

Secret Reich Matter!

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Protocol of Meeting.

I. The following persons participated in the meeting on the final solution of the Jewish question, held on 20 January 1942 at Am Grossen Wannsee 56-58, Berlin:

Gauleiter Dr Meyer and

Reich Department Head Dr Leibbrandt

Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories

State Secretary Dr Stuckart

Reich Ministry of the Interior

State Secretary Neumann

Office of the Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan

State Secretary Dr Freisler

Reich Ministry of Justice

State Secretary Dr Bühler

Office of the Governor General

Undersecretary of State Luther

Foreign Office

SS-Oberführer Klopfer

Party Chancellery

Ministerial Director Kritzinger

Reich Chancellery

SS-Gruppenführer Hofmann

Race and Settlement Main Office

SS-Gruppenführer Müller

Reich Security Main Office

SS-Obersturmbannführer Eichmann

SS-Oberführer Dr Schöngarth

Security Police and Security Service of the SS (SD)

Commander of the Security

Police and the Security Service of the SS (SD)

in the General Government

SS-Sturmbannführer Dr Lange

Security Police and Security Service of the SS (SD)

Commander of the Security Police

and Security Service of the SS (SD) for the

General District Latvia, representing

the Commander of the Security Police

and the Security Service of the SS (SD)

for the Reich Commissariat Ostland.

II. SS-Obergruppenführer H e y d r i c h , Head of the Security Police and the SD, opened the meeting with the announcement that the Reich Marshal had put him in charge of preparations for the final solution of the Jewish question. He noted that this conference had been convened to clarify fundamental questions.

The Reich Marshal's request to be sent a draft regarding the organisational, technical and material aspects of the final solution of the Jewish question requires that all of the central agencies directly involved with these questions address them jointly in advance in order to align their activities.

The authority for directing the final solution of the Jewish question rests with the Reichsführer SS and Head of German Police (Office of the Head of the Security Police and the SD), regardless of geographical boundaries.

The Head of the Security Police and the SD then gave a brief review of the struggle conducted so far against this foe. The most important elements are:

- a) forcing the Jews out of the various spheres of life [*Lebensgebiete*] of the German people,
- b) forcing the Jews out of the living space [*Lebensraum*] of the German people.

In pursuit of these endeavours, an intensified and planned effort was made to accelerate the emigration of Jews from the Reich, as the only provisional solution available.

By order of the Reich Marshal, a Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration was established in January 1939; its direction was entrusted to the Head of the Security Police and the SD. Its particular tasks were

- a) to take all measures for the preparation of increased emigration of the Jews;
- b) to direct the flow of emigration;
- c) to speed up emigration in individual cases.

The aim of this task was to cleanse German living space of Jews by legal means.

The disadvantages of such forced emigration methods were evident to all agencies concerned. Yet in the absence of other feasible solutions they had to put up with them for the time being.

In the period that followed, the handling of emigration was not a German problem alone, but one that had to be addressed by the relevant authorities of the destination or immigration countries too. Financial difficulties such as the increases ordered by the governments of various foreign countries in the financial means emigrants had to show upon landing and in landing fees, a lack of berths on ships, and constantly tightening restrictions and bans on immigration, all posed an extraordinary hindrance to efforts to emigrate. Yet despite these difficulties, a total of around 537,000 Jews were induced to emigrate between the [Nazi] assumption of power and the cutoff date of 31 October 1941. Of these,

from 30.1.1933	from the Altreich [Germany before 1938]	approx. 360,000
from 15.3.1938	from the Ostmark [Austria]	approx. 147,000
from 15.3.1939	from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia	approx. 30,000.

Emigration was financed by the Jews or the Jewish political organisations themselves. In order to make sure that the proletarianised Jews would not stay behind, it was determined that affluent Jews had to finance the emigration of Jews without means; to this end, a contribution or emigration tax based on individual wealth, was imposed, the proceeds being used to meet the financial obligations incurred in the emigration of destitute Jews.

