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I. INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to estimate the wealth held on the eve of World War II by the Jewish populations in countries that came under Nazi domination. For these the relevant dates are generally 1938/39, except for Germany, where they are 1933/34. The basic purpose is to provide some indication of the amount of assets that could have been moved to safe haven destinations. Chapter II sets out the general context within which the central question is asked, Chapter III deals with the methodology, Chapter IV presents the individual country studies and Chapter V summarises the results.

The investigation most directly involved a search for a methodology that would yield the answer to the question we had posed. But more centrally, it was an adventure in applied economics. As such it did not seek to illuminate or find new insights into theoretical precepts, but rather to demonstrate the use of the analytical tools of applied economics to fill in gaps in socio/economic knowledge. Obviously, the inventive use of the tools of the trade presupposes a thorough grasp of the fundamentals underlying economic analysis. The particular excitement of this project was that the tool chest normally used in economic forecasting proved equally helpful in helping discover the facts of the past. We hope therefore that we have contributed not only to the knowledge of the size and treatment of Holocaust era assets, but that we have shown how exciting an exercise in applied economics can be and, thereby, have made a contribution also to the fund of teaching examples.