

Rademacher, Franz

(1906-1973), Nazi Foreign Office official. Rademacher was the head of D III, the so-called Jewish desk (*Judenreferat*) of the German Foreign Office, from May 1940 until April 1943. The son of a locomotive engineer, Rademacher studied law, entered the civil service, and, like many government employees, joined the Nazi party in March 1933. He was called to the Foreign Office in 1937 and served several years abroad before being appointed head of D III. As the new Foreign Office "Jewish expert," Rademacher sought immediately to transcend the rather mundane tasks of his predecessor and claim for the Foreign Office a major role in realizing a "final solution to the Jewish question" within the framework of Germany's war aims and anticipated victory. Among the possibilities he suggested in this regard was the expulsion of the European Jews to the island of Madagascar, a French colony in the Indian Ocean. When this notion met with approval from above, Rademacher devoted himself to preparing the Madagascar plan (simultaneously developed by Adolf Eichmann), until German failure to defeat Great Britain made clear that it could not soon be realized.

In the fall of 1941 Rademacher became directly involved for the first time in the mass murder of Jews when he was sent to Serbia to help occupation authorities there find a "local solution" (in this case firing-squad executions) to the Jewish question. Most of the time, however, he did his work behind a desk in Berlin. As the "final solution" was implemented throughout Europe, Rademacher's *Judenreferat* was responsible for minimizing foreign-policy complications that might jeopardize or delay the deportations, and in this regard he was all too successful. His desk also served as the liaison between Eichmann's office which was in charge of coordinating the deportations, the German embassies, and special "advisers for Jewish affairs" in the Axis and satellite countries.

As part of a reorganization of the German Foreign Office in the spring of 1943, Rademacher was released for military service in the navy. After the war he was tried in the German state court in Nuremberg-Furth and convicted. However, he jumped bail while the case was being appealed and fled to Syria

in 1953. Penniless and in ill health, he returned to Germany in 1966 and faced a further trial, conviction, and appeal before his death in 1973.