In addition to this levy in Reichsmarks, foreign currency was required as evidence of means to be presented upon arrival abroad and to pay landing fees. In order to conserve German foreign currency reserves, Jewish financial institutions abroad were called upon by Jewish organisations in this country to arrange for the provision of the required sums in foreign currency. Up to 30 October 1941, a total of about \$ 9,500,000 all told was provided in this way by these foreign Jews as gifts.

In the meantime, the Reichsführer SS and Head of the German Police has forbidden any further emigration of Jews in view of the dangers posed by emigration in wartime and in view of the possibilities in the East.

III With appropriate prior authorisation from the Führer, emigration has now been replaced by evacuation of the Jews to the East as another possible solution.

However, these operations should be regarded only as provisional options, though they are already supplying practical experience of vital importance in view of the coming final solution of the Jewish question.

In the course of this final solution of the Jewish question, roughly eleven million Jews will be taken into consideration. They are distributed over the individual countries as follows:

Country		Number
A.	Altreich [Germany before 1938]	131,800
	Ostmark [Austria]	43,700
	Eastern Territories	420,000
	General Government	2,284,000
	Bialystok	400,000
	Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia	74,200
	Estonia - free of Jews -	
	Latvia	3,500
	Lithuania	34,000
	Belgium	43,000
	Denmark	5,600
	France / Occupied territory	165,000
	Unoccupied territory	700,000
	Greece	69,600
	Netherlands	160,800
	Norway	1,300
B.	Bulgaria	48,000
	England	330,000
	Finland	2,300
	Ireland	4,000
	Italy, including Sardinia	58,000
	Albania	200
	Croatia	40,000
	Portugal	3,000
	Romania, including Bessarabia	342,000
	Sweden	8,000
	Switzerland	18,000
	Serbia	10,000
	Slovakia	88,000
	Spain	6,000
	Turkey (European part)	55,500
	Hungary	742,800
	USSR	5,000,000
	Ukraine	2,994,684
	Belorussia, without	
	Bialystok	446,484
Total:		more than 11,000,000

The figures listed here for Jews in the different countries, however, pertain only to those who are of Jewish faith [*Glaubensjuden*] as definitions of Jews along racial lines are still lacking there to a certain extent. Given the prevailing attitudes and opinions, the handling of the problem in the individual countries will encounter certain difficulties, particularly in Hungary and Romania. For instance, even today the Jew in Romania can still obtain for cash the appropriate documents that certify officially that he is of foreign nationality.

The influence that Jews exert throughout the USSR is well known. Approximately five million Jews live in the European part of Russia, barely a quarter of a million in the Asian part.

The distribution by occupation of Jews living in the European part of the USSR was roughly as follows:

Agriculture	9.1 %
Urban workers	14.8 %
Trade	20.0 %
State employees	23.4 %
Private occupations, medicine, press, theatre, etc.	32.7 %

In the course of the final solution, and under appropriate supervision, the Jews are to be utilised for work in the East in a suitable manner. In large labour columns, separated by sex, the Jews capable of working will be dispatched to these regions to build roads. In the process, a large portion will undoubtedly drop out through natural reduction.

Those who ultimately should possibly get by will have to be given suitable treatment because they unquestionable represent the most resistant part and therefore constitute a natural selection that, if released, become the germ cell of renewed Jewish revival.

(Witness the experience of history.)

In the course of the practical implementation of the final solution, Europe will be combed through from West to East. Priority will have to be given to the territory of the Reich, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, if only because of the housing issue and other socio-political needs.

The evacuated Jews will first be taken, group by group, to so-called transit ghettos, from where they will be transported onwards to the East.

As SS-Obergruppenführer H e y d r i c h pointed out in addition, an important prerequisite for carrying out the evacuation at all is a precise definition of the persons under consideration.

