

Chronology

1920

September 26. The National Assembly passes the law 1920: act XXV. on numerus clausus. The law states that students of "races and ethnicities" living in the country can only be accepted to universities and law schools within the frame numbers according to how they are proportionally represented in the country. At acceptance it is obligatory to practice points of "national faith and moral". During the parliamentary discussion of the law it was clear and obvious that the law has been created to limit the number of Jewish students, even if in the text of the law itself does not say a word about the Jews. The proportion of Jews in the country in 1920 was about 6% and in some universities the number of Jewish students was a lot higher. The restrictions of the law were suspended in 1928.

1938

May 29. The law 1938: act XV. is announced to "ensure a more effective balance of public life and economy" (so called first Anti-Jewish law). According to the law a maximum of 20% of the business and commercial employees and members of the press, lawyer, engineer and medical chamber may be Jewish. (Jewish is the person whose religion is Israelite).

1939

May 5. The law 1939: act IV. is announced on the "restriction of Jewish expansion in public life and economy" (so called second Anti-Jewish law). Jewish is the person, irrespective of religion, who has at least one parent or two grand parents who are of Jewish denomination. Jews may not be naturalized after this, moreover their citizenship may be revoked by the Minister of Interior Affairs if it dates from after 1st July 1914. Jews may not be employed in state and public institutions, they cannot be editors and publishers, may be elected up to 6% as member of the lawyers', medical engineer, press and theatre/cinematographic chambers, they cannot lead theatres and cinemas. They cannot receive any state monopolies or other licenses dependant on the permission of the authorities, the licenses already issued may be revoked within five years. From public hauling they can receive a share of up to 20% in 1939-40, up to 10% in 1941-42 and only up to 6% in 1943. They could receive industry clearances and permissions only within these and could be employed in private enterprises only up to a 12% ratio. The ratios, that also included the stipends of the employees, had to be reached by 31st December 1942. (Policy no. 7720/1939. M. E. orders the execution of the law).

1941

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April 19. Order no 2870/1941. M. E. is announced regarding the military service of persons regarded as Jews. The government order obligates Jewish men to armless subsidiary military and labour service.

June 26. Declaration of war between Hungary and the Soviet Union. At the Eastern front, within the second Hungarian army, Jews served on labour service, deprived of their uniforms, wearing yellow armband on their civilian clothes – about 50 000 people at the beginning of 1943. As a result of the cruel treatment and the demolition of the army, several thousand died at the Russian snow-fields.

July- August Jews “unable to verify their citizenship”, more than 18 000 people were deported from Zakarpattia Oblast via the collection camp at Kőrösmező to the area of the Ukrainian Kamenyec-Podolsky, already under German occupation at that time. The majority of the deportations is executed by the authorized Einsatzgruppe-C. Therefore the first mass murder of the Holocaust can be linked to the activity of the Hungarian authorities.

August 8. The law 1941: act XV. is announced regarding the modification of the marital law and the racial protection orders related to marriage (so called third Anti-Jewish law). The law introduces a compulsory medical examination prior to marriage. It prohibits marriage between Jews and non-Jews, declares it racial abuse and declares sexual relation between Jews and non-Jews outside marriage a penal offence. According to the law a person is to be regarded Jewish if he has at least two grandparents born as members of Israelite denomination and also who is a member of the Israelite denomination. Those who have two grandparents born as members of the Israelite denomination, is not to be regarded as Jew if he himself was born as member of a Christian denomination and remained so and at the time of their nuptials both of his parents were members of Christian denominations. Nevertheless, these persons were forbidden to marry not only Jews but also Jews who had one of two grandparents born as members of the Israelite denomination.

1942

January 2. Carl Lutz and his wife arrive to Budapest and start his work at the Embassy of Switzerland.

