



"De-registered" – The forced displacement of the St. Pölten Jews to Jewish collection flats in Vienna, 1938-42

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Scientists from the Institute for the Jewish History of Austria, with schoolchildren from Sankt Pölten, are carrying out research into the eviction and enforced resettlement of Lower Austrian Jews between 1938 and 1942. The National Fund is supporting this project, undertaken within the scope of "Sparkling Science", a research program by the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and the Economy.

The eviction and forced displacement to so-called collection flats within their hometowns and in Vienna are barely being mentioned in the ego documents of the Jews and Jewesses dislodged from Lower Austria between 1939-1942. Neither the afflicted themselves nor the historians researching the Shoah attributed high importance to this initial displacement; it was too much overshadowed by the subsequent traumatic events. The present project will therefore for the first time look into the hitherto unevaluated archival material and life historical sources of the administrative, regulatory processes on the one hand and into the impact on those afflicted on the other.

Two 6th grade classes of two high schools in St. Pölten (approximately 50 students) will look into the family history and social situation of Jews and Jewesses in their home town before 1938 and into these people's life realities in those collection flats. Based on their own reflection on the meaning of living and being at home, the youths discuss the information gained on forced displacement within the Jewish ego documents. Wolfgang Gasser documents their cognitive process.

In a second sub-project Philipp Mettauer will research the organization and processing of the forced displacements by National socialist authorities. Further, number, location, size and furnishings of those collection flats in Vienna as well as the life realities and the scopes of action of its inhabitants are being looked into. For the reconstruction of living conditions and social networks from those displaced from St. Pölten, he will use the students' research results. Further, some youths may voluntarily organize a meeting of St. Pölten Jews' descendants. Beyond that project, the "learning and memorial site – former synagogue St. Pölten" is being extended.

Project leader

- Project leader: PD Dr. Martha Keil
- Project team members: Dr. Wolfgang Gasser, Dr. Philipp Mettauer, Mag. Iris Palenik, Alben Zlatanova

Cooperation partners

- BG/BRG St. Pölten, Josefstraße
- BRG/BORG St. Pölten, Schulring
- Provincial Archive of Lower Austria (NÖLA)
- National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism

Information on the project

- Project Code: SPA/05 – 116
- Project duration: 1.1.2015-31.12.2016
- Project description on the website of "Sparkling Science"