

Report by Police officer Salitter, who commanded the guards on the transport deporting Jews from Duesseldorf to Riga 11 December 1941¹.

Duesseldorf, 26 December 1941 Confidential Report about the evacuation of Jews to Riga ...11 - 17 November 1941. The Jew transport planned for 11 December 1941 included 1,007 Jews from the towns of Duisburg, Krefeld and several smaller towns and communities of the industrial areas of Rhineland and Westfalia. Duesseldorf was represented only by 19 Jews. The transport was compiled of Jews of both sexes, of various ages – from babies to 65-year-olds. Departure of the transport was planned for 9:30. The Jews were therefore brought to the loading ramp already ready to board at 4:00 a.m. However, the Reichsbahn could not have the train ready so early, allegedly due to lack of personnel, and the loading of the Jews began only at 9:00 a.m. The loading was carried out in great haste, as the Reichsbahn insisted that the train must depart on time. It is therefore no surprise that some cars were overloaded (60-65 persons) while others had only 35-40 passengers. These circumstances caused problems throughout the entire trip to Riga, since single Jews attempted repeatedly to get into the less crowded cars. As much as time permitted, I then allowed, in some cases, to make changes, as there were also mothers who had been separated from their children. On the way from the slaughter house yard to the platform, a male Jew attempted to commit suicide by throwing himself in front of the street-car. But he was caught by the street car's bumper and only slightly injured. He recovered during the trip, and realized that he could not avoid sharing the fate of the evacuees. An elderly Jewish woman walked away from the platform without anyone noticing – it was raining and it was very dark – entered a neighboring house, took off her clothes and sat on a toilet. However a cleaning woman noticed her and she too was led back to the transport. ...The loading of the

¹ See also Deportation to Riga -- testimony of Hilde Sherman who was deported with the same transport.

train ended at 10:15 and...the train left the Duesseldorf-Derendorf station at about 10:30.... Due to a faulty heating system, the steam pressure did not reach the last cars of the train. Because of the cold, the guard squad's clothing did not dry. (It rained during the entire transport). Thus I had to deal with guards who could not stand duty because of illness.... [The train arrived in Lithuania on 12 December] Normally the train ride from this point to Riga would take 14 hours, but as there was only one rail track and our train had only second priority, the voyage was often held up for long periods of time.... We reached Mittau in Latvia at 19:30 [13 December]. It was frosty and snow was falling. We arrived in Riga at 21:50. The train was kept at the station for one and a half hours.... The train stood there without heat. The temperature outside was minus 12 centigrade.... At 1:45 a.m., we turned the train over and six Latvian guards were charged with watching the train. Because it was past midnight, dark and the platform was covered with a thick layer of ice, it was decided to transfer the Jews to the Sarnel ghetto only on Sunday morning....

Conclusions: The provisions [for the guards] were good and sufficient. the fact that the men were supplied with two blankets, cooking utensils and field stoves, warm clothing, furs and warm boots, proved to be very useful and is to be recommended for future transports. the pistols and ammunition provided were sufficient as there is danger of attacks by partisans in Lithuania and Latvia.... the two search lights served their purpose well.... the assistance of the Red Cross is commendable... In order to supply the Jews with water, it is essential that the Gestapo get in touch with the Reichsbahn and coordinate one hour stops every day at a railway station in the Reich. Because of the time table, the Reichsbahn was reluctant to comply with the transport commander's wishes. The Jews are usually on the road for 14 hours or more before the transport leaves and have used up all the drinks they had taken with them. When they are not provided with water during the trip, they try, in spite of the prohibition, to leave the train at every possible spot or ask others to get them water. It is also essential that the Reichsbahn prepare the trains at least 3-4 hours ahead of departure, so that the loading of the Jews and their belongings can be conducted in an orderly fashion. The Gestapo has to make sure that the Reichsbahn place the car for the guard detachment at the center

of the train.... This is essential for the supervision of the transport.... During extreme cold, one should make sure that the heating of the train functions. The men in the guard squad gave me no reason to complain. With the exception of the fact that I had to prompt some of them to act more energetically against Jews who wanted to disobey my orders, they all behaved well and fulfilled their duty well. There were no incidents of disease or any other troubles. Signed: Salitter, Hauptmann of the Schupo

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