



SETTLING SCORES WITH GERMAN PERPETRATORS OF CRIMES
FROM THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

(UN)PUNISHED CRIMES

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE







**SETTLING SCORES WITH GERMAN PERPETRATORS OF CRIMES
FROM THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

(UN)PUNISHED CRIMES

E X H I B I T I O N C A T A L O G U E

KIELCE 2023

1.

Among the victorious powers which were actively engaged in the post-war settlements was the Soviet Union. However, up to this day the Soviets themselves have not been held responsible for the aggression against Poland, Finland, the occupation of the Baltic states, parts of Romania, deportations of citizens of conquered countries, mass repressions, or the murder of Polish prisoners of war in the spring of 1940. Photo: Exhumations in Katyn, 1943. [IPN]

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The war of 1939–1945 claimed the number of victims that was incomparable to that of earlier armed conflicts. In Europe alone, 26–62 million people were killed or died. Most were civilians. The military defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies made it possible to bring those responsible for war crimes to justice. The prosecution and trials of German criminals were an element of post-war settlements in Europe. Already during the war, work began on the form of prosecuting the perpetrators of war crimes and the leaders of the Third Reich. In 1943, the first trials took place. However, it is only after the defeat of Germany and the end of the hostilities that the Allies began preparations for thorough court settlements.

Many politicians of the Third Reich did not stand trial, including Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, and Josef Goebbels, who committed suicide in the spring of 1945. In Nuremberg, for the first time in history, an international institution convicted the leaders of a sovereign country and revealed the essential mechanisms and criminal nature of Nazi Germany. Thousands of direct perpetrators were prosecuted by the Allied military courts that operated in the four occupation zones of Germany, trying crimes against citizens of the anti-German coalition states.

At the same time, trials before the courts of individual countries took place in Europe. This concerned both the countries that were part of the Third Reich before 1939 or were its wartime allies,

as well as those occupied by the Third Reich. The scope of settlements with Germany in Western Europe was much smaller than in its eastern part. For political reasons, settlements were scaled down, the number of trials decreased, sentences became more lenient, and convicts were released from prison earlier.

The Cold War politics also left its mark on settlements in the east of the continent. The communists used it to fight post-war political opponents. The conflict with the West resulted in a steady reduction in the number of suspects extradited to Eastern European countries. In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC) was disbanded, and the Yugoslav-Soviet conflict began. In the face of the progressing Sovietization of Eastern Bloc countries and the espionage paranoia prevailing in them, the prosecution of German war criminals lost in significance.

The first phase of the settlements lasted until the mid-1950s. The next, less intense one, opened with the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961 – it drew the world's attention to the problem of criminals in hiding and demonstrated the role of the Holocaust in the criminal activities of the Third Reich. Since the 1960s, the judiciary of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) has been more active in prosecuting Nazi crimes. The activities of "Nazi hunters" and state institutions led to the extradition and trial of some criminals hiding in South America.

Most of the perpetrators of the crimes have not been punished. The post-war chaos allowed some to hide in Italy, Spain, Switzerland, the Middle East or South America. Many escaped prosecution even though they continued to live in Germany (sometimes under changed names), taking advantage of the tardiness of the justice system. A huge number of cases initiated at the request of other countries ended in discontinuation, as did attempts to extradite suspects of crimes. Since the 1960s, Nazi criminals have been tried almost exclusively in Germany. The few trials outside Germany were generally held without the presence of the accused.

Although trials for war crimes are still held, the prosecution of perpetrators is ending for biological reasons. Although nearly one hundred thousand Germans accused of war crimes have been tried to date, yet: in the case of most concentration camps, less than ten percent of their garrisons have been brought to justice; out of 1,701 suspects known to the German judiciary for their involvement in mass murders in the districts of Danzig (Gdańsk) and West Prussia, only ten have been sentenced; it is estimated that several hundred thousand to even several million Wehrmacht soldiers took part in the crimes.

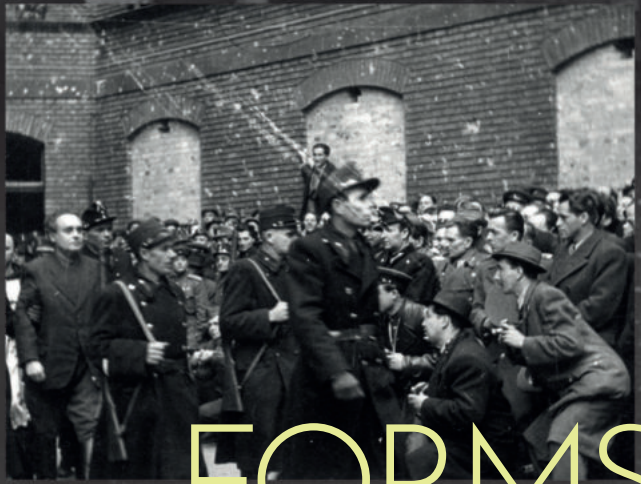
2.

