

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS

Dispatches from US Consulates in Germany (1933)

❖ *April 10–Dispatch from George S. Messersmith*

“...It is the undisguised intention of the National Socialist Party to get absolute control of all forms of German Government and of intellectual, professional, financial, business, and cultural life.... The (1933) forcing of the Jewish judges from the courts... [is] brought about by Party pressure and action.... It is a question as to whether such direct ruthless and complete control of a civilized people has ever been achieved in so short a time by a minority.”¹

❖ *July 8–Dispatch from George A. Gordon*

“...Consistently and relentlessly the Jews are being eliminated from practically all walks of life. Nazi doctors and lawyers are “conducting bitter, relentless boycotts against their Jewish colleagues.... Nazi leaders have repeatedly boasted in the past that one of the first acts of a Nazi regime would be to set up ghettos in Germany...the outward and official manifestations of antisemitism in present day Germany fail to reveal the real brutality and truculence of the Nazi toward the Jews, and that they are determined to make life for Jews in Germany well nigh insufferable.”²

US Newspaper (1942)

❖ *December 18–The New York Times (front page)*

11 ALLIES CONDEMN NAZI WAR ON JEWS; United Nations Issue Joint Declaration of Protest on ‘Cold-Blooded Extermination’ 11 ALLIES CONDEMN NAZI WAR ON JEWS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 -- A joint declaration by members of the United Nations was issued today condemning Germany’s “bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination” of Jews and declaring that “such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom-loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny.”

Excerpts from Official Reports and Statements (1944)

❖ *From “Report to the Secretary [of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr.] on the Acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of the Jews,” initialed by Randolph Paul for the Foreign Funds Control Unit of the Treasury Department (January 13, 1944)*

“[State Department officials] have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Government machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.

“They have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of these organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.

“They not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler’s plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously

attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.

“They have tried to cover up their guilt by: concealment and misrepresentation; the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action; and the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the ‘action’ which they have taken to date. While the State Department has been thus ‘exploring’ the whole refugee problem, without distinguishing between those who are in imminent danger of death and those who are not, hundreds of thousands of Jews have been allowed to perish.”

❖ *From Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr.’s Personal Report to the President (January 16, 1944)*

“...The facts I have detailed in this report, Mr. President, came to the Treasury’s attention as a part of our routine investigation of the licensing of the financial phases of the proposal of the World Jewish Congress for the evacuation of Jews from France and Rumania [sic]. The facts may thus be said to have come to light through accident. How many others of the same character are buried in State Department files is a matter I would have no way of knowing. Judging from the almost complete failure of the State Department to achieve any results, the strong suspicion must be that they are not few.

“This much is certain, however. The matter of rescuing the Jews from extermination is a trust too great to remain in the hands of men who are indifferent, callous, and perhaps even hostile. The task is filled with difficulties. Only a fervent will to accomplish, backed by persistent and untiring effort can succeed where time is so precious.”

❖ *From Presidential Statement (March 24, 1944)*

On March 24, 1944, President Roosevelt issued a strong accusation and warning which was published widely in Allied and neutral nations and airdropped in leaflet form by the millions over Nazi-occupied territories. Finally, the President had become convinced of the facts concerning Hitler’s war against the Jews. Now he acted forcefully, but too late to save the millions who had already gone to their deaths.

“In one of the blackest crimes of all history—begun by the Nazis in the days of peace and multiplied by them a hundred times in time of war—the wholesale systematic murder of the Jews of Europe goes on unabated every hour.... That these innocent people, who have already survived a decade of Hitler’s fury, should perish on the very eve of triumph over the barbarism which their persecution symbolizes, would be a major tragedy.... It is therefore fitting that we should again proclaim our determination that none who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished.... That warning applies not only to the leaders but also to their functionaries and subordinates in Germany and in the satellite countries. All who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany are equally guilty with the executioner. All who share the guilt shall share the punishment.”

“Hitler is committing these crimes against humanity in the name of the German people. I ask every German and every man everywhere under Nazi domination to show the world by his action that in his heart he does not share these insane criminal desires. Let him hide these pursued victims, help them to get over their borders, and do what he can to save them from the Nazi hangman. I ask him also to keep watch, and to record the evidence that will one day be used to convict the guilty.”

End Notes

¹*Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1933*, Vol. II (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 226–227.

²*Ibid.*, at 354–356.