

Vienna

Capital of Austria. Despite a long antisemitic tradition, Jews played an important role in Viennese life as composers, writers, thinkers, and scientists. In 1923 there were 201,513 Jews in Vienna. By the late 1930s, 30,000 Jews had fled the city.

After the Anschluss - the Nazi takeover of Austria in March 1938 - the Germans began implementing anti-Jewish measures. At first, the Germans' goal was to pressure the Jews into emigrating. They shamed the Jews by making them wash the streets. They closed the Jewish community and Zionist organization offices, and sent their board members to Dachau. Those offices were reopened in May to take care of emigration and social aid. From mid-October, almost every night in Vienna was punctuated with attacks on Jewish stores, synagogues, and schools. Then the Kristallnacht pogrom took place in November, which aggravated the situation: 49 synagogues were destroyed, and 3,600 Jews were deported to Dachau and Buchenwald. Those Jews were only released when they could show proof that they were going to emigrate.

After the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, deportations began from Vienna. In early October, 1,048 Polish and stateless Jews were sent to Buchenwald, and later that month, 1,584 Jewish professionals were deported to the Nisko region. By early 1941, SS leader Adolf Eichmann was still willing to allow emigration. Jews desperately searched for places to go, to very little avail.

In July 1941 there were still 50,000 Jews living in Vienna. Emigration of Jews between the ages of 18-45 was outlawed on August 5, and full-fledged deportations to extermination camps began on October 15, 1941. Tens of thousands of Jews were sent to Theresienstadt, Lodz, Riga, Minsk and Izbica (in the Lublin district). Most were later shot to death or gassed.

By the end of 1944 less than 6,000 Austrian Jews were left in Vienna. Most of these were partners in "privileged mixed marriages" or in regular mixed marriages. Vienna was liberated by Soviet troops on April 12, 1945. At that time, 150 Jews came out of hiding. Another 150 had survived as workers in

the warehouses of confiscated Jewish possessions, or as laborers in homes of SS leaders.