

THE HOLOCAUST IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

JEWS IN THE PROTECTORATE OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

With the outbreak of World War II, the Nazis unleashed a reign of terror against the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia. Their freedom of movement was curtailed. They were dismissed from their jobs. They were denied certain rations (items of clothing, sugar, tobacco). Jewish children were expelled from schools. The use of telephones and public transportation was restricted. Prominent Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps. In October 1939, 3000 men were deported to Nisko, near Lublin.

In September 1941 all Jews were required to wear the Jewish star and live in isolation from the rest of the population. One month later, in October, 1941, Reinhard Heydrich decided that the Jews would be concentrated first in the Theresienstadt (Terezín) ghetto and ultimately (*"after their numbers have been considerably depleted by death"*) to the "east." Transports were also sent from Prague and Brno to Lodz, Minsk, and Riga. These Jews were eventually killed in the death camps in Poland.

Between November 24, 1941 - March 16, 1945 122 trains containing 73,608 people were sent to Theresienstadt. Of these, 60,399 were eventually deported to Auschwitz and other death camps in Poland between 1942 and 1944. Only 3,227 survived

Altogether, it is estimated that of the 92,199 Jews living in Bohemia and Moravia before the start of the deportations, 78,154 perished in the Holocaust and 14,405 survived.

JEWS IN SLOVAKIA AND RUTHENIA

With the creation of the Slovakian state in 1939, Slovakian Jews came under the control of an extremely antisemitic regime that was closely tied to Nazi Germany. Numerous anti-Jewish restrictions were imposed, Jewish men were drafted into forced labor, and Jewish businesses were liquidated and property confiscated.

After Slovakia entered the war (summer 1941), anti-Jewish legislation intensified. Jews were barred from certain public places, they had to wear yellow Jewish star armbands, their mail and other documents also had to display the Star of David.

By September 1941, laws were passed that, like the Nuremberg Laws, classified the Jews in racial terms. In December 1941, Jews were forbidden to congregate, Jews had to observe a curfew, and 15,000 Jews were expelled from Bratislava, the city with the largest Jewish population

As elsewhere, after the Wannsee Conference (January 1942), the deportations accelerated. Between March and October 1942: 58,000 Slovakian Jews were deported to Auschwitz, Majdanek and the Lublin area. Though some Slovakian Jews managed to escape to Hungary between 1942 and 1944, altogether, some 100,000 Slovakian Jews were killed in the Holocaust.