

## The 12 November Meeting in the Wake of “Kristallnacht”

Stenographic report of the conference on the Jewish question at the Reich Ministry for Air on November 12, 1938 - 11 o'clock.

Participants: Goering, Goebbles, Funk (Ministry of Economy), Woermann (Foreign Office), Hilgard (insurance companies), Heydrich (SD and Sipo) Daluege (police), Schmer, Kerrl, Von Krosigk (Ministry of Finance), Guertner, Stuckart, Fischboeck (Austrian Economy Ministry), Frick (Ministry of Interior), Buerckl, Brinkmann, Blessing.

Goering: Gentlemen! Today's meeting is of a decisive nature. I have received a letter written on the Fuehrer's orders by the Stabsleiter of the Fuehrer's deputy Bormann, requesting that the Jewish question be now, once and for all, coordinated and solved one way or another. And yesterday once again did the Fuehrer request by phone for me to take coordinated action in the matter. Since the problem is mainly an economic one, it is from the economic angle that it shall have to be tackled. Naturally a number of legal measures shall have to be taken which fall into the sphere of the Minister for Justice and into that of the Minister of the Interior; and certain propaganda measures shall be taken care of by the office of the Minister for Propaganda. The Minister for Finance and the Minister of Economic Affairs shall take care of the problems falling into their respective resorts. In the meeting, in which we first talked about this question and came to the decision to aryanize German economy, to take the Jew out of it, and put him in our debit ledger, was one in which, to our shame, we only made pretty plans, which were executed very slowly. We then had a demonstration, eight in here in Berlin, we told the people that something decisive would be done, but again nothing happened. We have had this affair in Paris now, more demonstrations followed and this time something decisive must be done! Because, Gentlemen, I have enough of these demonstrations! They don't harm the Jew but me who is the last authority for co-ordinating the German economy. If today, a Jewish shop is destroyed, if goods are thrown into the street, the insurance company will pay for the damages, which the Jew does not even have -; and furthermore goods of the consumer goods belonging to the people, are destroyed. If in future, demonstrations, which are

necessary, occur, then, I pray, that they be directed, so as not to hurt us. Because it's insane, to clean out and burn a Jewish warehouse then have a German insurance company make good the loss. And the goods, which I need desperately, whole bales of clothing and what not, are being burned: and I miss them everywhere. I may as well burn the raw materials before they arrive. The people of course, do not understand that; therefore we must make laws which will show the people once and for all, that something is being done. I should appreciate it very much if for once, our propaganda would make it clear that it is unfortunately not the Jew who has to suffer in all this but the German insurance companies. I am not going to tolerate a situation in which the Insurance companies are the ones who suffer. Under the authority invested in me, I shall issue a decree, and I am, of course, requesting the support of the competent government agencies, so that everything shall be processed through the right channels, and the insurance companies will not be the ones who suffer. It may be, though, that these insurance companies may have insurance in foreign countries - if that is the case, foreign bills of exchange would be available which I would not want to lose. That shall have to be checked. For that reason, I have asked Mr. Hilgard of the Insurance company to attend, since he is best qualified to tell us to what extent the insurance companies are protected against damage, by having taken out insurance with other companies. I would not want to miss this under any circumstances. I should not want to leave any doubt, Gentlemen, as to the aim of today's meeting. We have not come together merely to talk again, but to make decisions, and I implore the competent agencies to take all measures for the elimination of the Jew from German economy and to submit them to me, as far as it is necessary..... Now the foreign Jews. There we'll have to make distinctions between the Jews who have always been foreigners and who shall have to be treated according to the laws we arranged with their respective countries. We shall try to induce them through slight and then through stronger pressure and through clear manoeuvring - to let themselves be pushed out voluntarily. But regarding those Jews who were Germans, have always lived in Germany and have acquired foreign citizenship during the last

year, only because they wanted to play safe. I ask you not to give them consideration. We'll finish with these. Or have you any misgivings?

Woermann: I'd like to request that the Foreign Office should participate in individual cases, as it is very difficult to decide this generally.

Goering: We cannot consult you in every case, - but on the whole we will.....

