

# THERESIENSTADT

Theresienstadt was a concentration camp and ghetto located in the town of Terezin, Czechoslovakia, approximately 60 kilometres north of Prague. In addition to serving as a transit camp for Jews from Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany, it also functioned as a “model settlement” to influence international public opinion regarding the Nazi treatment of Jews.

In July 1943, in anticipation of a visit from the International Red Cross inspection committee, the Nazis increased deportations to reduce the ghetto’s population. They also constructed a false ghetto environment, with fake stores, flower gardens, a café, a bank and a school. The Nazis succeeded in deceiving the Red Cross and, once the inspection was complete, the poor living conditions resumed.

By the end of 1943, reports had begun to surface about the Nazi death camps, and Theresienstadt served as propaganda to mask the truth. To this end, Theresienstadt was used as the subject for a Nazi propaganda film showing how the Jews were leading new lives under the protection of the Third Reich.

In reality, however, the ghetto was overcrowded with people suffering from disease and malnutrition. In 1942, the death rate among deportees was so high that a crematorium was built within the camp to dispose of the overwhelming number of bodies.

Between November 1941 and April 1945, roughly 33,000 Jews died of hunger or disease in Theresienstadt, while another 88,000 inmates were deported to extermination camps.