

March 20-25, 1942: First Transport

In early 1942, the Ministry of Interior sent the Bardejov district office the names of girls “subject to work duty.” On March 20, the Ministry ordered these girls transported to barracks in the concentration center of Poprad. The state police was called

in to assist the city police and guards. To facilitate the work of the state police, front doors of Jewish apartments in Bardejov were marked with a Jewish star the previous week, on March 15. In addition, District Commander Albert Lexmann on March 20 issued an edict forbidding Jews from leaving their houses so that family members could not interfere, assemble, or accompany the girls.

A guard was assigned to summon and oversee each Jewish girl. The girls had only one hour to prepare. Their luggage could not exceed 50 kg and had to be securely tied and labeled by first and last name. A summons for Anna Grossman from Andrejova specifies the following items: clothes—hat and cap, two suits (one for work), two pairs of shoes, one blanket, two towels, three sets of under garments; things for daily use—cup for eating, cutlery, cleaning products; and food for three days (FIG. 36). When their hour to prepare was up, the girls were escorted to the state police station where officials prepared detailed lists. Girls who, by feigning contagious illness or otherwise managed to elude their assigned guard and failed to appear at the assembly place, were labeled deserters (see sidebar).

Each girl had to carry her own luggage to the police station and subsequent gathering places. The municipal notary office was responsible for delivering the girls’ luggage to the railway station and for preparing the nearby Jewish school for the young Jewish women to spend the night.

The first passenger train was scheduled to leave Bardejov’s train station at 5:30 a.m. on March 21. The girls were guarded by a state police officer from the village of Kruzlov, two police officers from Bardejov, as well as twenty armed Hlinka Guards (FIG. 33).

394 Jewish women were identified for deportation from the Bardejov district. However, only 82 from the villages surrounding Bardejov were in fact delivered to the Poprad concentration camp, because an outbreak of typhoid—artificially induced as it turns out—indeinitely postponed the gathering of young Jewish women from Bardejov while the city was placed under quarantine to avoid further spread of the epidemic. Those who did arrive in Poprad stayed there for three nights before being transported on to Auschwitz on March 25.

OKRESNÝ ÚRAD v Bardejov

Císlo: M—Z: 306/42 praca/16/20

Pán — Pani

Anna Grossman, 1920
v *Andrejova*

Ministerstvo vnútra prikázalo Vám prácu podľa § 22 nariadenia číslo 198/1941 Sl. z.
Dostavte sa dňa 20. MRC. 1942 o 18 hod. na miesto žid. školy v Bardejove.

So sebou prineste:

a) šatstvo: klobúk alebo čiapku, dva obleky (jeden z nich pracovný), 2 páre obuvi, jednu prikrývku, 2 uteráky, 3 súpravy bielizne;

b) veci dennej potreby, šálku k jedeniu, príbor, čistiace potreby;

c) potraviny na tri dni.

Váha predmetov uvedených pod písm. a) a b) nesmie presahovať 50 kg.
Porušenie uvedených povinností sa trestá podľa príslušných platných predpisov.
Pri nastúpení práce preukážte sa týmto vyzvaním veliteľovi tábora.

Na stráž!
Okresný náčelník: *[Signature]*

Číslo: M—Z: 306/42 praca/16/20 Okresný úrad v Bardejove

DORUČENKA.

Podpísaný potvrdzujem, že som vyzvanie k nastúpeniu práce podľa § 22 nariadenia číslo 198/1941 Sl. z. dnešného dňa prevzal.

V _____ dňa _____ 1942.

Doručovateľ: _____ Vlastnoručný podpis: _____

Státna knižnica v Bratislave 438-2

FIGURE 36: Transport Summons for Anna Grossman of Andrejova, near Bardejov, March 20, 1942

April 7-10, 1942: Second Transport

In early April 1942, several incidents occurred in which local Hlinka Guards, under commander Mikulas Haluska, brutalized local youths, without direct orders from Bratislava. On one occasion, Hlinka Guards forced about 300 Jewish boys to sleep on the bare ground of the courtyard of the old brewery. The boys were refused food and were brutally beaten. Community President Rudolf Löwy strongly objected to this illegal treatment and the arbitrary actions of the local Hlinka Guard to the authorities in Bratislava. The young men were released by direct command from Bratislava, and also because there was yet another outbreak of typhoid, which necessitated an official quarantine to prevent its further spread.

The local Bardejov Hlinka Guards now took every opportunity to humiliate Löwy, including forcibly shaving his hair and beard. They also arrested him so that he could not disrupt the impending second deportation. Between April 7 and 10, a transport allocated to Jews aged 17 to 45 years left Bardejov railway station. Despite the official age designation, the deportees included 14-, 15- and 16-year old girls and people older than 45 years. This time, the deportees had less than an hour to prepare. State police officers were authorized to enter houses and forcibly take "summoned persons" into custody. Jews were gathered at the Jewish school and the Hotel Republika (FIG. 37). Patrols were deployed at the exits of the city and in the nearby village of Zborov and, once again, the movement of Jews in the streets was restricted. Police raids were conducted in the surrounding villages to catch individuals who had been declared deserters in the earlier transport.

Many young Jews hid, forcing Hlinka Guards to hunt for them. When these individuals were caught, they were treated ruthlessly. For example, when Alexander Friedmann was caught in an orchard, the local Hlinka Guard commander, Mikulas Haluska, broke his arm. As the deportees were marched through the town square, Haluska broadcast on the radio that all Bardejov Jews had to leave and played such well-known propaganda songs as "Kamarati, na straz" ("Friends, at the guard!")

While assembling the Jews for transport, mem-



FIGURE 37:
Hotel Republika, Bardejov

bers of the Hlinka Guard committed theft. Some amassed quite a fortune from this looting.

Approximately 275 men and 400 women were squeezed into cattle cars. The transport brought the unfortunates to Poprad and, from there, on April 22, 1942, most were deported to Auschwitz.

The Typhoid Rescue Plan

Rudolf Löwy, long-time president of the Bardejov Jewish community, was among the first to learn of the plan to deport young girls on the first trains. Distressed, he initially proposed that Jews gather gasoline and diesel fuel and burn the entire city, as if to meet the inimitable final words of the Biblical Samson quoted in the Book of Judges: "Let my soul die with the Philistines!" However, instead, he developed a unique rescue plan, untried elsewhere in Slovakia or in Europe. Taking advantage of the Germans' fear of contagious diseases, he secretly met with doctors Mikulas Atlas and Jakub Grosswirth and together they decided they would inoculate some Jewish girls from Bardejov with a double dose of anti-typhoid serum which Löwy secured from Kosice. The girls risked their health and the rescuers their lives.

The plan worked. The girls started showing signs of the disease and it looked like an epidemic had broken out in town. Predictably, the authorities quarantined Bardejov and imposed a compulsory revaccination of the population. More importantly, the "infected" girls were released from the Jewish school where they were held, and many of them used the opportunity to flee to Hungary or hide (FIG. 38).



FIGURE 38:
Refuel Rudolf Löwy,
President of Bardejov's
Jewish Community,
ca. 1942