

The Expulsion of the Jews from Prague by Maria Theresa (1744)

Abstract

Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780) ruled over the diverse Habsburg lands from 1740. Her possessions included (among others) Austria, Hungary, the Balkan territories, and regions in northern Italy. Her subjects included Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, and Jews. This decree from 1744 commanded the expulsion of Jews from Bohemia, the territory that included the city of Prague. Similar expulsions of Protestants also took place.

Source

Her Royal Highness, our most gracious Mistress Empress Maria Theresa, did for several extremely cogent reasons on the 18th and today the 22nd of December of the year 1744, which is fast coming to a close, pass the supreme decree that no more Jews will be tolerated in the patrimonial kingdom^[1] of Bohemia in the future.

First: On the last day of January of the coming year 1745 no Jew is to be within the royal city of Prague; should the contrary be the case, he will be removed by the military.

2) In order that they can dispose of their possessions and articles that cannot be removed by the last day of January, ...they will be permitted to remain in the kingdom for six months from the end of the present month of December, i.e., until the next month of June, 1745, so that after they leave Prague and go into the country, they can, with a permit from the graciously appointed enforcement commissioner, His Excellency Count Phil. V. Kolowrat, be admitted into the city of Prague by day, but are absolutely forbidden to stay a single night.

3) After those six months have passed, however, all Jews shall leave the entire kingdom of Bohemia and shall be found nowhere within its borders in [the] future; otherwise, as already stated, they will be removed by the military. This evacuation of the whole land is to be understood to refer and be extended not only to Prague Jews but likewise to the whole land, so that on that day no Jews will be found in the kingdom any more, and none shall settle in any dominion of Her Royal Majesty. It is the duty of all Jews as well as those who have any contact with them to adhere strictly to this.

Issued in the royal castle of Prague on the 22nd [of] December in the year of Our Lord 1744.

NOTES

^[1] Bohemia and Moravia were inherited in the Habsburg Empire, in this case by Maria Theresa from her father Charles VI.

Source: Wilma Abeles Iggers, ed., *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, pp. 31–32.

Source of original German text: Markus Hirsch Friedländer, ed., *Materialien zur Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen*. Brünn: Verlag von Bernhard Epstein, 1888, pp. 67–69. Available online at:

<https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/freimann/content/pageview/629694>

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