

Brzeziny

Categories: Locations

A resettlement transport on May 19-20, 1942, of 3,780 Jews from Brzeziny out of approximately 6,000 Jews residing there.

Over thirty months from the start of the war until the liquidation of the Brzeziny ghetto, the town of Brzeziny (Löwenstadt) – located virtually on the border of the Generalgouvernement – saw large numbers of Jews illegally crossing the border back and forth. About 40% of the local Jewish population left the city, soon to be replaced by refugees from other cities in the Wartheland. In terms of professional occupation, the vast majority were tailors, just as they were before the war.

Initially, the Eldest of the Jews was Dymant, pre-war chairman of the Jewish Community, but on December 4, 1939, he was replaced with F. Ikka, a native resident of Łódź and a man of bad reputation brought in by authorities.

Between November 1939 and May 1940 was the largest regrouping in the composition of the Jewish population.

In April 1940, the organization of a closed Jewish district was ordered. On May 31, the Brzeziny ghetto was sealed. Housing and sanitary conditions of the ghetto, located within an area marked by a handful of narrow streets, were very poor. As for the provisioning in the ghetto, the situation was not as dire, mostly due to intensive smuggling.

The Brzeziny ghetto maintained constant contacts with the Łódź ghetto, where a number of people came to Brzeziny from, including a variety of much-needed specialists in short supply in Brzeziny (for example, in autumn 1941, mgr Rozenblum arrived to organize a pharmacy). In 1941, “workshops” were organized, namely tailoring plants working for private German companies which employed a number of experts in various textile industries. On several occasions that same year, authorities shipped out strong young

men to work on the Reichsautobahnlager (vide) on the Frankfurt – Poznań route.

On May 15, 1942, the outsettlement of the entire Jewish population of Brzeziny was ordered and took place the following day. As in many other towns, the outsettlement entailed ordering the entire population to gather at the town square where officers of the authorities – with the “help” of F. Ikka as well as other community representatives and various individuals – made selections and allocated people to their respective outsettlement transports. In this way, part of the population—mostly women, older men, and children – were deported in an unknown direction, and those remaining were sent to the Łódź ghetto. Once the outsettlement was completed, the remaining group of about 300 people – mostly men, including F. Ikka – were employed in the newly organized “workshop.”

It took an entire day for the outsettled to reach Łódź. Each of them was permitted to bring only small hand luggage with them. The personal belongings of Brzeziny residents were sent to the ghetto much later, arriving in such poor condition that they could not be delivered to the owners. All transported items were given to the Department for Special Affairs (vide Abteilung für Besondere Angelegenheiten). For a long time, Dr. Warhaft (vide) represented the residents of Brzeziny before the Eldest of the Jews.

Most of the newly deported were professional tailors, and as such they were employed in tailoring divisions, while some of them were given more responsible professional tasks.

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Resources

Encyclopedia, p. 42.

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