The Thessaloniki wartime commissioner Max Merten was arrested in Greece in 1957 and sentenced to 25 years in prison. Due to the pressure from the West German government, however, he left prison after only eight months. Promises of financial assistance and the payment of compensation to Greece by the Federal Republic of Germany led to the formal end of legal settlements with the Germans and the closure in 1959 of the Greek office for war crimes. Photo: Max Merten on his way to trial, 1959. [Yad Vashem Photo Archive]



1.

Post-war settlements in Europe concerned mainly European citizens who engaged in various forms of collaboration. In Belgium, Germans accounted for only 0.2 percent, while in Poland for as much as 30 percent of convicts (which included the Volksdeutsche, however). Photo: The trial of the Belgian concentration camp guards in Breendonk, Mechelen, May 7, 1946. [Regionale Beeldbank – Stadsarchief Mechelen]



3.

Across Europe, leaders of governments, and heads of institutions and organizations dependent on the Third Reich were tried. Photo: The execution of Ferenc Szálasi, Prime Minister of Hungary in 1944–1945. Budapest, March 12, 1946. [fortepan]

2.

The prosecution of Nazi collaborators through court trials in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Italy, France, and Czechoslovakia was preceded by the period of so-called “wild” settlements. Photo: Benito Mussolini’s body hanged together with bodies of his comrades who had tried to escape with him, in a square in the centre of Milan, April 29, 1945. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]

FORMS OF CRIME SETTLEMENTS

4.

The Asian equivalent of the Nuremberg trials of 1945–1946 was the trial before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East held in Tokyo in 1946–1948. Photo: The Tokyo trial, 1946. [Library of Congress]



3.



B E F O R E N U R E M B E R G

1.

In January 1942, during the conference at St. James's Palace in London convened on the initiative of the Polish government, nine countries occupied during the war issued a joint declaration that announced that the direct perpetrators of the crime and their superiors would be brought to justice. Photo: Speech by the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile, Władysław Sikorski, January 13, 1942. [State Library Victoria]

| from to LONDON |
| to LONDON |



2.

Photo: Representatives of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, the United States, and China signing the declaration to prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes. Moscow, October 30, 1943. [Photo: Fu Bingchang. Photo courtesy of CH Foo, YW Foo, and Special Collections, University of Bristol Library (www.hpcbristol.net)]



3.

Influenced by reports of German atrocities and publications of photographs of liberated concentration camps, the American administration and public opinion opted for the execution of the leaders of the Third Reich by firing squad, without trial. Photo: KL Lublin (Majdanek) after liberation, 1944. [Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku]



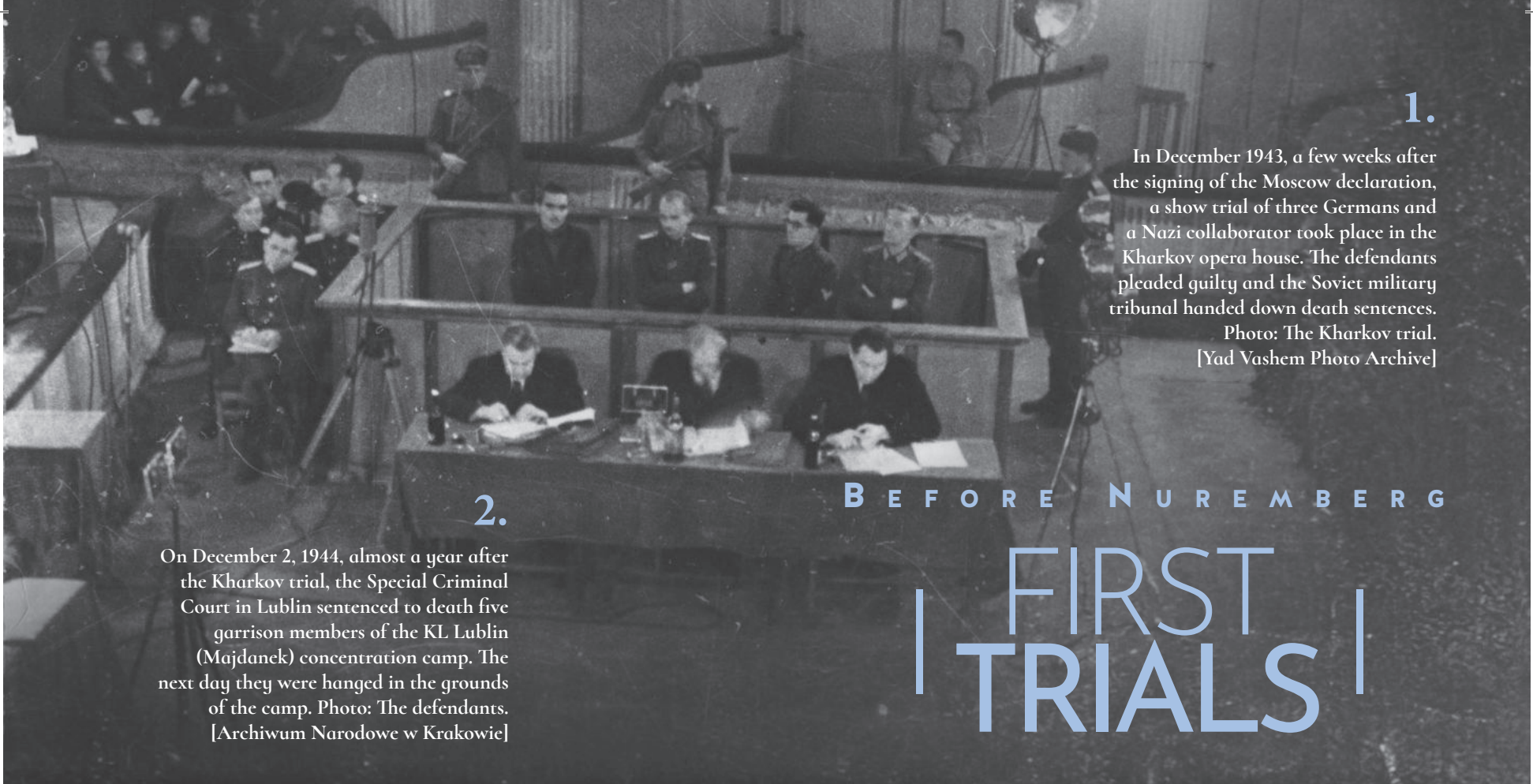
4.

