

Martin Luther (1895 - 1945)

Undersecretary of State (Unterstaatssekretär)
German Foreign Office



From 1940 until 1945, Luther was Head of Department D (*Deutschland*, i.e. internal affairs) and as such responsible for liaison with Himmler and the Reich Security Main Office. He was simultaneously in charge of Section D III ("Jewish question, race policy, and providing information about important domestic developments to the foreign missions"). By his close cooperation with the Reich Security Main Office, and with Adolf Eichmann's office in particular, Luther turned Section D into one of the administrative agencies involved in the "Final Solution". In the long run, the contribution which the Foreign Office made to the genocide amounted above all to the diplomatic preparation and protection of the deportations that proceeded from occupied and friendly countries. At the Wannsee Conference, Luther recommended to defer initially all deportations from the nordic countries because of the small "Jewish numbers" and the possibility of arising troubles; instead, one should concentrate first on Europe's south-eastern and western parts.

Born in Berlin. Did not graduate from high school. War volunteer in 1914, and lieutenant in 1918. Worked subsequently as a shipping agent for furniture. Joined the Nazi Party (NSDAP) in March 1932. In 1933/34, Head of the Economic Consulting Center of the NSDAP in Berlin. Placed in charge of the Party's Consulting Center at the Office of the Representative of the Nazi Party for Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, in 1936. When the latter was appointed foreign minister in 1938, Luther became Head of the "Special Section of the Nazi Party" within the Foreign Office. In 1941 appointed permanent secretary (*Ministerialdirektor*), although his official designation was "undersecretary of state" (*Unterstaatssekretär*). On account of his attempt to overthrow Ribbentrop, he was dismissed in February 1943 and imprisoned as a "privileged prisoner in protective custody" in the Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen near Berlin. Freed by the Red Army, Luther died a month later in Berlin.

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