survived in Theresienstadt. After their return to Vienna, they reported their mother Rosa Schwarz, who was sentenced to six years imprisonment in one of the first people's court trials after the war.⁸⁶

The last transport from Vienna's Nordbahnhof to Theresienstadt left the railway station on March 19, 1945. Among the 11 women on the transport was Cornelia Salzer, who had been living in hiding together with her husband Karl for three years. They were arrested by the Gestapo on November 25, 1944. All 11 deportees, who arrived in Theresienstadt less than two months before liberation, survived. Cornelia Salzer's husband Karl, however, was transferred to Mauthausen concentration camp and murdered in Ebensee in April 1945, just a few weeks before the end of the war.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁸⁵ Maria Gabrielsen and Oddvar Schjølberg: *Angezeigt von Mama: Die Geschichte einer Denunziation*, Berlin: Metropol, 2018, 56–58. Translation by the author.

⁸⁶ Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 510; Dohmen and Scholz, *Denunziert*, 9–20.

⁸⁷ Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW) and Institut Theresienstädter Initiative (eds.): *Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch. Österreichische Jüdinnen und Juden in Theresienstadt 1942–1945*, Prague, 2005, 597; Gestapo, TB 4, 24.–30.11.1944, 8479, DÖW, 14; DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

Precarious Protection during the Last Years of the War

During the last years of the war, the remaining Jewish population found themselves under increased scrutiny. For preliminary protected groups, even trivial infractions against Nazi laws could lead to imprisonment and deportation. Julius Kalmus, who was protected by an intermarriage with a non-Jewish spouse, was arrested in March 1943 for an alleged 'refusal to work' in his forced labor assignment as a coal carrier. While the details of his fate are not clear, he eventually perished under unknown circumstances.⁸⁸ His daughter, 21-year-old Stefanie Kalmus, was arrested in October of the same year. According to the Gestapo record, she was accused of having an 'illegitimate relationship' with a 'German-blooded' man.⁸⁹ 'Half-Jewish' descendants of intermarriages were particularly targeted with a number of marriage stipulations regarding their most personal decisions, which became objectives of state control.⁹⁰ Stefanie Kalmus was deported to Auschwitz with a 'protective custody' transport and murdered in October of 1944.⁹¹ Even activities like going to the movies could be dangerous, since it was forbidden to Jews and one could only enter if one removed the yellow star, which was itself a major offense. Marie Glaser, who was married to a non-Jewish man, was arrested by the Gestapo on March 5, 1943, on the basis of a 'forbidden cinema visit'. Her fate remains unknown.⁹²

The wide-ranging anti-Jewish stipulations led to a criminalization of normal, daily activities, since survival strategies, such as getting extra food from the black market to supplement the meagre food rations, were dangerous. This can be seen in the increased number of arrests quoted in the Gestapo daily reports during the final years of the war.⁹³ Lilli Gampl, who was protected by an intermarriage, was arrested in November of 1942, after being caught purchasing

⁸⁸ DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁸⁹ Gestapo, TB 8, 26.–28.10.1943, 8479, DÖW, 3.

⁹⁰ '*Geltungsjuden*' such as Stefanie Kalmus were subjected to the same anti-Jewish legislation as the general Jewish population, prohibiting them from having sexual relationships with 'Aryans'. Walk, *Sonderrecht*, 127, 139–140. For '*Mischlinge*', the decree forbidding these relations followed in the summer of 1942. *Ibid.*, 382.

⁹¹ DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁹² DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021.

⁹³ Statistik der Staatspolizeileitstelle Wien für den Monat Januar 1944, Gestapo, TB 1, 01.–06.01.1944, 8479, DÖW; Raggam-Blesch, *Survival of a Peculiar Remnant*, 212–213.

provisions that were forbidden to her from farmers in the countryside. She was deported to Auschwitz, where she was killed in April 1943.⁹⁴

At times, the surge of anti-Jewish legislation also led to absurd accusations: In December of 1943, Otto Lauterbach, who was protected through his marriage to a woman of Catholic decent, was denounced for illegally wearing of a traditional Austrian folk suit (*Trachtenanzug*) – which was forbidden to Jews – and for listening to foreign radio stations. He was deported to Auschwitz and survived.⁹⁵

For preliminary protected groups, survival, in fact, was not guaranteed until the very last hours of the Nazi regime. Margarete Mezei, an employee of the Vienna Jewish Community, had stayed behind in Vienna with her two children after the escape of her husband, the writer Moritz Mezei (1886–1944).⁹⁶ With the beginning of deportations and forced labor assignments in 1941, she managed to secure jobs for her children at the Jewish Community: Ilse got a position at the telephone switchboard, while Kurt volunteered at the technical department.