Photo: General Eisenhower at the liberated Ohrdruf concentration camp in Thuringia, April 1945. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]

5.

During the conference in London, it was eventually decided that the most important war criminals would be tried by the International Military Tribunal, and the rest by courts in individual countries or Allied zones in occupied Germany. Photo: Signing of the agreement concluding the London conference, August 8, 1945. [State Library Victoria]





1.

In December 1943, a few weeks after the signing of the Moscow declaration, a show trial of three Germans and a Nazi collaborator took place in the Kharkov opera house. The defendants pleaded guilty and the Soviet military tribunal handed down death sentences.

Photo: The Kharkov trial. [Yad Vashem Photo Archive]

B E F O R E N U R E M B E R G

FIRST TRIALS

2.

On December 2, 1944, almost a year after the Kharkov trial, the Special Criminal Court in Lublin sentenced to death five garrison members of the KL Lublin (Majdanek) concentration camp. The next day they were hanged in the grounds of the camp. Photo: The defendants. [Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie]



3.

In June 1945, in occupied Germany, the military court of the US 15th Army sentenced three people to death for the murder of a US Army airman in August 1944. Photo: Local NSDAP leader Peter Back on the gallows. Rheinbach, June 29, 1945. [NIOD]

4.

As early as in the summer of 1945, war crimes trials were already taking place before the national courts in Poland, Austria, or Czechoslovakia. Photo: The trial of Prague deputy mayor Josef Pfitzner, sentenced to death and executed. Prague, September 1945. [IPN]



5.

The first Allied war crimes trial was held in Caserta, Italy. In October 1945, General Anton Dostler was convicted of ordering the execution by firing squad of American prisoners of war in March 1944. Photo: Execution of the sentence, December 1, 1945. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]



1.

The search for people suspected of committing war crimes began even before the end of the war. Photo: SS men from Buchenwald detained by the Americans, April 1945. [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]

2.

Suspects were detained not only in Germany, but also in other European countries. Photo: Selection of Gestapo officers and war criminals in the Norwegian camp for German prisoners of war in Mandal, May 1945. [Statsarkivet i Stavanger]

3.

Some individuals who had been in charge of the German terror system were also brought to justice. Photo: Carl Oberg, the SS and Police Leader in the Radom District and then in occupied France, captured near Kitzbühel in May 1945. Despite being sentenced to death twice, he left a French prison in 1962. [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]

4.

