

Eichmann Informs the Jews on Deportations From Austria and on the Theresienstadt Ghetto

Vienna, June 1, 1942

Memorandum on the visit to the Reich Security Main Office, Reich Ministry of the Interior, Department IV B 4, on Friday, May 29, 1942, at 10:30 A.M. and to SS *Obersturmbannfuehrer* Eichmann on Saturday, May 30, 1942, at 12:00 noon at the same office.

1. In accordance with an order received I reported to the Reich Security Main Office, Dept. IV B 4, on May 29, 1942, together with Dr. Benjamin Israel Murelstein, the six members of the Presidium of the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden* in Berlin: Baeck, Eppstein, Henschel, Kozower, Kreindler and Lilienthal, as well as the two representatives of the Jewish Community of Prague: Janovic and Friedmann. There we were informed that in connection with a sabotage attack on the exhibition "The Soviet Paradise" in Berlin, in which five Jews had been actively involved, 500 Jews had been arrested in Berlin and of these 250 had been shot and 250 sent to a camp. We were further informed that additional measures of this kind were to be expected in the event of any other act of sabotage in which Jews took part.

An instruction was given that this position was to be made known to the Jews in a suitable manner in order to make clear to them what the result of such acts would be.

2. During the visit to SS *Obersturmbannfuehrer* Eichmann I reported on the situation in Vienna, the position [reached] by the emigration transports, the probable number of Jews over 65, who were to be taken to Theresienstadt for permanent residence, as well as on financial questions.

SS *Obersturmbannfuehrer* Eichmann informed me that the total evacuation of the Jews was planned from the *Altreich* [Germany before 1938], the *Ostmark* [Austria] and the Protectorate. Jews under 65 years old would emigrate to the East, and those over 65, as well as some groups of those under 65, such as men seriously disabled in

the War, and those who received medals in the World War, etc., would be sent to Theresienstadt for permanent residence.

In accordance with the Regulation of February 16, 1942, the Czechs living in Theresienstadt must leave the locality by May 31, 1942, so that the entire area of the city will be available for the Jews. After this a start will be made on transporting the Jews designated for permanent residence there. The administration of the city is to be carried out independently by the Council of Jewish Elders (*Judenaeltestenrat*). In addition to the old people, several thousand young people are to remain there in order to carry out necessary work in the city and countryside (about 640 (?) acres of land are available) and to look after the old people.

Institutions necessary for the maintenance of the Jews are also to be set up or, where possible, existing institutions will be enlarged. According to the instructions of the Council of Elders the Jews will be accommodated partly in the existing large barracks, or privately in the houses. A part will be catered for in communal kitchens, and a part privately. In addition to personal luggage of up to 50 kgs. per person, a large quantity of equipment and furniture for apartments and dormitories, as well as tools, are to be sent to Theresienstadt. The number of items of this type will be decided on each occasion by the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, in accordance with the freight cars available.

Special importance will be accorded to the provision and maintenance of sanitary installations. Good doctors and nurses will go to Theresienstadt to look after the health of the Jews and, in particular, to prevent epidemics. This will also to a large extent be the task of the Council of Elders.

The financial maintenance of the Jewish population settled in Theresienstadt will be provided by the funds of the three organizations, the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Berlin, and the Jewish Communities of Vienna and Prague. These organizations in general have considerable funds at their disposal.

The budget will be decided in accordance with requirements for certain periods at a time, and the necessary sum made available to the Council of Elders in Theresienstadt. The capacity of Theresienstadt to accommodate Jews is quite large. When I was asked how many Jews from Vienna might be considered for Theresienstadt, I named a figure of about 12,000 persons; SS *Obersturmbannfuhrer* Eichmann declared that the number of Jews from Vienna could be settled there.

I pointed out that a total evacuation of Jews from Vienna was scarcely possible, because as a result of the large-scale emigration and the unusually high age of the remaining population there is a disproportionate number of aged and sick persons, who must be considered as incapable of traveling. In any case a fairly large number of Jews will remain in Vienna owing to the exclusion from deportation of [members of] Jewish mixed marriages.

I also asked that a part of the Jews designated for emigration, particularly the children at present in youth and children's homes, who are under my care as guardian of orphans, should be sent to Warsaw with the personnel looking after them, because I could then be sure that they will receive the proper care and attention in a large Jewish center.

SS *Obersturmbannfuhrer* Eichmann declared that the destination for emigration was decided together with departments of the Wehrmacht, and that it was not possible to say in advance where the transports would go; he would see what could be done in this matter.

signed Dr. Josef Israel Loewenherz

General Director and Head of the Jewish Community, Vienna

Source: Yad Vashem Archives, TR-3/1156.