March Initiated by the Palestinian Jewish Agency, the Swiss Embassy starts issuing protective passports. Krausz Miklós, the Hungarian representative of the agency, founds the Palestina Office and referring to the British immigration quotas of 1939, first listed the children fled to Hungary from other countries so that they would be issued passports at the Swiss Consulate to emigrate. (Switzerland was the representative of “foreign interests” in Palestine which counted as British mandate territory). Carl Lutz joined this activity. Later on the lists became collective passports, protective letters (schutzbrief). The operation served as an example for several other embassies and became the most common form of rescue operations by 1944.

July 19. The law 1942: act VIII. is announced to regulate the legal standing of the Israelite denomination. The law suspends act 1895:XLII which declared the Israelite as an established denomination. The Israelite religion becomes a “recognized” religion only, as it was between 1867-95.

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September 6. The law 1942: act is XV. announced regarding the usage of the field and forest agricultural properties of Jews.

1943

For German request several Jewish labour service units are handed over to the German Todt-organisation, which organized forced labour in the Nazi Empire. Most of those handed over worked at the copper mines at Bor and at the building of the Bor-Zagubia railway that would serve it (about 6000 people). Most of these died at the retreat in October 1944, including Radnóti Miklós (Hungarian poet).

1944

March 19. The German army occupies Hungary. The leader of the Ministry of Interior Affairs becomes the extreme-right Jaross Ador. His under-secretaries are Baky László and Endre László, both hating Jews extremely, who on the 22nd of March liaise about the deportation of Jews with Eichmann and Kaltenbrunner who come to Hungary. At this point, there is a bigger Jewish community, saved from deportation only in Hungary in whole Europe which is occupied by the Nazis.

March 31. Order no. 1210/1944. M. E. is announced regarding the abolishment of public service and public commission of Jews, as well as the abolishment of their work as lawyers. Jews may not serve the state, authorities, the community, any other public board, public foundation, public institution or public factories as representatives or other employees. Those employed in such positions have to retire or have to be laid off. Jews cannot be notaries, notarized interpreters, court or any other official expert. Jews cannot enter the lawyer's chamber; all Jewish lawyers included in the registry of the chamber have to be removed by 31st May 1944.

Order no. 1220/1944. M. E. is announced regarding the abolishment of the membership of Jews in the press, theatre and film arts chambers. Jews have to be removed from these chambers by 30th April 1944. The publishers, editor and an absolutely necessary number of employees with indefinite work contract of any newspapers serving exclusively denominational purposes (and stating this clearly in the title of the paper) do not fall under this order. These Jewish chamber members cannot participate in the self-government of the press chamber but the orders regarding the responsibilities and obligations of the members also concern them.

According to the order no. 1230/1944. M. E. all vehicles owned by Jews have to be reported. The license plate number, storage location and number of tires of passenger and freight cars and motorcycles must be reported in writing by 8th April 1944.

April 5. Order no.1240/1944. M. E. regarding the distinctive sign of Jews. All Jews above the age of 6 must wear on the left side of their top garment a clearly visible "canary yellow" hexagram made of a piece of 10x10 centimeters textile, silk or velvet.

April 7. The Ministry of Internal Affairs issues the secret order no. 6163. regarding the "usage of the flats of the Jews and the assignment of new places of residence". The citizens who fall under the order could only bring "the clothes they are wearing, up to two sets of underwear and 14 days of food, as well as a maximum 50 kg luggage". According to the order all Jews have to be

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transported to collection camps irrespectively of sex and age. The only exceptions were those employed in factories of military importance, in mines, in bigger enterprises or by landowners and whose immediate removal would impede production at these places.

April 16. Ghettos are started at Zakarpattia Oblast – over the course of one month it is completed in the whole country..

April 25. Order no. 1540/1944. M. E. abolishes the employment of Jews in white collar positions..

April 28. Order no. 1610/1944. M. E. regulates the assignment of flats and places of residence for Jews. The order also takes measures regarding the usage of Jewish homes. At settlements with less than 10 000 residents, based on the ruling of the head of authorities, Jews must a move to other towns or cities within a set time period. Elsewhere, Jews can only live in certain designated areas, streets or houses of the settlement.