At the same time, necessary evidence started to be collected in order to prepare an indictment against the leaders of the Third Reich. Photo: Rudolf Hess interrogated by American prosecutors, October 1945. [Photo by Ch. Alexander, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum]



B E F O R E N U R E M B E R G

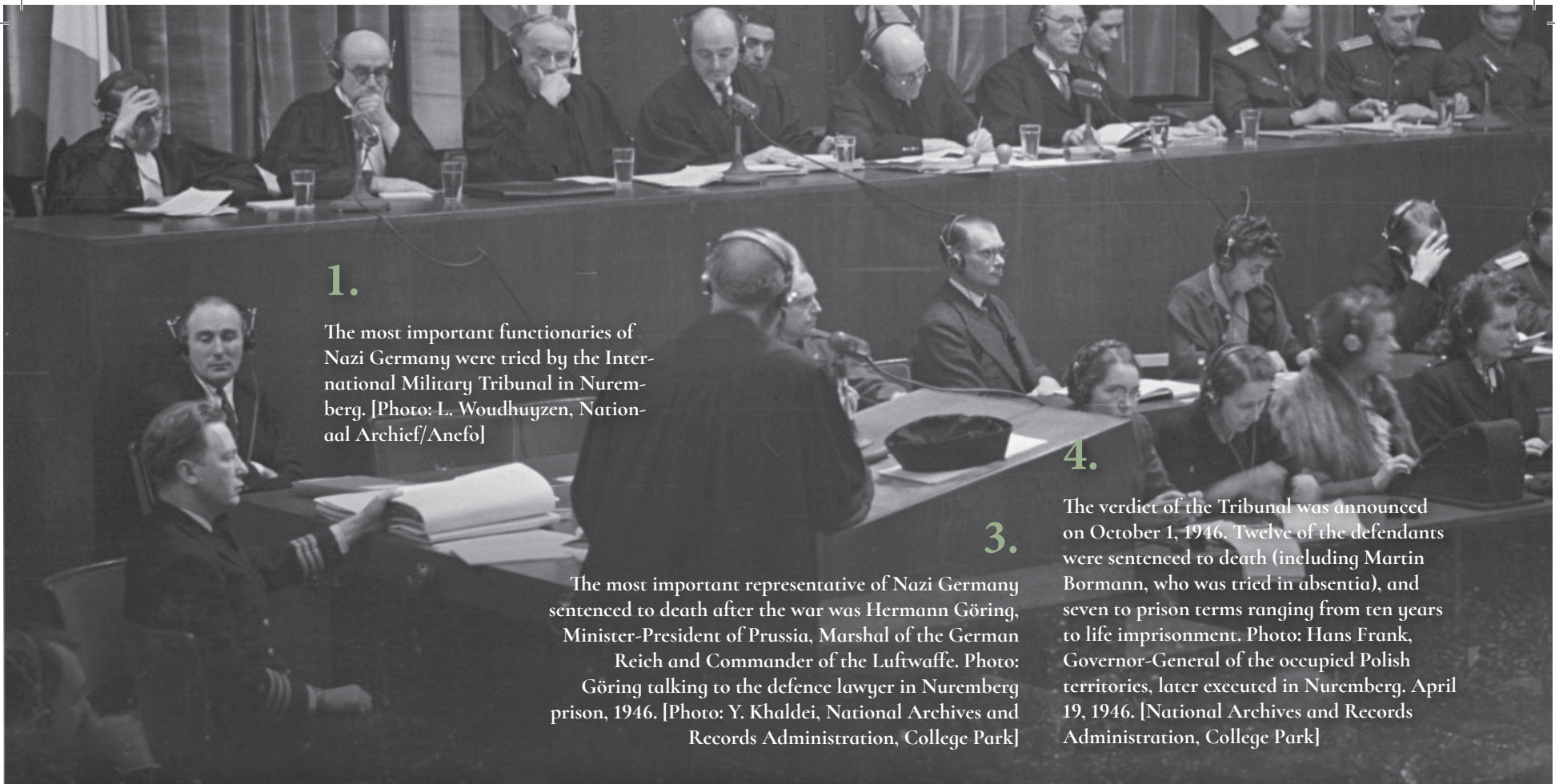
PREPARATIONS

5.

Photo: US military lawyers scour files for evidence to be presented at war crimes trials, 1945. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]



6.



1.

The most important functionaries of Nazi Germany were tried by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. [Photo: L. Woudhuyzen, Nationaal Archief/Anefo]

4.

The verdict of the Tribunal was announced on October 1, 1946. Twelve of the defendants were sentenced to death (including Martin Bormann, who was tried in absentia), and seven to prison terms ranging from ten years to life imprisonment. Photo: Hans Frank, Governor-General of the occupied Polish territories, later executed in Nuremberg. April 19, 1946. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]

3.

The most important representative of Nazi Germany sentenced to death after the war was Hermann Göring, Minister-President of Prussia, Marshal of the German Reich and Commander of the Luftwaffe. Photo: Göring talking to the defence lawyer in Nuremberg prison, 1946. [Photo: Y. Khaldei, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]



2.

Side by side with the co-founders of the Third Reich, government ministers, military and SS commanders, party activists and governors of the occupied territories, less significant functionaries of the National Socialist state were indicted as well. Photo: The accused and their defence lawyers, December 4, 1945. [Photo: L. Woudhuyzen, Nationaal Archief/Anefo]

THE BIG FOUR ARE HOLDING THE GERMANS ACCOUNTABLE

NUREMBERG 1945-1946

5.

