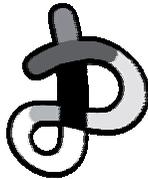


# **Jewish Emigration** from the **Third Reich**

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**Theses & Dissertations Press**  
**PO Box 257768, Chicago, Illinois 60625**

**December 2004**

**HOLOCAUST Handbooks Series, Vol. 12:**

Ingrid Weckert:

*Jewish Emigration from the Third Reich*

Translated by Dr. Fredrick Toben

Chicago (Illinois): Theses & Dissertations Press,  
Imprint of Castle Hill Publishers, December 2004

ISBN: 1-59148-011-6

ISSN: 1529-7748

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Distribution Australia/Asia: Peace Books, PO Box 3300,  
Norwood, 5067, Australia

Distribution Rest of World: Castle Hill Publishers  
UK: PO Box 118, Hastings TN34 3ZQ  
USA: PO Box 257768, Chicago, IL  
60625

Set in Times New Roman.

[www.vho.org](http://www.vho.org)

[www.tadp.org](http://www.tadp.org)

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## Introduction

Current historical writings dealing with matters related to the Third Reich paint a bleak picture. But such historiography has nothing to do with the depiction of actual historical events. This applies especially to writings that deal with the Jewish ethnic group. The emigration of Jews from Germany is an example of such historical distortion.

To this day there are still accounts of the Jewish emigration that depict it as some kind of clandestine operation – as if the Jews who wished to leave Germany had to sneak over the borders in defiance of the German authorities, leaving all their possessions and wealth behind. Or as if certain routes out of Germany were ‘inside knowledge’ not available to all Jews. In other accounts the emphasis is on Germany offering exit visas for a high price. There is no limit either to the inventive powers or to the stupidity of their authors.

The truth is that the emigration was welcomed by the German authorities, and frequently occurred under a constantly increasing pressure. The anti-Semitic legislation of the Third Reich is an undisputed fact in this emigration story. Likewise, the psychological pressure that Jews in Germany came to experience after 1933 is not trivialized here; it was often tragic for individuals and families. But this tragedy has already entered the public consciousness through countless publications, in radio and television programs. We needn’t recapitulate it here.

However, counter to numerous eyewitness or autobiographical accounts, the following needs to be insisted on: Emigration was not some kind of wild flight, but rather a lawfully determined and regulated matter.

The purpose of this work is to elucidate the emigration process in law and policy, thereby augmenting the traditionally received picture of Jewish emigration from Germany.

German and Jewish authorities worked closely together on this emigration. Jews interested in emigrating received detailed advice and offers of help from both sides. The accounts of Jews fleeing Germany in secret by night across some border are untenable. On the contrary, the German government was interested in getting rid of its Jews. It would have been senseless to prevent such an emigration.