

well-expressed in the instruction of December 10, 1938, signed by Göring (in his function as Commissioner for the Four Year Plan) and sent to all senior state and party authorities and leaders, which stated that “*Die Ausschaltung der Juden aus dem deutschen Wirtschaftsleben ist Aufgabe des Staates*” (the expulsion of Jews from German economic life is the task of the state).⁶⁵ This is important to emphasize vis-à-vis the Hilbergian interpretation which views expropriation as a second phase in the escalation process or vis-à-vis other interpretations that view it only as part of the early exclusionary stage of anti-Jewish policies (which took place in the 1930s, i. e. within Nazi Germany and annexed Austria) and pay little attention to the enormous investment in economic policies in Germany also in later years and in all occupied countries.⁶⁶ Even when radical means of removal of the physical Jews – physical elimination – were implemented later on, the results and leftovers of past economic damage caused by the Jews still had to be removed. The imagined sphere of life as shaped by long-standing images inflated by the Nazi discourse weighed much heavier than the factual situation (about which the authorities definitely had enough information). Consequently, economic persecution of the Jews – getting hold of Jewish assets, property, belongings and money, often carried out through (at face value) legal means – continued, broadened and deepened side by side with the evolving and escalating genocidal direction, its volume not decreasing at all. The unprecedented chapter in the history of antisemitism – the Final Solution of the Jewish Question – was accompanied by intense activity in the economic domain; both were aspects of the comprehensive project to achieve a total “erasure” of any sign of (assumed) past Jewish power and presence. This was a pre-condition for the perfect future world.

65 “Der Beauftragte für den Vierjahresplan an die obersten Reichsbehörden, die Leiter und Führer der Gliederungen der Partei und der angeschlossenen Verbände, die Gauleiter, die Reichsstatthalter, die Landesregierungen, die Oberpräsidenten und Regierungspräsidenten, die Reichskommissare für das Saarland, für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich, für die sudetendeutschen Gebiete”, 10. Dezember 1938, Bundesarchiv Freiburg, RW 19/1580, p. 59.

66 Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat*, gives a series of examples of such activities, though – as pointed out in note 4 above – he interprets them in a different way.