Goebbels:...In almost all German cities synagogues are burned. New, Various possibilities exist to utilize the space where the synagogues stood. Some cities want to build parks in their place, others want to put up new buildings.

Goering: How many synagogues were actually burned?

Heydrich: Altogether there are 101 synagogues destroyed by fire, 76 synagogues demolished, and 7,500 stores ruined in the Reich.

Goering: what do you mean, "destroyed by fire"?

Heydrich: Partly, they are razed and partly gutted.

Goebbels: I am of the opinion that this is our chance to dissolve the synagogues. All these not completely intact, shall be razed by the Jews. The Jews shall pay for it. There in Berlin, the Jews are ready to do that. The synagogues, which burned in Berlin are being leveled by the Jews themselves. We shall build parking lots in their places or new buildings. That ought to be the criterion for the whole country, the Jews shall have to remove the damaged or burned synagogues, and shall have to provide us with ready free space.... Furthermore, I advocate that the Jews be eliminated from all positions in public life in which they may prove to be provocative. It is still possible today that a Jew shares a compartment in a sleeping car with a German. Therefore, we need a decree by the Reich Ministry for Communication stating that separate compartments for Jews shall be available; In case where compartment are filled up, Jews cannot claim a seat; They shall be given a separate compartment only after all Germans have secured seats. They shall not mix with Germans, and if there is no more room, they shall have to stand in the corridor.

Goering: In that case, I think it would make more sense to give them separated compartments.

Goebbels: Suppose, though, there won't be many Jews going on the express train to Munich, suppose there would be two Jews in the train and the other compartments would be overcrowded. These two Jews would then have a compartment all to themselves. Therefore, Jews may claim a seat only after all Germans have secured a seat.

Goering: I'd give the Jews one coach or one compartment. And should a case like you mention arise and the train is overcrowded, believe me, we won't need a law. We'll kick him out and he'll have to sit all alone in the toilet all the way!

Goebbels: I don't agree. I don't believe in this. There ought to be a law. Furthermore, there ought to be a decree barring Jews from German beaches and resorts. Last summer....

Goering: Particularly here in the Admirals palast very disgusting things have happened lately.

Goebbels: Also at the Wannsee beach. A law, which definitely forbids the Jews to visit German resorts.

Goering: We could give them their own.

Goebbels: It would have to be considered whether we'd give them their own or whether we should turn a few German resorts over to them, but not the finest and best, so we cannot say the Jews go there for recreation. It'll also have to be considered if it might not become necessary to forbid the Jews to enter German forests. In the Gruenewald, whole herds of them are running around. It is a constant provocation and we are having incidents all the time. The behavior of the Jews is so inciting and provocative that brawls are a daily routine.

Goering: We shall give the Jews a certain part of the forest, and the Alpers shall take care of it that various animals that look damned much like Jews, - the elk has such a crooked nose - get their also and become acclimated.

Goebbels: I think this behavior is provocative. Furthermore Jews should not be allowed to sit around in German parks... Furthermore, Jewish children are still allowed in German schools. That's impossible. It is out of the question that any boy should sit beside a Jewish boy in a German Gymnasium and receive lessons in German history. Jews ought to be eliminated completely from

German schools; they may take care of their own education in their own communities.

Goering: I suggest that Mr. Hilgard from the Insurance Company be called in. He is waiting outside. As soon as he'll be finished with his report, he may go and we can continue to talk. At the time Gustloff died, compensation for the damage Germany had suffered was prepared. But I believe that at present we should not work it through raised taxes but with a contribution paid only once. That serves my purpose. (Hilgard enters)

Mr. Hilgard: The following is our case. Because of the justified anger of the people against the Jew, the Reich has suffered a certain amount of damage. Windows were broken, goods were damaged and people hurt, synagogues burned etc. I suppose that the Jews, many of them are also insured against damage committed by public disorder, etc... We are concerned with the...of insurance. Not with the insurance against damage resulting from revolt or from risks, but with the ordinary fire insurance, the ordinary glass insurance, and the ordinary insurance against theft.... The people, because of their contracts, who have a right to claim compensation, are partly Jews, partly Aryans. As for the fire insurance they are practically all Jewish, I suppose. As for the department stores, the victim is identical with the Jew, the owner at that applies more to the synagogues, except for neighbors to whole places the fire may have spread. Although the damage is done to the latter's property seems to be rather slight, according to the inquiries I made late last night. As for the glass insurance, which plays a very important part in this, the situation is completely different. They majority of the victims mostly the owners of the buildings are Aryans, the Jew has usually rented the store, a procedure which you may observe all over, for example on Krufuerstendamm.