May 15. Deportations start in the gendarmerie district of Kosice after which over the course of 56 days 437 402 Hungarian Jews are deported from Hungary by the gendarmerie, going from East to West according to gendarmerie districts – this happens with the effective help of the Hungarian state authorities.

During the ghettoisation and deportation of the country Jews there were no widespread rescue operations. By the end of the period, several people spoke, on behalf of the churches, for the ending of deportations at Horthy - primarily for the interest of Jews converted to Christianity .

June 15. The mayor of Budapest issues his note no. 523.926/1944. XXI. about the yellow starred houses. Out of the 36000 houses in Budapest, 2681 are declared as starred houses, 700 of which are deleted for various reasons. The approximately 150.000 Jews living in Budapest are forced to move into these houses.

July 6. Horthy Miklós stops the deportations. Eichmann leaves the country, Endre László and Baký László are removed from their positions.

July 9. Wallenberg arrives in Budapest and takes up his post as secretary at the Swedish Legation. (The last wagons transporting the deported from the countryside cross the Hungarian border on this day.)

End of September Fights are already at the Trianon territories.

October 15. After the unsuccessful attempt to cease to fight, the Germans help the Arrow Cross to come into power, led by Szálasi Ferenc.

A comprehensive rescue operation unfolds to rescue the Jewry of Budapest. Wallenberg and Carl Lutz issue several thousands of protection letters. The rescue operation is joined by the churches of Hungary, by individuals, by the Red Cross, by Giorgio Perlasca who takes over the leading of the Spanish Embassy, by pontifical nuncius Angelo Rotta and by many others. Wallenberg is one of the most active organizers of the rescue operations. The approximately 30 houses of the international ghetto belong to him, he rescues several people from death marches.

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From 21st October 1944, following the request of the minister without portfolio, entrusted with the total mobilization of the nation, all men between the age of 16 and 60 and women between the age of 16 and 40 who are capable of labour, obliged to wear the yellow star and living in houses marked as Jewish, are sent to labour service for military purposes.

As a consequence of the personal intervention of Angelo Rotta pontifical nuncius, Szálasi recognizes the protection passports trusting the recognition of neutral states.

November 3. According to order no. 3840/1944. M. E. all assets of Jews are transferred to the state as national assets. The order extends the effect of order no. 1600/1944. M E. to properties, stock and trusts and takes measures regarding the control and usage of assets that are transferred to the state.

November 6. death marches begin. Several thousands of people are sent towards Győr-Kőszeg.

November 19. Order about 6 categories of Jews. The categories are as follows: 1. those with foreign protection letters, 2. Jews "lent" to Germany, 3. Jews in ghettos, 4. exempt Jews, 5. Christian clergymen of Jewish origins, 6. foreign citizens of Jewish race.

For those in the first category an international "protected" ghetto is established in the neighbourhood of Szent István Park- Pozsonyi street.

November 29. The order of the Minister of Interior Affairs is published about the establishment of a "great" ghetto at Budapest. The Jews living at Budapest obliged to wear yellow stars must move to an approximately 0.3 km² big area within the borders of Dohány-Király-Rumbach Sebestény-Nagyatádi Szabó (today Kertész str.)- Madách streets. The non-Jews living here are relocated. The ghetto is surrounded with planks and the four gates are closed on the 10th of December.

On 25th December the Soviet ring around Budapest closes. The siege of the city starts.

1945

January 13. The Russians take over the office of the International Red Cross (Benczúr street) with the leadership of a Russian major. According to eye witnesses it is from here that Wallenberg voluntarily follows a soldier calling him to do so. From this time Wallenberg was therefore in the captivity of the Soviet army. The exact date and location of his death is unknown.

January 18. The end of the siege of Pest. This is the day of the liberation of the great ghetto of Budapest.

February 13. The siege of Budapest ends.

First half of April The military operations of the Second World War come to an end at Hungary.