The trial before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg aroused numerous controversies. Photo: Communists rally in Hamburg against the Nuremberg acquittals. [Deutsches Historisches Museum]



7.



1.

During twelve successive trials in Nuremberg between 1946 and 1949, the Americans tried both the direct perpetrators of the crimes, as well as employees of Nazi institutions, military commanders and representatives of economic circles of the Third Reich. Photo: Doctors' trial, 1946. [Photo: R. D'Addario, Stadtarchiv Nürnberg A 65/II Nr RA-178-D]

THE BIG FOUR ARE HOLDING THE GERMANS ACCOUNTABLE

TWELVE NUREMBERG TRIALS

3.

Of the 177 people tried in Nuremberg between 1946 and 1949, 24 were sentenced to death and 20 to life imprisonment. Most death sentences (14) were handed down in the trial of Einsatzgruppen officers. Photo: Paul Blobel, a high-ranking Einsatzgruppen officer responsible for the extermination of tens of thousands of Jews in Ukraine, is being sentenced to death, April 10, 1948. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]

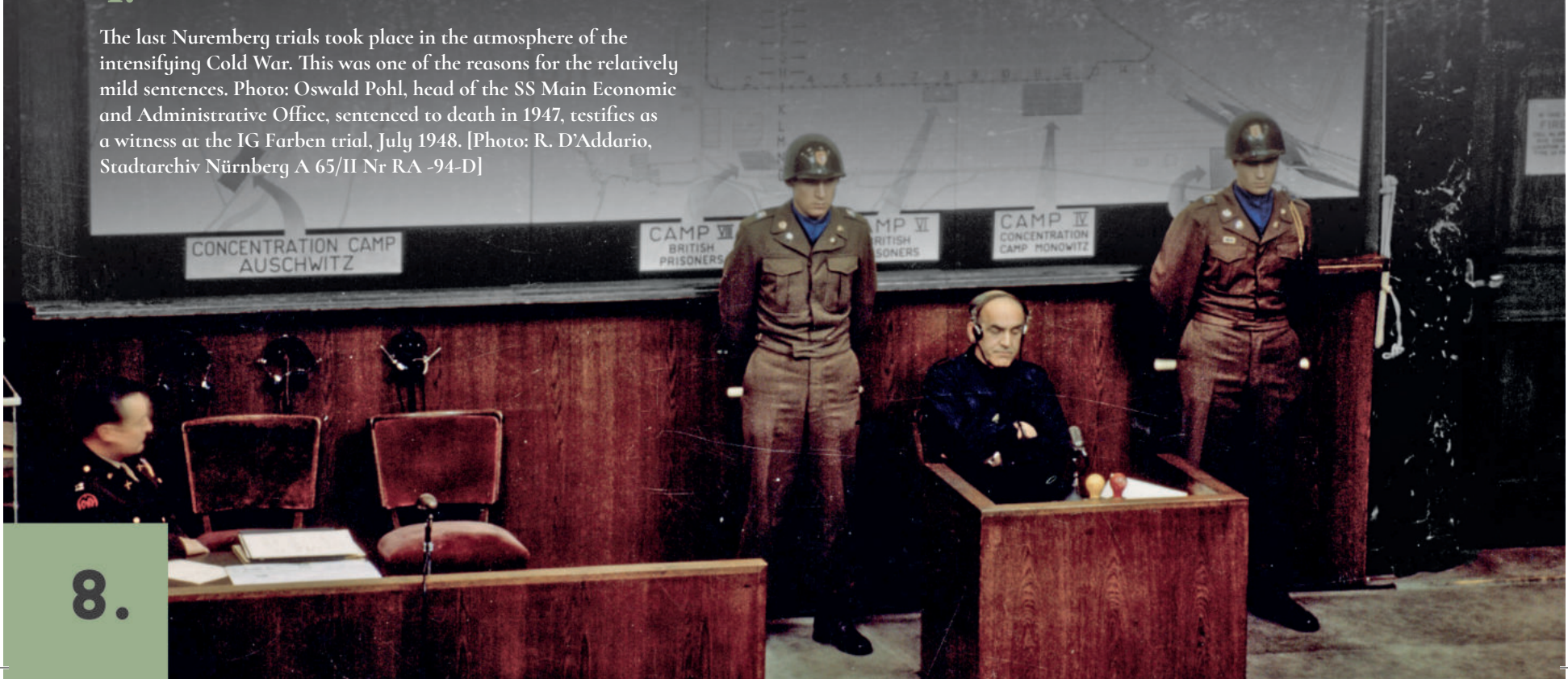
2.