Goering: That is what we've said.

Goebbels: In these cases, the Jew will have to pay.

Goering: It doesn't make sense. We have no raw materials. It is all glass imported from foreign countries and has to be paid for in foreign currency. One could go nuts.

Hilgard: May I draw you attention to the following facts: the glass from the shop windows is not being manufactured by the Bohemian, but by the Belgian

glass industry. In my estimation, the approximate money value to which these damages amount is 6,000,000 that include the broken glass, glass which we shall have to replace, mainly to Aryans because they have the insurance policy....

Goering: Are they insured against damages caused by public disturbances?

Hilgard: No, no more. May I show this by an example. The most remarkable of these cases is the case of Margraf, Unter Den Linden. The Jewelry store of Margraf is insured with us through a so-called combined policy. That covers practically any damage that may occur. This damage was reported to us as amounting to 1,700,000 because the store was completely stripped.

Goering: Daluege and Heydrich, you'll have to get me this jewellery through raids, stated on a tremendous scale.

Daluege: The order has already been given. The people are being controlled all the time. According to reports, 150 were arrested by yesterday afternoon...

Goering: And the jewels?

Heydrich: That is very difficult to say. They were partly thrown into the street and picked up there. Similar things happened with furriers, for example in Friedrichstrasse, district C. There the crowd was naturally rushing to pick up minks, skunks etc. It'll be very hard to recover that....

Hilgard: We'd like to make it our point, Mr. General Fieldmarshal, that we shall not be hindered in fulfilling the obligations for which our contracts call... If I may give reasons for this request, I'd like to say that it simply has to do with the fact that we carry out, to a large extent, quite a number of international transactions. We have a very good international basis for our business transactions, and in the interest of the equilibrium of the foreign exchange in Germany, we have to make sure that the confidence in the German insurance shall not be ruined. If we now refuse to honor clear-cut obligations, imposed upon us through lawful contract, it would be a black spot on the shield of honor of the German insurance.

Goering: It wouldn't be the minute I issue a decree, a law sanctioned by the state.

Hilgard: I was leading up to that.

Goering: The insurance may be granted, but as soon as it is to be paid, it'll be confiscated. That way we'll save face... One moment, you'll have to pay in any case because it is the Germans who suffered the damage. But there'll be a lawful order forbidding you to make any direct payments to the Jews. You shall also have to make payment for the damage the Jews have suffered, but not to the Jews, but to the Minister of Finance. (Hilgard: Aha!) What he does with the money is his business....

Daluege: One more question ought to be cleared up. Most of the goods in the stores were not the property of the owner but were kept on the books of other firms, which had delivered them. Then there are the unpaid for deliveries by other firms, which definitely are not all Jewish but Aryan....

Hilgard: We'll have to pay for them, too.

Goering: I wished you had killed 200 Jews, and not destroyed such values.

Heydrich: there were 35 killed....

Goering: Now for the damage the Jew has had. At Margravs' the jewels disappeared, etc. Well, they are gone, and he won't get them refunded. He is the one who has to suffer the damage. As far as the jewels may be returned again by the police, they belong to the state. Now for the consumer goods which were thrown into the street, stolen or burned. There too, the Jew will be the one who has the damage. As for the goods that were kept on the basis of commissions, the Jew shall have to make good for the damage.....

Goering: Of course, I too am of the opinion that these economic measures ought to be strengthened by a number of police-action-propaganda-measures and cultural displays so that everything shall be fixed now and the Jewry will be slapped this week right and left.

