

Letter Describing the Deportation To Zbaszyn,* December 1938

My dear ones!

You have probably already heard of my fate from Cilli. On October 27 of this year, on a Thursday evening at 9 o'clock, two men came from the Crime Police, demanded my passport, and then placed a deportation document before me to sign and ordered me to accompany them immediately. Cilli and Bernd were already in bed. I had just finished my work and was sitting down to eat, but had to get dressed immediately and go with them. I was so upset I could scarcely speak a word. In all my life I will never forget this moment. I was then immediately locked up in the Castle prison like a criminal. It was a bad night for me. On Friday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon we were taken to the main station under strict guard by Police and SS. Everybody was given two loaves of bread and margarine and was then loaded on the freight cars. It was a cruel picture. Weeping women and children, heart-breaking scenes. We were then taken to the border in sealed cars and under the strictest police guard. When we reached the border at 5 o'clock on Saturday afternoon we were put across. A new terrible scene was revealed here. We spent three days on the platform and in the waiting rooms, 8,000 people. Women and children fainted, went mad, people died, faces as yellow as wax. It was like a cemetery full of dead people. I was also among those who fainted. There was nothing to eat except the dry prison bread, without anything to drink. I never slept at all, for two nights on the platform and one in the waiting room, where I collapsed. There was no room even to stand. The air was pestilential. Women and children were half dead. On the fourth day help at last arrived. Doctors, nurses with medicine, butter and bread from the Jewish Committee in Warsaw. Then we were taken to barracks (military stables) where there was straw on the floor on which we could lie down....

H.J. Fliedner, *Die Judenverfolgung in Mannheim 1933-1945* ("The Persecution of the Jews in Mannheim 1933-1945"), II, Stuttgart, 1971, pp. 72-73.

This was the first deportation of Jews from Germany on October 27 and 28, 1938, which involved Jews holding Polish nationality. The Poles refused to allow the Jews to enter Poland, and they were concentrated near the border city of Zbaszyn.

From : ***Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union***, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1981, Document no.55