

Exchange of Letters Between Hindenburg and Hitler Concerning the Status of Jews who Served in the German Army

Berlin, April 4, 1933

The President of the Reich

To

The Reich Chancellor

Adolf Hilter

Berlin

Dear Mr. Chancellor!

Recently, a whole series of cases has been reported to me in which judges, lawyers, and officials of the Judiciary who are disabled war veterans and whose record in office is flawless, have been forcibly sent on leave, and are later to be dismissed for the sole reason that they are of Jewish descent.

It is quite intolerable for me personally...that Jewish officials who were disabled in the war should suffer such treatment, [especially] as, with the express approval of the government, I addressed a Proclamation to the German people on the day of the national uprising, March 21, in which I bowed in reverence before the dead of the war and remembered in gratitude the bereaved families of the war dead, the disabled, and my old comrades at the front. I am certain, Mr. Chancellor, that you share this human feeling, and request you, most cordially and urgently, to look into this matter yourself, and to see to it that there is some uniform arrangement for all branches of the public service in Germany. As far as my own feelings are concerned, officials, judges, teachers and lawyers who are war invalids, fought at the front, are sons of war dead, or themselves lost sons in the war should remain in their positions unless an individual case gives reason for different treatment. If they were worthy of fighting for Germany and bleeding for Germany, then they must also be considered worthy of continuing to serve the Fatherland in their professions....

April 5, 1933

The Chancellor

Dear Mr. President!

In a most generous and humane manner you, Mr. Field Marshal, plead the cause of those members of the Jewish people who were once compelled, by the requirements of universal military service, to serve in the war. I entirely understand these lofty sentiments, Mr. Field Marshal. But, with the greatest respect, may I point out that members and supporters of my movement, who are Germans, for years were driven from all Government positions, without consideration for their wives and children or their war service.... Those responsible for this cruelty were the same Jewish [political] parties which today complain when their supporters are denied the right to official positions, with a thousand times more justification, because they are of little use in these positions but can do limitless harm... Nevertheless, Mr. Field Marshal, in consideration of your noble motives, I had already discussed the preparation of a law with Minister of the Interior Frick which would remove the solution of these questions from arbitrary individual action and provide a uniform law. And I pointed out to the Reich Minister of Interior the cases for which you, Mr. Field Marshal, wished to see exceptions made. The law in question received preliminary discussion at several meetings last week and will provide consideration for those Jews who either served in the war themselves, were disabled in the war, have other merits, or never gave occasion for complaint in the course of a long period of service. In general, the primary aim of this cleansing process is only to restore a certain sound and natural balance, and, secondly, to remove from official positions of national significance those elements to which one cannot entrust [the choice between] Germany's survival or destruction. For it will not be possible to avoid, in the next few years, [the need] to make sure that certain processes which must not be communicated to the rest of the world for reasons of the highest national interest, will indeed remain secret. This can only be guaranteed by the inner homogeneity of the administrative bodies concerned.

I beg you, Mr. President, to believe that I will try to do justice to your noble feelings as far as is possible. I understand your inner motivations and myself,

by the way, frequently suffer under the harshness of a fate which forces us to make decisions which, from a human point of view, one would a thousand times rather avoid.

Work on the law in question will proceed as quickly as possible, and I am convinced that this matter, too, will then find the best possible solution.

I am, in sincere and profound respect,

Your ever devoted,

Signed Adolf Hitler

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Abraham Margaliot (Eds.), *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 1981, Document no. 9, pp. 37-39.