Among the seven sentenced to death in the Doctors' trial was Dr. Karl Brandt, Reich Commissioner for Sanitation and Health, and Hitler's personal physician. [State Library Victoria]



4.

The last Nuremberg trials took place in the atmosphere of the intensifying Cold War. This was one of the reasons for the relatively mild sentences. Photo: Oswald Pohl, head of the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office, sentenced to death in 1947, testifies as a witness at the IG Farben trial, July 1948. [Photo: R. D'Addario, Stadtarchiv Nürnberg A 65/II Nr RA -94-D]



8.



1.

The American military courts in occupied Germany conducted a significant part of their proceedings on the site of the former concentration camp in Dachau. Photo: The trial of 74 SS men accused of crimes against American soldiers in Malmédy, June 20, 1946. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]

2.

In nearly five hundred trials, the Americans sentenced over 1,400 people (426 of them received the death penalty), including garrison members of concentration camps and perpetrators of crimes against Allied soldiers. Photo: Trial of the garrison of KL Dachau. The witness Rudolf Wolf identifies the camp kapo Emil Mahl, 1945. [Horace Hansen Collection at the Riesenfeld Rare Books Research Center, University of Minnesota Law Library]

3.

By the end of 1949, the British war crimes court had sentenced 1,085 defendants, 240 out of whom received the death sentence. Photo: The first trial of the Bergen-Belsen garrison – the former camp commandant Josef Kramer in conversation with his defence lawyer. Lüneburg, September 19, 1945. [Imperial War Museum]

4.

The French military tribunal sat in Rastatt, and among the nearly eight hundred people convicted there, there were some garrison members of the Natzweiler-Struthof and Ravensbrück concentration camps. Photo: Rastatt tribunal courtroom. [Kreisarchiv Rastatt]



THE BIG FOUR ARE HOLDING THE GERMANS ACCOUNTABLE

ALLIED MILITARY TRIBUNALS

5.

By 1955, the Soviet occupation tribunals had tried at least 35,000 people, but mainly for post-war crimes. Photo: A show trial in Berlin of a dozen or so garrison members of KL Sachsenhausen. On November 1, 1947, most of the accused were sentenced to life imprisonment. [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]



9.



1.

By the end of the Soviet occupation in 1955, Austrian People's Courts had sentenced more than thirteen thousand people, out of whom 43 received death sentences, and 27 those of life imprisonment. The amnesty of 1957 essentially ended the country's judicial settlements with Nazism. Photo: Four members of the SA tried for the murder of 102 Hungarian Jews from the Engerau camp near Bratislava in March 1945. Vienna, August 17, 1945. [Österreichische Nationalbibliothek]

DOMESTIC SYSTEM
OF JUSTICE

AUSTRIA and DIVIDED GERMANY

2.

German courts tried crimes committed against citizens of the Third Reich and stateless persons in Germany. By 1950, more than 5,200 people had been sentenced in the western occupation zones. Photo: The trial of the personnel members of Hadamar euthanasia centre, where more than fifteen thousand people were murdered. Frankfurt am Main, 1947. [PAP/DPA]



4.

In just two months in 1950, 3,324 people were convicted in Waldheim, East Germany, most of whom received harsh prison sentences. The trials violated the principles of legal proceedings, and ten of them were show-trials. Photo: The trial of Alfred Schultz, accused of murdering forced labourers in Meissen, June 21, 1950. [Bundesarchiv]

3.

A dozen or so people suspected of murdering patients were tried in the summer of 1947 in Dresden, in the Soviet occupation zone. The trial resulted in three death sentences. [Bundesarchiv]



10.

1.

In France, where settlements with local Nazi collaborators were regarded as the most important, by the mid-1950s over 2,300 German criminals had been convicted. Photo: The trial of the Gauleiter of Alsace Robert Wagner and his six subordinates. Strasbourg, 1946. [Archives de la Ville et de l'Eurométropole de Strasbourg, 1 FI 11/43]

2.

Among the Benelux countries, the largest number of Third Reich officials (242) were tried in the Netherlands. Photo: The trial of Albin Rauter, a senior SS and police commander in the occupied Netherlands. The Hague, 1948. [Nationaal Archief/Anefo]



3.

The total of 87 Germans and Austrians were brought to trial before the Belgian courts. Photo: Breendonk camp commandant Philipp Schmitt, sentenced to death in 1950. [Centre d'Études et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines (CegeSoma)]

4.

Although the German occupation in Norway was more brutal than in Denmark, similar numbers of perpetrators were brought to justice in both countries – about eighty in each. In Norway, however, the sentences were more severe. Photo: SS-Obersturmbannführer Gerhard Flesch, sentenced to death. In 1939 he was the leader of the Einsatzkommando which murdered inhabitants of the Greater Poland region, and later the head of the Security Police and SD in Bergen and Trondheim. [Falstadsenteret]



5.

