

Document name: Documents II.8, II.9 and II.10
Document date: n/a
Copyright information: Proprietary and used under license
OpenLearn Study Unit: The Holocaust
OpenLearn url: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/world-history/the-holocaust/content-section-0>



II.8 From the Reports on Germany, SOPADE (Social Democrats in Exile) Dec. 1938

The broad mass of the people has not condoned the destruction, but we should nevertheless not overlook the fact that there are people among the working class who do not defend the Jews. There are certain circles where you are not very popular if you speak disparagingly about the recent incidents. The anger was not, therefore, as unanimous as all that. Berlin: the population's attitude was not fully unanimous. When the Jewish synagogue was burning [...] a large number of women could be heard saying, 'That's the right way to do it – it's a pity there aren't any more Jews inside, that would be the best way to smoke out the whole lousy lot of them.' No one dared to take a stand against these sentiments, [...] If there has been any speaking out in the Reich against the Jewish pogroms, the excesses of arson and looting, it has been in Hamburg and the neighbouring Elbe district. People from Hamburg are not generally anti-Semitic, and the Hamburg Jews have been assimilated far more than the Jews in other parts of the Reich. They have intermarried with Christians up to the highest levels of officialdom and the wholesale and shipping trades.

(Detler J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, London, Batsford, 1987, p.59, trans. Richard Deveson)

II.9 From a report by the Heilbrunn Gendarmerie station (26 Nov. 1938)

Some have welcomed the actions taken against the Jews; others watched them calmly; others again are sorry for the Jews, though they do not necessarily express this openly.

(Detler J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, London, Batsford, 1987, p.59, trans. Richard Deveson)

II.10 From the monthly report of the Regierungspräsident of Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate (8 Dec. 1938)

The Jewish assassination of the German Embassy counsellor in Paris gave rise to sheer anger in all sections of the population. There was a general expectation that the national government would intervene. The legal measures directed against the Jews were therefore fully understood. What was correspondingly much less well understood, by the bulk of the population, was the reason for the manner in which the spontaneous actions against the Jews were carried out; indeed, these were condemned, including widely within the Party. The damage to shop-windows, merchandise and furniture was seen as an unnecessary

destruction of valuable items which in the last analysis were part of the national wealth of Germany, and it was viewed as a flagrant contradiction of the goals of the Four-Year Plan, especially the salvage campaigns that are being conducted at this very time. Fears were also voiced that the destructive urges of the masses might be reawakened by these means. In addition, the incidents enabled unnecessary sympathy for the Jews to come to the surface, in both town and countryside.

(Detler J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life*, London, Batsford, 1987, pp.159–60, trans. Richard Deveson)