

Luther, Martin

(1896--1945), Head of the German division of Germany's Foreign Office from 1940 to 1943. The owner of a furniture-moving business, Luther joined the Nazi Party and the Storm Troopers (SA) in 1932. While redecorating his home, Luther became close to German diplomat Joachim von *Ribbentrop*. Luther slowly entrenched himself in Ribbentrop's staff, and when Ribbentrop became Foreign Minister in 1938, Luther was brought into the Foreign Office.

Luther's career flourished; he became chief of "Division Germany" in 1940 and undersecretary in 1941. His main goal was to nazify the Foreign Office, while at the same time defend it against Nazi Party rivals. Therefore, when Luther realized at the end of 1941 that the Nazis' main priority was the "final solution"---the deportation and extermination of Europe's Jews---he made sure that it became a priority for the Foreign Office, too. After Luther attended the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, where the implementation of the Final Solution was discussed, the Foreign Office fully cooperated with the ss regarding the deportations.

Luther gradually got fed up with Ribbentrop's inadequacies as Foreign Minister, and tried to unseat him. However, the coup backfired and Luther was arrested. He spent the rest of the war at *Sachsenhausen*, and died soon after the war's end.