Heydrich: In spite of the elimination of the Jew from the economic life the main problem, namely to kick the Jews out of Germany, remains. May I make a few proposals to that effect? Following a suggestion by the commissioner of the Reich we have set up a centre for the Emigration of Jews in Vienna, and that way we have eliminated ( translation should say: pushed out ) 50,000 Jews from Austria while from the Reich only 19,000 Jews were eliminated during the same period of time. We were so successful because of the co-

operation on the part of the competent Ministry for Economic Affairs and of the foreign charitable organizations....

Goering: This story has gone through the whole world press. During the first night the Jews were expelled into Czechoslovakia. The next morning the Czechs grabbed them and pushed them into Hungary. From Hungary they were returned to Germany and from there into Czechoslovakia. They traveled around and around that way. They landed finally on an old barge in the Danube. There they lived and wherever they tried to go ashore, they were barred.

Heydrich: That was the report. There weren't even 100 Jews.

Goering: For two weeks a number of Jews left every midnight. That was in the Burgenland.

Heydrich: At least 45,000 Jews were made to leave the country by legal measures. Goering: How was that possible? Heydrich: Through the Jewish Kultusgemeinde (community) we extracted a certain amount of money from the rich Jews who wanted to emigrate. By paying this amount, and an additional sum in foreign currency, they made it possible for a number of poor Jews to leave. The problem was not to make the rich Jews leave, but to get rid of the Jewish mob.

Goering: But children, did you ever think this through? It doesn't help us to extract hundreds of thousands from the Jewish mob. Have you ever thought of it that this procedure may cost us so much foreign currency that in the end we won't be able to hold out?

Heydrich: Only what the Jew has had in foreign currency. (Goering: Agreed) This way, may I propose that we set up a similar procedure for the Reich with the co-operation of the competent government agencies, and that we then find a solution for the Reich, based on our experiences, after having corrected the mistakes, the General Fieldmarshal has so rightly pointed to us. (Goering: Agreed) As another means of getting the Jews out, measures for emigration ought to be taken in the rest of the Reich for the next 8 to 10 years. The highest number of Jews we can possibly get out during one year is 8 -10,000. Therefore a great number of Jews will remain. Because of the Aryanzation and other restrictions Jewry will become unemployed. The remaining Jews



gradually become proletarians. Therefore, I shall have to take steps to isolate the Jew so he won't enter into the German normal routine of life. On the other hand, I shall have to restrict the Jew to a small circle of consumers, but I shall have to permit certain activities with professions; lawyers, doctors, barbers etc. This question shall also have to be examined. As for the isolation, I'd like to make a few proposals regarding police measures, which are important also because of their psychological effect on public opinion. For example, who is Jewish according to the Nuremberg laws, shall have to wear a certain insignia. That is a possibility, which shall facilitate many other things. I don't see any danger of excuses, and shall make our relationship with the foreign Jew easier.

Goering: A uniform.

Heydrich: An insignia. This way we could also put an end to it that the foreign Jews, who don't look different from ours, are being molested.

Goering: But, my dear Heydrich, you won't be able to avoid the creation of ghettos on a very large scale, in all the cities. They shall have to be created.

Heydrich: As for the question of ghettos, I'd like to make my position clear right away. From the point of view of the police, I don't think a ghetto in the form of completely segregated districts where only Jews would live, can be put up. We could not control a ghetto where the Jews congregate amidst the whole Jewish people. It would remain the permanent hideout for criminals and also for epidemics and the like. We don't want to let the Jew live in the same house with the German population; but today the German population, their blocks or houses, force the Jew to behave himself. The control of the Jew through the watchful eye of the whole population is better than having him by the thousands in a district where I cannot properly establish a control over his daily life through uniformed agents.

Goering: We'd only have to forbid long-distance calls.

Heydrich: Still I could not completely stop the Jews from communicating out of their districts.

Goering: And in towns all of their own.

Heydrich: If I could put them into towns entirely their own, yes. But these towns would be such a haven for criminals of all sorts that they would be a

terrific danger. I'd take different steps. I'd restrict the movement of the Jews and would say; In Munich the governmental district and the district...

