

From the Testimony Of Ludwig Weiler Describing The Establishment of The Ghetto in Sopron

A: Well, really the problems started in March, 1944. I remember it was a Sunday morning. I was looking out the window from our house and I saw the Germans coming in. It was nothing so tragic because we'd seen the German army going through the town when they went to Yugoslavia. We have seen them a number of times. You know, they just drove through there as if it was their own country, but very shortly in the morning we knew that they came in and literally in the first few days we didn't notice very much, but then they appointed a "Judenrat" and then they started with the yellow star and sort of...They arrested the first people like my uncle immediately.

Q: Was that the Germans, the Wehrmacht?

A : No, no. The system was different. The Germans came in. The Gestapo straight away established one particular property. And nowadays I always call it, when people move into the houses and they demolish it and they rebuild it and put in new stuff where it was quite good before, it was like the Gestapo. And obviously they got the carpets from the Jewish carpet people, from the workmen everything and they took a very beautiful villa and that's where they established their headquarters. Now, it was done by proxy. It wasn't like in Poland that they came shooting and pushing and shoving people. No, no, no, we didn't see anything of the sort. All you saw on the street was four Germans in a sort of line - that was the Wehrmacht I suppose - were marching down the street, up and down like... you know, if you like to call it an occupying force. But the system started coming into operation by the fact that they started having lists of the Jews. They appointed a "Judenrat" who then were told what to do. And the Hungarian police was reasonably okay, but there was the gendarmerie. That was the police parallel to the police which were dealing more in the countryside. They were not in the cities. And they were the real nasty Nazis. And they were given the jobs to do. In actual fact, I cannot recall ever having seen a German soldier near the ghetto - it was all Hungarians.

They were very happy accomplices to do the job and in actual fact, they organized two ghettos in town - one was at "Oyuca" which is the old centre part of Sopron - that's where this museum which I told you is - and then there was another area around the shul which was a little bit on the other side of town, so there were two areas. Ghettos they put up large...round the other place because that was more a bit of an open area in some streets so they put up very huge boardings, you know, high fences, wooden fences. In the one which was in the centre of town where we were, they just put a metal chain on two ends and there was a guard there and that was that. But we were taken in only there, I would say, probably six, eight weeks after the Germans came in, not immediately. They took its time till, it was even more. I would say approximately two months afterwards. And then every family got a room. We were four of us in one room in one of these older places, and then in the properties where Jews lived like in our house they put in these "Volksdeutsche", you know, they allocated, they gave it out.

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