

Jews in Public Bathing Areas: Letter from the NSDAP in Hesse to the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt (July 27, 1938)

Abstract

After the passing of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, assaults on the civil liberties of Germany's Jewish population grew. Jews were no longer allowed membership in professional organizations, and they were barred from marrying people of Aryan "descent." Many saw their German citizenship revoked and their legal protections disappear. The civil liberties that were first established during the emancipation of Jews in the nineteenth century vanished quickly. This document, a letter of complaint sent by the head of the local NSDAP chapter in Hesse to the Lord Mayor [*Oberbürgermeister*] of Frankfurt am Main, suggests that Germans began to accept the Nazis' perception of Jews as a physical contaminant. The author reported that some citizens in Niederrad were traveling inconveniently long distances to far-flung swimming and bathing areas, because the ones near them were "continually being used by Jews."

The restrictions on which facilities Jews could use were regulated at the local level. After 1935, many cities and towns enacted bans on Jews in public facilities. Frankfurt's administrative authorities eventually complied with these complainants' requests and issued a regulation barring Jews from using public swimming pools in the city.

Source

July 27, 1938

National Socialist German Workers' Party
Kreisleitung of Greater Frankfurt am Main

To:
The Lord Mayor
Of the City of Frankfurt am Main
Frankfurt a. M.

Subject: "Jewish Bathing Area" in Niederrad

Complaints from the population are multiplying day by day concerning use by Jews of the Niederrad bathing area. In particular, the inhabitants of Niederrad and of those parts of the city near the bathing area complain that they are being forced to go a relatively long way when they want to swim, because the bathing areas near them are continually being used by Jews. Moreover, on warm days the trams to and from Niederrad are so full of Jews that it often results in unpleasant incidents. With regard to the fact that the bathing facilities here are not adequate for the German population, it is no longer acceptable that the Jews should have a bathing area at their disposal. I therefore request that Jews be forbidden to use the Niederrad bathing area as soon as possible.

I would therefore ask you to ban Jews from the Niederrad bathing area as soon as possible.

Please be so kind as to inform me of the measures you have taken.

Heil Hitler

[signature obscured]

Source of English translation: *Kreisleiter* of the NSDAP to the *Oberbürgermeister* of Frankfurt am Main on July 27, 1938; in Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 83 (with additions by GHI staff).

Source of original German text: Schreiben des Kreisleiters an den Oberbürgermeister vom 27. 7. 1938 über das “Judenbad” in Niederrad, Stadtarchiv Frankfurt a. Main, Mag-Akte 7441/ 7442/ 7451; reprinted in Wolfgang Wippermann, *Das Leben in Frankfurt zur NS-Zeit*, Band I., *Die nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung: Darstellung, Dokumente und didaktische Hinweise*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Dr. Waldemar Kramer, 1986, p. 185.

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