Goering: Wait a minute! I don't care so much for it that the Jews don't appear in spots where I don't want them. My point is this one: if one Jew won't have any more work, he'll have to live modestly. He won't be able to go far on his 3 1/2 % to restaurants, etc. He'll have to work more. That'll bring about a concentration of Jewry, which may even facilitate control. You will know that in a particular house only Jews are living. We shall also have concentrated Jewish butchers, barbers, grocers etc. in certain streets. The question is of course whether we want to go on tolerating that. If not, the Jew shall have to buy from the Aryan.

Heydrich: No, I'd say that for the necessities in daily life, the German won't serve the Jew anymore.

Goering: One moment. You cannot let him starve. But there'll be the following difficulty. If you say that the Jews will be able to have so and so many retail stores, then they'll again be in business, and they'll continually have to sell for the wholesaler.

Schmer: In a small town this wouldn't work at all.

Goering: It would only be worked out if you'd reserve in advance whole districts or whole towns for the Jews. Otherwise, you'll have to have only Germans do business, and the Jew shall have to buy from them. You cannot set up a Jewish barbershop. The Jew will have to buy food and stockings.

Heydrich: We'll have to decide whether we want this or not... As some additional measures I'd propose to withdraw from the Jews all personal papers such as permits and drivers licenses. No Jew should be allowed to own a car, neither should he be permitted to drive because that way he'd endanger German life. By not being permitted to live in certain districts, he should be furthermore restricted to move about so freely. I'd say the Royal Square in Munich, the Reichswihstatte, is not to be entered any more within a certain radius by Jews. The same would go for establishment of culture....Furthermore, like Minister Dr. Goebbels has said before, exclusion of the Jews from public theatres, movie houses etc. As for cultural activities, I'd like to say this: cultural activities in holiday resorts may be considered an

additional feature, not absolutely necessary for the individual. Many German Volksgenossen are unable to improve their health through a stay at a resort town. I don't see why the Jew should go to these places at all.

Goering: to health spas, no.

Heydrich: Well, then I'd like to propose the same thing for hospitals. A Jew shall not like in a hospital together with Aryan Volksgenossen.

Goering: We'd have to manage that gradually.

Heydrich: The same applies to public conveniences.

Goering: Are there no Jewish sanatoriums and Jewish hospitals? (Remarks: Yes!) We'll have to settle all this. These things will have to be straightened out one right after the other.

Heydrich: I only meant to secure your approval in principle so that we start out on all this.

Goering: One more question, gentlemen. What would you think the situation would be if I'd announce today that Jewry shall have to contribute 1 billion as a punishment?

Buerckel: The Viennese would agree to this wholeheartedly.

Goebbels: I wonder if the Jews would have a chance to pull out of this...

Goering: I shall choose the wording this way; that German Jewry shall as punishment for their abominable crimes etc. etc. have to make a contribution of 1 billion. That'll work. The pigs won't commit another murder. Incidentally, I'd like to say again that I would not like to be a Jew in Germany.

Von Krosigk: Therefore, I'd like to emphasize what Mr. Heydrich has said in the beginning; that we'll have to try everything possible, by way of additional experts, to shove the Jews into foreign countries. The decisive factor is that we don't want the society-proletariat here. They'll always be a terrific liability for us. (Flick: And a danger!) I don't imagine the prospect of the ghetto is very nice. The idea of the ghetto is not a very agreeable one. Therefore the goal must be as Heydrich said to move out whatever one can!

Goering: the second point is this. If in the near future, the German Reich should come into conflict with foreign powers, it goes without saying that we in Germany should first of all let it come to a showdown with the Jews. Besides that, the Fuehrer shall now make an attempt with these foreign powers who

have brought the Jewish question up, in order to solve the Madagascar project. He has explained it all to me on 9 November. There is no other way. He'll tell the other countries: "what are you talking about the Jew for? - take him!" Another proposal may be made. The Jews, gotten rid of, may buy territory for their "co-religionists" in North America, Canada or elsewhere. I wish to summarize: The Minister of Economic Affairs shall direct the committee and he shall in one form or another take all steps necessary within the next few days.....Also the Ministry of Interior and the Police will have to think over, what measures will have to be taken. I thank you. (Conference closed at 2:40 p.m.)

**Source: Yad Vashem Archive N/11/465/E.**