

Reactions to Kristallnacht in the United States

A Report by the German Ambassador in Washington, Dieckhoff, 14 November 1938:

I believe the storm now raging over the United States will calm down in the near future. As for now, a hurricane is raging here and no regular work can be done. It is well known that a large part of the American press has been attacking Germany in the most hateful and vicious way, and that this incitement has become widespread. Until 10 November, large and strong parts of the American people were still indifferent to the propaganda campaign, partly because of indifference in what regards European matters, partly because of scepticism concerning the newspapers, partly out of sympathy for the Third Reich... Today this is no longer the case... There are still wide circles that are indifferent, and many individuals who are maintaining their calm, but as far as public opinion is being expressed, it is without exception enraged and bitter against Germany. The outcry comes not only from Jews, but equally from all quarters and classes, including German-Americans. What I find so remarkable is that with few exceptions, the decent national circles who are mostly anti-Communist and anti-Semitic, are starting to distance themselves from us. It is no surprise that Jewish newspapers are now more outspoken and that Catholic bishops incite more viciously against Germany than in the past. However, it is to be taken seriously that people like Dewey, Hoover, Hearst and many others who in the past were relatively reserved and even sometimes expressed sympathy to Germany, are now publicly adopting such a violent and bitter attitude against us. There is one basic idea that is common to all these public declarations. An American friend of mine put it in the following way: It is generally felt, even among those who wish Germany well that the recent events are the best thing that could have happened to the Jews and the worst thing that could have happened to Germany, because they arouse universal sympathy. It jeopardises the appeasement that was to follow Munich...

Source: ***Into the Dark Night, Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933 – 1939.***