On March 12, 1945, the bomb shelter in the basement of the Jewish Community was hit during an air raid. Ilse Mezei, who had taken refuge there together with her mother, was instantly killed, while Margarethe Mezei survived severely injured. Kurt Mezei, her twin brother, had to attend the funeral alone, since their mother was still in the hospital. When the fighting in Vienna became particularly violent during the last days before liberation, he took refuge in a cellar near his apartment together with eight other Jewish neighbors. On April 12, 1945 – only hours before liberation by the Red Army – they were discovered by raging SS troops and murdered.⁹⁷

Conclusion

The deportations from Nordbahnhof were significantly smaller in scale than the mass transports during the years 1941 to 1942. Considering the fact that most of

⁹⁴ As with many ‘protective custody’ transports, the exact date of her deportation is not known. Her death was recorded in Auschwitz. DBSHOAH: <http://www.doew.at/personensuche>. Last accessed: 18.06.2021; Gestapo, TB 7, 20.–22.11.1942, 8479, DÖW, 9.

⁹⁵ Gestapo, TB 3, 07.–09.12.1943, 8479, DÖW, 5. Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 406–407.

⁹⁶ The writer and journalist Moritz Mezei fled to Italy in 1939. From there he was deported to Auschwitz and killed in 1944. Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 299–300.

⁹⁷ Hecht, Lappin-Eppel, and Raggam-Blesch, *Topographie der Shoah*, 545–548.



Fig. 4: The twins Ilse and Kurt Mezei (born 1924), Vienna, presumably 1941, Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, DÖW 09443/7.

those deported had been previously protected by family relations to non-Jews, employment with the Jewish community organization or Council of Elders, citizenship or by the ability to evade deportations in hiding, these transports give the opportunity to analyze the precarious conditions of protection and add personal stories to transport numbers and dates. They also illustrate the Nazi authorities' arbitrariness when assigning individuals to specific transports: While Hildegard Gutfreund and her son Kurt were deported to Theresienstadt, other persons who had been caught while living in hiding – such as the sisters Deborah and Brandel Feuer – were deported to Auschwitz. Even if details of the Holocaust were not yet known or considered as scare stories – as Helga Feldner-Busztin remembered – people still had an understanding that a deportation to Auschwitz implied some sort of 'punishment' while Theresienstadt was perceived a 'privileged destination'. In the beginning of 1943, foreign citizenship came in the center of attention and protection for Jewish citizens of many countries waned. During the last years of the war, members of 'mixed families' found themselves under increased scrutiny and even trivial infractions against Nazi laws could lead to imprisonment and deportation. Finally, denunciation also had an impact. The case of the 'half-Jewish' Schwarz siblings, who were reported

by their 'Aryan' mother, was, however, more of an exception, which also drew attention in the immediate postwar years.⁹⁸

With the liberation by the Red Army on April 13, 1945, about 6,512 Austrians classified as Jewish had survived Nazi persecution in Vienna.⁹⁹ Among them were about 195 people who had been protected through employment with the Council of Elders. More than 40 percent of the 334 employees registered in January 1943 had been deported in the meantime.¹⁰⁰ Foreign citizenship proved to be the most fragile protection: From 235 individuals protected by foreign citizenship in April 1943, only 13 individuals had been able to remain in Vienna.¹⁰¹ The majority – about 5,300 Austrians of Jewish descent – survived as members of intermarried families.¹⁰² From 6,715 Jewish spouses of 'mixed marriages' and '*Geltungsjuden*' in the beginning of 1943, more than 1,400 individuals had either died or been deported between 1943 and 1945.¹⁰³ Another approximately 1,000 people had managed to survive in hiding. According to the historian Brigitte Ungar Klein, more than 500 persons can be determined, who had attempted life in hiding and became victims of the Shoah. She estimates the actual number of individuals who were deported after being discovered much higher.¹⁰⁴

Considering that the Viennese Jewish Community had been one of the largest in Central Europe – 167,249 members before the Nazi takeover in 1938 – only a very small number was able to survive in Vienna.¹⁰⁵

98 Willy Krell, "Kinder klagen an", in *Der Neue Weg*, 3/4, 01.02.1946, 7.

99 According to Jonny Moser, the number of Austrians was 5,512. An additional 1,000 persons survived in hiding. Jonny Moser, *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs 1938–1945*, Vienna: DÖW 1999, 56; Brigitte Ungar-Klein: "Jüdische U-Boote und ihre Helferinnen und Helfer in Wien", in Hecht, Raggam-Blesch, and Uhl, *Letzte Orte*, 171–185, here 171–173.

100 At least 139 former employees of the Council of Elders were deported between 1943 and 1945. Aufgliederung der in Wien und Niederdonau lebenden Juden, 01.01.1945, A/W 415, CAHJP; Bericht, A/W 116, CAHJP, 18.

101 Among them 2 Bolivian, 1 British, 2 Palestinian, 2 Romanian, 2 Slovakian, 2 Turkish, 1 Hungarian and 1 US citizen of Jewish decent. Ibid; Aufstellung betreffend Zugehörigkeit der in Wien lebenden Juden, 15.04.1943, A/W 414, CAHJP. See footnote 8.

102 An additional approximately 118 individuals who were members of intermarried families survived in the region of Lower Austria. Aufgliederung, A/W 415, CAHJP.

103 In January 1943, a total of 5,564 individuals were registered as spouses with a non-Jewish partner. Another 1,151 were descendants of 'mixed marriages' ('*Geltungsjuden*'). Bericht, A/W 116, CAHJP, 18.

104 Ungar-Klein, *Jüdische U-Boote*, 171–173.

105 Moser, *Demographie*, 16.