

**On 4 February 1936 the Regierungspräsident in Potsdam informs Gauleiter Wilhelm Kube of his planned circular directive concerning the Jewish question<sup>1</sup>**

Letter (secret) from the Regierungspräsident in Potsdam<sup>2</sup> (I Pol. gh. 903) to the Gauleiter and Oberpräsident of Brandenburg province, Prussian Staatsrat Wilhelm Kube,<sup>3</sup> Berlin, dated 4 February 1936 (draft)<sup>4</sup>

Re: issuance of a circular directive concerning the Jewish question. Without enactment. Reporting secretary: Government Assessor *Radmann*<sup>5</sup>

The legislation on Jews has temporarily been concluded with the issuance of the implementing provisions and regulatory statutes for the Nuremberg Laws. However, the details of the future treatment of the Jews are not yet settled by the legislation. A number of Landräte in my district have already submitted reports in advance with regard to local measures for a solution to the Jewish question.<sup>6</sup> The issues covered above all concern decisions by individual municipalities regarding future legal relations and on the dealings of their inhabitants with Jews. Through a circular decree enclosed with this draft, I intend to take a stand on the abuses that they and I observed in the area of public enlightenment concerning the Jewish question.

However, considering the cardinal importance of the matter, and to ensure that it is treated uniformly in the entire Gau Kurmark, I request that you comment on my draft.

I would appreciate your forwarding the approved directive also to all the Gau's Party offices in question, because the decisions of the municipalities have frequently been prompted precisely by the Party offices.

The circular directive dated 22 August 1935 (I Pol.g.705 geh.) that is cited in my draft has made the authorities responsible to me aware only of the Secret Circular Decree of

1 BLHA, Pr.Br.Rep. 2 A I Pol/1919, fols. 281–283v. This document has been translated from German.

2 The Regierungspräsident in Potsdam was Dr Ernst Fromm (1881–1971), political scientist; joined the NSDAP in 1932; worked in the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Territories, 1923–1930; in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, 1930–1933; from 1933 Regierungspräsident in Potsdam; forced into non-active service in 1937; from 1943 in the administration of the Oschersleben Regional Council Office.

3 Wilhelm Kube (1887–1943), journalist; member of the German National People's Party (DNVP), 1919–1923; joined the NSDAP in 1927 or 1928 and the SS in 1933; Gauleiter in the Prussian Ostmark, 1927–1933; Oberpräsident of the Prussian province of Brandenburg and Gauleiter in the Kurmark, 1933–1936; in 1936 lost all his offices; general commissioner for Belarus, 1941–1943; assassinated by partisans.

4 The original contains handwritten changes and annotations. The original date, 29 Dec. 1935, has been crossed out and replaced by the handwritten date '4 Feb. 1936'. In the left-hand margin is a handwritten note: 'completed and sent Sch 4 Feb.', 'resubmission 2 March 1936'. The circular decree of the Regierungspräsident in Potsdam was issued on 3 March 1936 to chiefs of police, Landräte, mayors, and local police administrators: *ibid.*, fols. 307–308v.

5 Probably Helmuth Radmann (b. 1908), lawyer; joined the NSDAP in 1932; in 1932 junior lawyer in Beuthen; lived in Breslau, 1933–1935, in Potsdam, 1935–1937, and, after 1937, in Berlin.

6 These reports could not be found.

the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior dated 20 August 1935, (III P.3710/59 XIII g)<sup>7</sup> concerning the prohibition of individual actions against Jews.<sup>8</sup>

2. As an annex to 1, the following draft is to be prepared:

*Draft.*

As a result of the Nuremberg Laws and the implementing rules and regulatory statutes issued for them, the Jewish question has been conclusively regulated for the moment. I am using this as an opportunity, with reference to my circular directive of 22 August 1935 (I Pol.g.705 geh.), once again to remind, with all due urgency, all the offices involved of the ban on all individual actions against Jews. Recent experiences have demonstrated the limited value – or, more properly, the worthlessness – of independent actions by individuals to combat the harmful influence of the Jews. The position of the vermin has remained unaltered in the main. The Jew, by contrast, has used the harm allegedly done to him in order to arouse sympathy by referring to it and, in the end, to promote himself in this way.<sup>9</sup>

A number of municipalities in my district believed they needed to vent the existing conscious and instinctive rejection of the Jews by German Volksgenossen by issuing resolutions with regard to the restriction of legal relations and the dealings of their citizens with Jews. The resolutions frequently go beyond the bounds imposed on the local administration by the law. To give one example, they deny the Jews a building licence and a permit for residential development, the issuance or denial of which is in reality a matter for the state authorities. The release and publication of the resolutions must, in addition – and therein, in particular, are to be seen the objections to them – arouse in everyone not familiar with the true circumstances the impression that the Jew in Germany, independently of the racial laws, is heavily burdened by restraints, in contrast to the German citizen. In actual fact, however, the Jews' ability to live decently in Germany is by no means impaired, even after the new legislation. In particular, they continue to have the opportunity they wish to freely pursue a gainful occupation. The announcement of such resolutions, therefore, serves only to give rise at home and abroad to com-

7 See the circular decree of Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior Frick dated 20 August 1935, BArch, R 1501/5513, fol. 2. Published in Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz (ed.), *Dokumentation zur Geschichte der jüdischen Bevölkerung*, pp. 54–55.