The intention is not to evacuate Jews over the age of 65, but to transfer them to an old-people's ghetto – Theresienstadt has been earmarked for this purpose.

In addition to these age groups – of the 280,000 Jews living in the Altreich and the Ostmark on 31 October 1941, some 30 % are over 65 – the old-people's ghetto will continue to receive severely war disabled Jews and Jews with war decorations (Iron Cross First Class). This

expedient solution will eliminate the many interventions at a stroke.

The start of the individual larger evacuation operations will depend to a great extent on military developments. With regard to the manner in which the final solution will be carried out in those European territories which we now either occupy or influence, it has been suggested that the pertinent specialists in the Foreign Office should confer with the responsible official of the Security Police and the SD.

In Slovakia and Croatia the situation is no longer all that difficult since the most essential key questions in this respect have already been resolved there. In the meantime, the Romanian government has likewise appointed a commissioner for Jewish affairs. In order to settle the matter in Hungary, in the near future it will be necessary to impose an adviser for Jewish questions on the Hungarian government.

With regard to the beginning of preparations for a settlement of this problem in Italy, SS-Obergruppenführer H e y d r i c h considers it appropriate to establish contact with the Head of Police regarding these matters.

In occupied and unoccupied France, the registration of Jews for evacuation will – in all likelihood – be able to proceed without major difficulties.

Regarding this issue, Undersecretary of State L u t h e r remarked that the thorough treatment of this problem will cause difficulties in some countries, notably the Nordic states, and that it is therefore advisable to defer action in these countries

for the time being. Given the insignificant number of Jews involved there, such a postponement will in any case not amount to any substantial curtailment.

By contrast, the Foreign Office foresees no major difficulties in South-Eastern and Western Europe.

SS-Gruppenführer H o f m a n n intends to send a specialist from the Race and Settlement Main Office to Hungary for general orientation when the Head of the Security Police and the SD begins tackling the matter over there. It was decided that this specialist from the Race and Settlement Main Office – who is not to become actively involved – be officially assigned as an assistant to the Police Attaché on a temporary basis.

IV. For the implementation of the final solution, the Nuremberg Laws should form the basis to a certain extent, though the solution to issues pertaining to mixed marriages and *Mischlinge* is also a prerequisite for clearing up the problem completely.

With reference to a letter from the Head of the Reich Chancellery, the Head of the Security Police and the SD thereupon discussed – for the moment still theoretically – the following issues:

1) Treatment of first-degree *Mischlinge* [persons of Jewish and Non-Jewish parents/grandparents]

First-degree *Mischlinge* will be treated as Jews in regard to the final solution of the Jewish question.

The following will be exempt from this treatment:

a) First-degree *Mischlinge* married to persons of pure German blood, if the marriage has resulted in children (second-degree *Mischlinge*). These second-degree *Mischlinge* will essentially be treated as Germans.

b) First-degree *Mischlinge* who have up to now been granted exemptions in some selected spheres of life by the highest authorities of Party and state. Each individual case must be reviewed, whereby the possibility cannot be ruled out that the new decision may be again to the *Mischling's* disadvantage.

The prerequisites for granting any exemption must always be the fundamental merit of the *Mischling* in question himself. (The merits of the German-blooded parent or spouse do not count). Any first-degree *Mischling* to be exempted from evacuation will be sterilised in order to prevent any progeny and to settle the *Mischling* problem once and for all. Sterilisation will be voluntary, but it is the precondition for remaining in the Reich. The sterilised "*Mischling*" will henceforth be exempt from all restrictive provisions to which he was previously subjected.

2) Treatment of second-degree *Mischlinge*

Second-degree *Mischlinge* will be treated in principle as persons of German blood, except in the following instances when second-degree *Mischlinge* will be treated as Jews:

- a) The second-degree *Mischling* is the descendent of a bastard marriage (both spouses being *Mischlinge*).
- b) The racial appearance of a second-degree *Mischling* is particularly unfavourable, in which case he will be classed with the Jews already based on his external appearance.
- c) A particularly negative police and political assessment of the second-degree *Mischling*, indicating that he feels and behaves like a Jew.

