

German Embassy
Press Office

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The Secretary of State, Dr. Hans Globke, answers Communist attacks

In an interview with the Hamburg newspaper "Die Zeit", the Secretary of State, Dr. Hans Globke, has replied to charges that have recently been made against him by eastern sources. The Secretary of State declared in reply to charges that he had collaborated in the drafting of the Nuremberg Laws:

This is not true, I did not even know that it was intended to pass these laws. What was involved in his case was one of those sudden decisions which were typical for Hitler's method of government. Like everyone else, I only later received notice of these reprehensible laws.

In answer to the question why he had written the commentary to the Nuremberg Laws that later came in for so much criticism, Dr. Globke said the following: Rudolf Hess, Hitler's Deputy, attempted to intensify the effect of the Nuremberg "Racial Laws" by severe directives for their implementation. The Ministries of the Interior, War and Economics adopted during discussions about these directives, a more moderate attitude than Hess. Hess had a draft submitted, according to which all persons who were even of one-quarter of Jewish descent, as well as their "Aryan" spouses, were to be considered as "fully Jewish" within the meaning of the Nuremberg Laws. In view of the objections he encountered, he modified this draft by confining it to individuals who were half-Jews and their spouses. Even this version of the draft was so much pulled apart by me, when consulted in my capacity as senior official on questions of family status in the Interior Ministry, that it was eventually discarded. I took no part in formulating the other directives for enforcing the laws. Eventually, a compromise was reached during the discussions that represented the best way out under the circumstances, however unsatisfactory it was as such.

During the discussions I was surprised to be approached by the Secretary of State, Herr Stuckart, with the order to write, in collaboration with him, a modifying commentary on the Nuremberg Laws, which would counteract the intentions of Rudolf Hess to interpret the laws in the broadest possible manner. The authorities, too, interpreted the laws often in a way that was least favourable for those charged. After thinking it over, I consented. I would not have written the commentary had I been able to foresee the later development of the "Jewish Question". Under the circumstances prevailing at the time, the commentary provided protection for many persons who were being discriminated against on racial grounds. This has been confirmed to me by numerous individuals involved.

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In regard to the charge that, in certain aspects, his commentary arrived at even less favourable conclusions for those involved than the Nuremberg Laws as such, Dr. Globke replied as follows: This is untrue. I could, of course not involve the users of the commentary in difficulties, by endorsing views which were not adhered to in actual practice. If I wrote, for instance, that a marriage, entered into abroad, between a Jew and an Aryan in order to evade the prohibition of such a marriage would be void and punishable in Germany, the reason for such an interpretation was that the Reich Minister of Justice had given this legal directive, which was used by the courts in their decisions. In all instances, however, where I was not restricted by such earlier directives, my commentary chose the interpretation most favourable for those involved.

Asked why he had at the time remained in such an exposed position, the Secretary of State remarked: Many things look different in the light of today than they appeared at the time. In 1933, there was still a possibility that the national socialist rule would be of short duration. This is why the Centre Party, too, of which I was a member, advised its members to remain in their positions if possible. Later I was repeatedly asked by opponents of the Nazis not to relinquish my position.

I was not only able to supply frequently important information to these circles in time, I was also in a position to help many people. By supplying advance information, I was, for instance, responsible to a considerable extent for the fact that the planned legally-enforced divorces of "German-Jewish mixed marriages" failed because of the objections of the episcopate. I have pointed out ways to so-called "fully Jewish" persons, how they could obtain a classification as half-Jews, by submitting photographs of supposed Aryan-looking "ancestors". I have advised various persons involved, on how they could delay a negative decision about their ancestry, as happened in the case of Professor Jellinek. In a number of cases I have pointed out to persons of half-Jewish descent, how they could enter into valid marriages abroad. I was also successful in various cases to obtain the release of persons of "mixed blood", who had been arrested during mass arrests of Jews, by intervening in the competent offices on the pretension of having an official order. Senior church officials, among them Cardinal Preysing, have acknowledged that I kept them continuously informed about important developments in the Reich Ministry of the Interior.

At an early date I also made contact with military and civil groups of the resistance movement, who later attempted the coup of July 20, 1944. I was on friendly terms with General Stieff, who was later executed. I had constant contacts with Herr Kaiser, who later became a Federal Minister, and with Count Schulenburg and the Attorney Wimer, both of whom were also later executed. I participated actively in drawing up plans for personnel and the structure of the State, for the contingency that the resistance fighters would be successful.

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The Secretary of State had this to say about the letter written by the former Reich Minister, Herr Frick, to Rudolf Hess on April 25, 1938, in which he suggested Dr. Globke's promotion on the grounds of "proven loyalty and constant readiness". I had no knowledge of this letter. But surely you don't believe that Herr Frick could have recommended my promotion by citing opposite arguments? Of course he knew nothing to the contrary. I could obviously only maintain my position in which I was able to help so many opponents of the Regime by not becoming known to the Nazis as a declared opponent myself.

Replying to the charges of the lawyer, Herr Merten, that he had been in contact with Eichmann and had prevented the shipment of Jewish women and children from Greece to Israel, which had been planned by Eichmann, Dr. Globke said: I have never had any knowledge of such a plan. I would have been in no way competent to deal with this matter. The telephone conversation between Eichmann and myself, of which Merten (whom, as far as I can remember, I have never known) speaks, has never taken place. Merten has never made this assertion previously, especially not during his trial as a war criminal by the Court of Athens. But only after Eichmann's arrest. I have only once seen Eichmann casually, and I have never had any official or personal relations with him.

Asked, whether, if the clock of history could be turned back, he would again be prepared to play the part in which he had been cast by remaining in the Ministry, State Secretary Globke answered: I realised even then that my remaining in office and my collaboration on the commentary could later be misinterpreted. I believed though, that I should not deprive myself of the opportunity to render the assistance mentioned earlier. And today I am still of the opinion that I had made the correct decision.

During the many difficult situations in which I then found myself I had always hoped that my anti-national socialist activities would be an adequate explanation why I had to keep up the appearances which were essential for continuing in my position. Today, many in the Soviet Zone may be in a similar situation. Do you believe that it would be better if they all gave up their positions in order to make room for radical fanatics? One can combat a totalitarian regime from the outside and from the inside. Those who chose the latter way can maintain themselves against a powerful adversary only by cunning. For this cunning they should later not be attacked, if they can prove that by activities which at the time may have led to their death, they have manifested their true attitude.

I have so far kept silent about many of the things that I have discussed with you now. I only intended to talk about them when I no longer held a public office. It appears, however, that circumstances no longer permit me to wait.

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