8 The following paragraph is deleted in the original: 'In drafting my circular directive I have taken into account the decree of the Reich and Prussian Minister of Economics dated 12 December 1935 (IV 26 037/35), presented together with a report dated 22 December 1935 (I Po g. 3040) and, attached to it, a copy of the written statement of the Deputy of the Führer, the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior, and the Reich and Prussian Minister of Economics regarding the definition of individual actions against Jews. Accordingly, I intend, as expressed in my directive, to obtain the approval of the Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior for any resolutions by the municipalities of my district that have become necessary with regard to the Jewish question. Measures against any form of informative notice opposing Jews (*Stürmer* display cases) are, in my opinion, not to be anticipated, also because of the comments obtained by the Reich and Prussian Minister of Economics and the view he himself holds concerning individual actions. Additional instructions about these notices are therefore still necessary.' At the bottom of the page, handwritten: 'A carbon copy for use by the Gauleitung is enclosed.'

9 In the original, the following paragraph has been crossed out: 'Observations concerning the defence against Jewry being made by the Volksgemeinschaft in many instances in the municipalities of my district lead me to note the following, in addition to what has been said above.'

pletely mistaken views of the situation of Jewry in Germany and to provide welcome material for world Jewry's agitation against Germany.

Consequently, I cannot endorse formal and fundamental municipal decisions about the future treatment of the Jews, and I forbid the municipalities of my district, with immediate effect, to pass additional resolutions regarding the Jewish question without my explicit, previously obtained permission. Of course, that is not intended to rule out a solution to individual questions that has become necessary. For example, I am aware of the detrimental effects that use of municipal public baths by Jews can have. But I request that, in accordance with what was stated above, my consent be obtained in such cases before passage of a resolution, with a detailed report.<sup>10</sup> Superfluous and avoidable publication of any authorized resolutions must not occur.

The anti-German propaganda of the Jews also forces me – here I address particularly the municipalities with large numbers of tourists – to warn against the now common erection of signs etc. with informative contents regarding the Jewish question in streets and on squares with a high volume of traffic.<sup>11</sup> The foreigner visiting Germany has been exposed in advance to constant and unbounded anti-German agitation by the Jewish press, and in many instances he feels compelled to see the public display of what are, in his understanding, 'intolerant' sentiments. The anti-German propaganda cleverly exploits that, and the supposed successes of educational work among the German people take a back seat, by and large, to the loss of pro-German views abroad.

In my opinion, it will also be out of the question, apart from the concern for tourism, to put up signboards with informative contents, which necessarily often include quite unpleasant material drawn from sexual life, in the immediate vicinity of schools and other places frequented by young people. As a result, in a surely unintended but nonetheless harmful secondary effect, adolescents will very regrettably reach impressions that can only have harmful effects at this stage of their development.

Putting up signs with alarming contents, such as 'Entry here is life-threatening for Jews', must be avoided, of course, as has already been repeatedly announced in individual cases.

Precisely during this year, on account of the Olympic Games, proper handling of the Jewish question along the lines of the aforementioned instructions acquires the utmost significance, specifically in the Potsdam administrative district. Not only is the Olympic village located there, but the district will also be visited by large numbers of members of all the nations on short excursions. The foreign visitors include not only Jews but also, above all, numerous non-Jews who, if not exactly sympathizers with Jews, are nonetheless not opponents in principle and who are still uncomprehending as yet with regard to the German racial legislation. The feelings of all these foreign participants in and spectators at the Olympic Games must not be offended, for reasons of politeness to Germany's guests alone, by posters, placards, and boycott measures that have an irritating effect in terms of foreign policy.

10 In the original, a sentence has been crossed out: 'If necessary, I will give a report in high places.'

11 In the original, a sentence has been crossed out: 'The successes of the untiring work in the area of educating the German people about the Jewish danger, particularly by the purposefully crusading newspaper *Der Stürmer*, are undeniable.'

Generally and in principle it must always be kept in mind that the Jewish question, to the extent that it has not already been legally settled in accordance with the wishes of the Third Reich, now under development, cannot be solved decisively and lastingly by more or less non-legal weapons. Rather, it can be solved only through the exertion of educational influence upon German Volksgenossen and through increasing practice, as a result of this influence, of self-discipline and restraint by all German Volksgenossen with regard to the Jews. All educational measures for this purpose must not exceed certain boundaries, and thus cease to have an educational influence upon German Volksgenossen and begin instead to signify an impermissible duress, levelled publicly and more or less directly against the Jews.