Even in such cases, no exceptions are to be made if the second-degree *Mischling* is married to a person of German blood.

3) Marriages between full Jews and persons of German blood

Here it must be decided on a case by case basis whether the Jewish spouse should be evacuated or, taking into account the effect of such a measure on the German relatives of these mixed marriages, be transferred to an old-people's ghetto.

4) Marriages between first-degree *Mischlinge* and persons of German blood

- a) No children

If the marriage has remained childless, the first-degree *Mischling* will be evacuated or transferred to an old-people's ghetto. (The same treatment as in marriages between full Jews and persons of German blood; point 3)

b) With children

If children have resulted from the marriage (second-degree *Mischlinge*), they will, if they are to be treated as Jews, be evacuated or sent to a ghetto along with the first-degree *Mischling*. If these children are to be treated as Germans (standard cases), they are exempted from evacuation, as is therefore the first-degree *Mischling*.

5) Marriages between first-degree *Mischlinge* and first-degree *Mischlinge* or Jews

In these marriages, all parties (including children) will be treated as Jews and therefore evacuated or transferred to an old-people's ghetto.

6) Marriages between first-degree *Mischlinge* and second-degree *Mischlinge*

Both spouses will be evacuated or transferred to an old-people's ghetto, regardless of whether or not they have children, because, as a rule, any offspring of such marriages will, racially speaking, have stronger Jewish blood than second-degree *Mischlinge*.

SS-Gruppenführer H o f m a n n is of the view that extensive use must be made of sterilisation, particularly because once the *Mischling*

faces the choice between evacuation and sterilisation, he will prefer to undergo sterilisation.

State Secretary Dr S t u c k a r t noted that the practical implementation of the possible solutions regarding mixed marriages and *Mischling* questions just discussed would, in this form, constitute endless administrative work. In order to take into account the biological aspects as well, State Secretary Dr S t u c k a r t suggested that forced sterilisation be embarked upon.

To simplify the problem of mixed marriages, further possibilities should be considered, with the objective, for instance, of the legislator simply ruling: “these marriages are hereby dissolved”

With regard to the question of how the evacuation of the Jews will affect the economy, State Secretary N e u m a n n stated that Jews currently working in industries essential to the war effort could not be evacuated as long as there were no replacements for them.

SS-Obergruppenführer H e y d r i c h pointed out that on the basis of the guidelines approved by him for the implementation of the evacuations currently underway, these Jews would not be evacuated anyway.

State Secretary Dr B ü h l e r declared that the General Government would welcome it if the final solution of this question were to begin in the General Government, because for one thing the transportation problem was not of overriding importance there,

and because issues related to labour deployment would not impede the course of this operation. Jews should be removed from the territory of the General Government as rapidly as possible because it is precisely there that the Jew constitutes an eminent danger as a carrier of epidemics and he also constantly disrupts the economic structure of the region through his continuous illicit trading. Moreover, the majority of the around 2 ½ million Jews in question are unfit for work.

State Secretary Dr B ü h l e r noted further that the Head of Security Police and SD is in charge of the solution of the Jewish question in the General Government, and that the administrative authorities of the General Government would assist him in his work. He had only one favour to ask: that the Jewish question in this territory be solved as quickly as possible.

In conclusion the various types of possible solution were discussed. Here, Gauleiter Dr M e y e r and State Secretary Dr B ü h l e r both took the position that in connection with the final solution certain preparatory measures should be carried out in the occupied territories at once, but in such a way that the population there would not become apprehensive.

The meeting was closed with the request of the Head of Security Police and the SD that all participants in today's deliberations give him the appropriate support in implementing the tasks connected with the solution.