

EHRI Online Course in Holocaust Studies

IfZ/A ZS 3100/1

Ghettos under Nazi-Rule – The German Administration

Translation: A05 Auerswald's letter to the Restitution case of the Furs' Handover

Heinz W. Auerswald

Lawyer

4 Düsseldorf

Königsallee 40

16 January 1963

To the Lawyers
Henry Ormond
Dietrich Brandt
Dietrich Kremer

6 Frankfurt/Main
Post office box 2767

Re.: Restitution case Fela Billauer
Your reference no.: 1/RH/III/8262

Dear Colleagues!

Regarding your query from the second of this month I would like to advise that:

Your assumption, that details on the relevant handover of furs are no longer in my recollection, is unfortunately correct. I cannot even recall that such an action was ever carried out. In all likelihood I issued the directive mentioned by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw on instructions received from my direct superiors, without ever being involved in its carrying out.

Whether the directive of the Federal Finance Ministry mentioned by you refers to only fur items handed over from personal possessions or also includes the delivery of fur items by a contractor (furrier, skinner) is something I am unable to judge. It seems certain to me however, that furs and fur goods, once they were delivered, were treated in the same way, irrespective of whether they came from private ownership or a commercial business.

Perhaps the following is of use: In Warsaw there was a so-called Transfer Office [Transferstelle] whose task was to handle all economic activities between the Jewish residential district and the outside world. I assume with certainty that this Transfer Office was engaged in the handover of the furs and that it ensured a consistent utilisation of all fur items handed over. Subsequently, the fur items, irrespective of whether from private or commercial ownership, were in part directly placed at the disposal of the Wehrmacht, in part processed further by workshops in the Jewish residential district for the purposes of the Wehrmacht and otherwise transported to Germany.

I consider accurate your assumption that the furs and fur items handed over by the husband of your client were utilised in the same way as all the others. In any case, I myself cannot recall any circumstances which could indicate anything to the contrary.

With collegial respect,

Sgd.
Auerswald

[Translated from the German by Paul Bowman]