Photo: The four most important leaders of the German occupation authorities in Denmark during a break in the interrogation. First from the right is Werner Best, organiser of Einsatzgruppen in Poland, from 1942 Reich Plenipotentiary in Denmark; he was sentenced to death in 1948, but left prison in 1951 after an appeal. Copenhagen, 1947. [Nationalmuseet]



6.

Italy, Germany's wartime ally, pursued a limited policy of defascization. Until 1952, only eleven trials of German perpetrators were held. Photo: Herbert Kappler, head of the SD and Security Police in Rome, during the March 1944 Ardeatine massacre trial, when he was convicted. Rome, 1948. [Fototeca Gilardi]

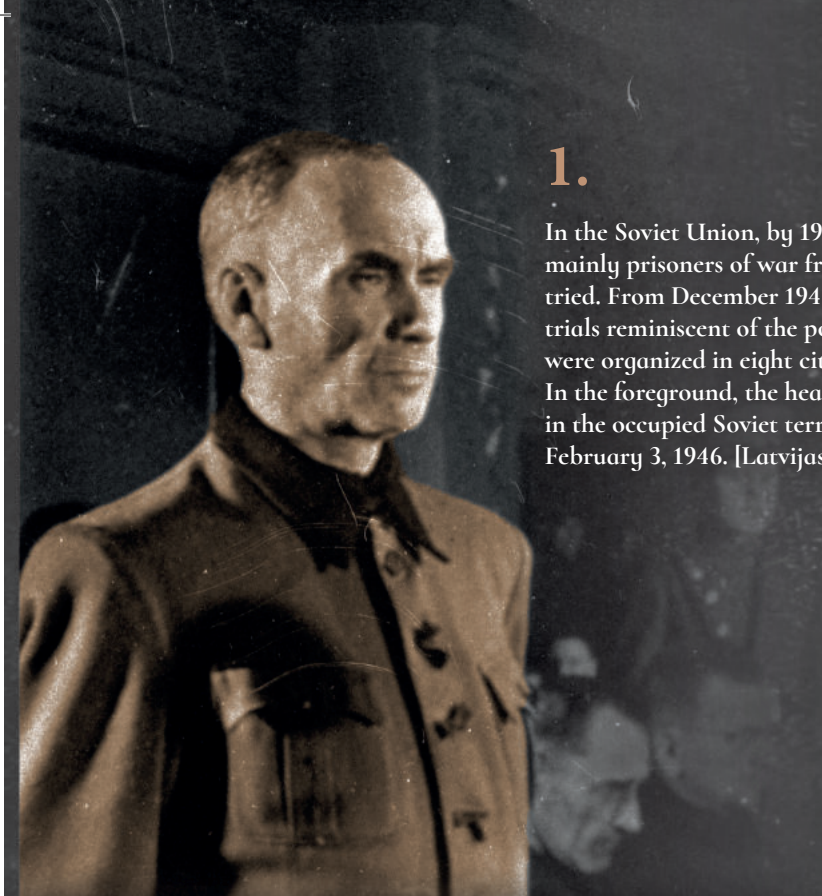
7.

In Greece, the prosecution of criminals from the years of German occupation was hindered by the civil war that lasted until 1949. As a consequence, only seventeen trials took place. Later, in the name of good economic relations with Germany, the prosecution of German criminals was abandoned. Photo: The execution of Friedrich Schubert, the commander of the unit responsible for numerous crimes in Crete and Macedonia. Thessaloniki, October 22, 1947. [Photo: S. Iordanikis, Thessaloniki Museum of Photography]



DOMESTIC
SYSTEM
OF JUSTICE

WESTERN, NORTHERN and SOUTHERN EUROPE

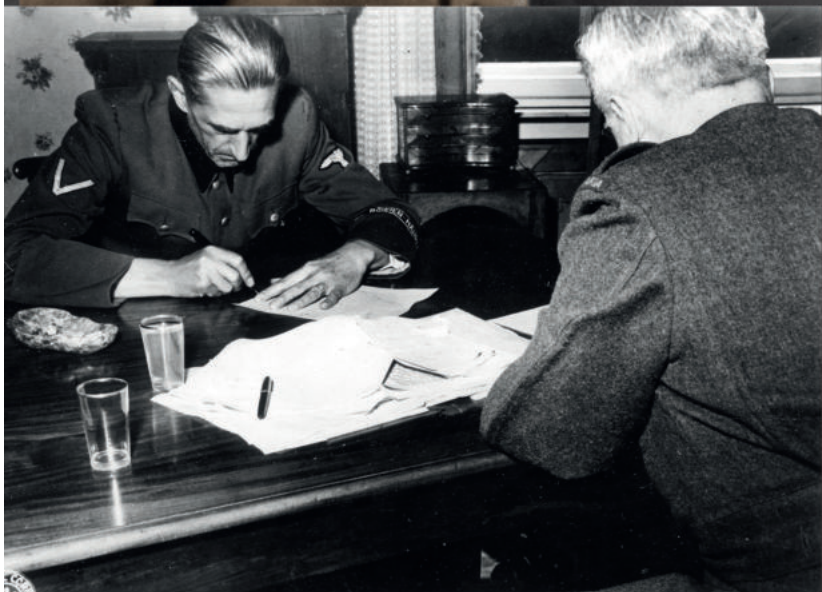


1.

