

QUOTES: DANISH RESCUE AND RESISTANCE



Cut apart the quotes below and distribute one to each student. Depending upon the size of the group, these pages may need to be reproduced and more than one student may receive the same quote.



1 "The Jews are a part of the Danish nation. We have no Jewish problem in our country because we never had an inferiority complex in relation to the Jews. If the Jews are forced to wear the yellow Star, I and my whole family shall wear it as a badge of honor." [The badge was never introduced in Denmark.]
- King Christian X

2 "I will assume responsibility for everything I am going to do. I am consoled by my strong faith that good deeds can never be wrong."
- Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, September 26, 1943, diary entry
[Duckwitz was a German diplomat in occupied Denmark who tipped off the Danish Jews about the Nazi plan to deport the Jewish population and arranged for their reception in Sweden.]

3 "I tell you that I would rather die with the Jews than live with the Nazis."
- Pastor Ivar Lange of Frederiksberg Church, October 3, 1943

4 "When here in this country pogroms have been started against a special group of our fellow countrymen, only because they belong to a special race, then the church has a right to cry out. This is breaking the constitution of Christ's kingdom and is abominable to the Nordic way of thinking. The church must here be indefatigable."
- Kaj Munk, Danish Minister, October 1943

5 "The persecution of the Jews has hit the Danes in the sorest point of their conception of justice; even the much too tolerant, the passive, the lukewarm can feel this meanness and shrink from it...We couldn't yield to the German threats when the Jews' well-being was at stake. Nor can we yield today...We have helped them, and we shall go on helping them by all the means at our disposal. The episodes of the past two nights have to us become part of Denmark's fate, and if we desert the Jews in this hour of their misery, we desert our native country."
- Editorial in Danish Underground Newspaper in response to German attempts to get Danes to surrender Jews in hiding by releasing Danish detained soldiers and lifting the existing state of emergency

Source: The Institute for the Study of Rescue and Altruism in the Holocaust, "Quotes: Danish Rescue and Relief," <https://www.holocaustrescue.org/danish-rescue-quotes>.

6 "It was the natural thing to do. I would have helped any group of Danes being persecuted. The Germans' picking on the Jews made as much sense to me as picking on redheads."
– Dr. Karl Henry Koster, Danish physician

7 "I was brought up to believe in democracy and to believe that you have to be willing to fight if you want to preserve that democracy. As for helping the Jews, I didn't feel any particular responsibility for Jews. As a matter of fact, I never thought of them as Jews or anything else. They were merely my countrymen and they needed my help."
– Signe Jensen, Danish nurse

8 "It was never a question of Jew or non-Jew. It was a question of people in distress. I would have helped anyone to escape from the Gestapo."
– Jørgen Knudsen, Danish citizen

9 "We Danes know that the whole population stands behind resistance to the German oppressors. The Council calls on the Danish population to help in every way possible those Jewish fellow-citizens who have not yet succeeded in escaping abroad. Every Dane who renders help to the Germans in the persecution of human beings is a traitor and will be punished as such when Germany is defeated."
– Danish Freedom Council

10 "The Danish Jews are a living part of the people, and the whole nation is therefore profoundly affected by the measures which have been taken and which must be regarded as an infringement of the Danish conception of justice."
– Statement by the Council of Nine (a group of political leaders) condemning the deportation of Danish Jews

11 "Despite different religious views, we shall...struggle to ensure the continued guarantee to our Jewish brothers and sisters of the same freedom we ourselves treasure more than life itself. The leaders of the Danish Church have a clear understanding of the duty to be law-abiding citizens...our conscience obliges us...to maintain the law and to protest against any violation of rights."
– Protest by Danish Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard, read in Danish churches on Sunday, October 3, 1943

12 "From now on there was no doubt or uncertainty possible. In the face of these open acts of atrocity, insanely meaningless, it was not a question of one's viewpoint. Action was the word. Even under serious or desperate conditions it is often a happy feeling to be able to devote oneself to a cause that one feels convinced is both unconditionally just and absolutely binding. The situation in Denmark at that time was precisely that simple. No honest man could possibly refrain from action after this raid, when the persecuted cried for help."
– Aage Bertelsen, Danish citizen, October 1943