

Biebow, Hans

(1902-1947), head of the Lodz ghetto administration. Born in Bremen, Biebow was a businessman who had joined the Nazi party. When the Lodz ghetto was established in the spring of 1940, Biebow was put in charge of its food and economic office (Ernährungs- und Wirtschaftsstelle für das Ghetto), which in October was re-designated the "Ghetto Administration" (Ghettoverwaltung). The office had a staff of 250 German officials. Thanks to his personal ties with Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the SD (Sicherheitsdienst; Security Service), and with Arthur Greiser, governor of the Warthegau, Biebow enjoyed wide powers in administering the Lodz ghetto. By exploiting the manpower in the ghetto factories that he established and by robbing the Jews of their property, Biebow was able to extract great profits. He personally made sure that the ghetto was hermetically closed and that the inhabitants would starve. He set up special warehouses in the town of Pabianice, where the personal possessions and clothing of the victims of the Chelmno extermination camp were stored, sorted, and sent to Germany for use by the German population.

Biebow was among the officials who organized the transports to Chelmno from Lodz and from the ghettos in the provincial towns of the Warthegau. These transports began in December 1941 and continued throughout 1942. Biebow, however, did not want the ghetto administration to pass into the hands of the SS, and in order to maintain the flow of profits from the ghetto factories he ensured the ghetto's continued existence even after the 1942 deportations, up until the summer of 1944. Nevertheless, once it was decided that the ghetto would be liquidated, Biebow became very active in organizing transports to the Chelmno and Auschwitz extermination camps, from June to August 1944, and in the ghetto's final liquidation. He excelled in deception tactics, convincing the Jews that the transports from the ghetto would take them to work camps attached to German factories. When the ghetto was liquidated in August 1944, Biebow remained in Lodz, and until January 1945 he supervised the removal to Germany of possessions left behind by the

ghetto inhabitants. After the war, Biebow was tried by a Polish court in Lodz, sentenced to death, and executed.