

Early Intelligence Record on Nazi Final Solution Discovered in Documents Declassified Under Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act

U.S. Newswire [Washington] 02 July 2001: 1.

Abstract (summary)

The document was part of a release in June of 2000 at the National Archives of 400,000 pages of OSS records by the Interagency Working Group (IWG), a group that coordinates the government-wide effort to declassify federal records related to Nazi and Axis war crimes. Other related documents in the records of the OSS that add details to the story are currently being opened under the Act. IWG historians have completed an historical analysis of the Prague report and related documents, which is accessible at the IWG website: [http:// www.nara.gov/iwg /pressrel.html](http://www.nara.gov/iwg/pressrel.html).

The records add new details to the longstanding debate about how much the West learned of the Holocaust at the time. IWG public member Thomas H. Baer said, "Warnings from the allies to the Jews of Europe of a planned genocide never came. The Nazi murders depended on secrecy and subterfuge. Warnings would not have stopped the Holocaust, but they could have saved lives." Former U. S. Representative and IWG public member Elizabeth Holtzman said, "This recently declassified document helps pinpoint how much officials within our government knew about the Holocaust and when they knew it. The next question is why our government -- not to mention the British -- did nothing in response. It is unbearable to think that plans to 'eradicate' a Jewish population were a matter of such indifference."

Full Text

WASHINGTON, July 2 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Documents declassified under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998 are shedding new light on what the American and British intelligence communities knew of Hitler's plans for the Jews early in World War II. By March 20, 1942, a surreptitiously obtained document appears in the files of the United States Coordinator of Information (COI), a predecessor to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the Central Intelligence Agency. The document is a translated copy of a despatch filed by a Chilean diplomat on November 24, 1941, which the COI received some time later from British intelligence. It clearly discusses the Nazi intent to eradicate European Jewry.

The report, by the diplomat stationed in Prague, tells of the Nazi plan for the destruction of "Semitism," the "eradication" of the Jews of Europe. It was delivered to David Bruce, head of the Secret Intelligence Branch of the COI, who forwarded it to an administrative assistant to William J. Donovan, who served as Coordinator of

Information before heading the OSS. There is no indication on the document whether other Americans may have seen it.

The document was part of a release in June of 2000 at the National Archives of 400,000 pages of OSS records by the Interagency Working Group (IWG), a group that coordinates the government-wide effort to declassify federal records related to Nazi and Axis war crimes. Other related documents in the records of the OSS that add details to the story are currently being opened under the Act. IWG historians have completed an historical analysis of the Prague report and related documents, which is accessible at the IWG website: [http:// www.nara.gov/iwg /pressrel.html](http://www.nara.gov/iwg/pressrel.html).

The records add new details to the longstanding debate about how much the West learned of the Holocaust at the time. IWG public member Thomas H. Baer said, "Warnings from the allies to the Jews of Europe of a planned genocide never came. The Nazi murders depended on secrecy and subterfuge. Warnings would not have stopped the Holocaust, but they could have saved lives." Former U. S. Representative and IWG public member Elizabeth Holtzman said, "This recently declassified document helps pinpoint how much officials within our government knew about the Holocaust and when they knew it. The next question is why our government -- not to mention the British -- did nothing in response. It is unbearable to think that plans to 'eradicate' a Jewish population were a matter of such indifference."

The Chilean Despatch

During German occupation, Prague was no longer a capital of a country and most foreign diplomats had departed. The former Chilean consul, Gonzalo Montt Rivas, however, was able to resume his post because of friendly relations between Nazi Germany and neutral Chile. His location and good connections provided a unique vantage point for discerning the Nazi agenda and actions in Nazi-occupied territories, a perspective not afforded to most Western diplomats.

Prompting his despatch was a decree to be issued by Nazi Germany on November 25, 1941, announcing that Jews who had left Germany and were living abroad could not be German subjects (they had lost their citizenship by laws issued in 1935) and that all remaining assets of these Jews automatically were forfeited to the Reich.

The diplomat wrote to the Chilean government, translating part of the decree and making the following observations about Nazi policy in general:

"The Jewish problem is being partially solved in the Protectorate (Reich Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia), as it has been decided to eradicate all the Jews and send some to Poland and others to the town of Terezin, whilst looking for a more remote place.

The German triumph (in the war) will leave Europe freed of Semites. Those (Jews) who escape with their lives from this trial will certainly be deported to Siberia, where they will not have much opportunity to make use of their financial capabilities.

In proportion to the U.S.A. increasing its attacks on the Reich, Germany will expedite the destruction of Semitism, as she accuses international Judaism of all the calamities which have befallen the world.

The exodus of the Jews from the Reich has not had the results prophesied by the enemies of Germany: on the contrary: they have been replaced by Aryans with obvious advantage to everything and in everything, except in the usury line in which they are past masters."

The West received partial information about the Holocaust from a multitude of sources, but Montt's November 24, 1941 despatch came to the West in early 1942, which was very early in the flow of information. The report, was one of a set of despatches from Chilean diplomats in Europe to the Chilean Foreign Ministry in Santiago that were acquired by British intelligence and shared with American intelligence during the war.

The Declassification Effort

Since 1999, the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group (IWG) has overseen the identification, declassification review, and release of formerly classified U. S. Government records as required by the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act. Under the auspices of the IWG, U.S. Government agencies have declassified more than 3 million pages to date. The records are available for research at the National Archives. In its recent passage of the Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Act of 2000, Congress endorsed the IWG's effort to finish the European war crimes phase and move into the Japanese and Far East phase and thus complete the full task set forth in the Disclosure Act.

The IWG website provides additional background: [http:// www.nara.gov/iwg](http://www.nara.gov/iwg).

KEYWORDS:

GOVERNMENT, INTERNATIONAL

Copyright U.S. Newswire Jul 2, 2001

Indexing (details)