

Corfu

Northernmost Greek island in the Ionian Sea.

Italy occupied Corfu in April 1941. When the Italians surrendered to the Allies in September 1943, German troops invaded the island. They bombed Corfu's Jewish quarter and several Jews were killed.

Despite the fact that the Italians had warned the Jews of Corfu of the impending danger and advised them to run, the Jews—unaware of the horrors of the Holocaust—had not believed that the Germans would cross over to their island, and stayed put. The Germans immediately shut down the Jewish school and put restrictive measures into effect.

The German commander posted in Corfu, Karl Jaeger, reported that the Deportation of Corfu's Jews was not possible, because of the Red Cross representatives stationed there and because the local Greek population might intercede on the Jews' behalf. However, 1,795 Jews—almost all of Corfu's Jewish population—were arrested on June 9, 1944 by German army police units and the local Greek police. They were moved into an old fortress, and then sent on an arduous seven-day trip to Athens. From there the Jews were deported to Auschwitz. Two-thirds were murdered immediately upon arrival on June 30, 1944. Only about 200 Jews returned to Corfu after the war.