

ernization process of the second half of the nineteenth century, now molded into an apocalyptic *Weltanschauung*. This means that economic persecution of the Jews differed in its nature (though not necessarily in some of its forms) from economic persecution of other groups and individuals. On the other hand, economic persecution of the Jews by other antisemitic regimes in Europe drew from the same centuries-old European antisemitic tradition.

When Hitler ascended to power in 1933, he set a vision of *Entfernung der Juden überhaupt* (total removal of the Jews), as he had envisioned in that same first political writing mentioned above. Yet he had no clear plan how to achieve that goal. This situation resulted in the popping-up of a variety of interpretations of total removal by different leading personalities and bureaucrats in the regime; the economic interpretation was one of them, a venue of state institutionalization of a deeply entrenched ingredient of traditional and modern antisemitism.

And there was more. Economic policies in the Third Reich were built-up and crystallized in the course of time, as executorial tools were created to implement these goals – which was the case with many other goals of Nazi policy too. As such, the first years of the Third Reich – until 1938 – were of decisive importance, because at that time concepts and bureaucratic procedures were formed regarding governmental and private involvement, Aryanization and bank transfer modes of action – which would all be used and even expanded later on, with the occupation of a growing number of countries. That means that the first five years of the regime served as an experimenting field and training school for crystallizing ways of economic persecution in a state-ordained mode. Similarly, popular attitudes and modes of behavior – mainly adaptation to the situation and benefitting from it – took shape. In this context, it is important to state that in those first years Hitler did not impose one clear-cut goal on antisemitic policies: he allowed for trial-and-error processes carried out by a variety of – sometimes competing, sometimes complementing – forces in the bureaucracy, the party and other institutions to take place.

Looking upon the palette of anti-Jewish policies in the first years of the Nazi regime, and taking into account other forms of *Judenverfolgung*, it seems that the economic approach is of the utmost importance, perhaps even the leading policy. The person leading that economic