In the Soviet Union, by 1954, 21-30 thousand Germans, mainly prisoners of war from the Wehrmacht, were tried. From December 1945 to February 1946, show trials reminiscent of the political purges of the 1930s were organized in eight cities. Photo: Trial in Riga. In the foreground, the head of the police and the SS in the occupied Soviet territories, Friedrich Jeckeln, February 3, 1946. [Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs]

3.

In Romania, Northern Transylvania People's Tribunal in Cluj sentenced 83 Germans. Sentences were usually passed in absentia and not enforced. Photo: Trial in Cluj, 1946. [Yad Vashem Photo Archive]



DOMESTIC SYSTEM
OF JUSTICE

EASTERN BLOCK

2.

In Czechoslovakia, retribution was carried out separately in the Czech and Slovak territories. It took a more radical form in Czechia, where people's courts convicted several thousand Germans for collaboration and various crimes. Photo: Interrogation of SS-Obergruppenführer Karl Herman Frank, who had been in charge of the repressions in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia [IPN]

4.

The post-war settlements conducted in Yugoslavia were marked by ethnic conflicts, the problem of extensive collaboration with the Nazis, and the struggle for power.

As a result, about four thousand Germans and 2,600 Volksdeutsche were sentenced. Photo: General Aleksander Löhr, commander of German troops in the Balkans responsible for the bombing of Warsaw in 1939 and Belgrade in 1941, testifying in the court. Belgrade, 1947. [Muzej Jugoslavije]



1.

Prosecution of Nazi crimes in Poland began even before the end of the war. The Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland dealt with the investigations and the collection of evidence. Photo: Members of the Main Commission visiting the ruins of the crematorium in Brzezinka (Birkenau), April 5, 1945. [Biblioteka Narodowa]



POLAND COURTS, COMMISSIONS, EXTRADITIONS

4.

The most important criminals were to be judged by the Supreme National Tribunal, before which seven trials took place in the years 1946–1948.

Photo: A crowd of people gathered in front of the entrance to Polonia Sports Hall at the avenue named after Soviet Marshal K. Rokossowski (today: Baltic Opera at aleja Zwycięstwa) in Gdańsk during the trial of Albert Forster, 1948. [IPN]



2.

Photo: Meeting of the Commission for the Investigation of German-Nazi Crimes in Oświęcim. In the centre, the writer Zofia Nałkowska, on the left, the judge Jan Sehn, who was involved in the following years in the investigations of the cases of Amon Göth, Rudolf Höss, the Auschwitz-Birkenau garrison, and Josef Bühler. April 1945. [IPN]

3.

Initially, most cases were heard by single-instance special criminal courts, and after their abolition in the autumn of 1946, by district courts, and from 1950, by voivodship courts. Photo: War crimes suspect outside the courthouse, 1945. [IPN]



5.

Out of just over four thousand criminals handed over by the Allies to various countries, 1,817 ended up in Poland. Photo: Three German war criminals being handed over to the Polish authorities in front of the entrance to the headquarters of the Polish Military Mission in Germany, 1946. [IPN]



P O L A N D

„POLISH NUREMBERG”

1.

The hearings before the Supreme National Tribunal, despite the propaganda overtones, were objective in nature. Photo: The trial of the Reich governor of the territory of Wartheland, Arthur Greiser. Poznań, June – July 1946. [Photo by Zbigniew Zielenacki, from the collection of Lech Zielenacki, cyryl.poznan.pl]

2.

In September 1946 in Kraków, the Tribunal delivered the highest sentence on Amon Göth, the sadistic commandant of KL Plaszow. [IPN]

3.

Photo: Tried in Warsaw, from the left: Ludwig Fischer – Governor of the Warsaw district (death penalty), Ludwig Liest – Mayor of Warsaw (eight years in prison), Josef Meisinger – commander of SD and Security Police in Warsaw (death penalty), and Max Daume – police officer (death penalty). February 1947. [IPN]

4.

In December 1947 in Krakow, 23 SS men out of forty on trial were sentenced to death, including the second commandant of KL Auschwitz, Artur Liebehenschel. [IPN]



5.

In 1947, some members of the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau garrison appeared before the Polish Tribunal. Photo: Rudolf Höss, the first commandant of the camp (sentenced in Warsaw in March 1947) moments before the execution. Auschwitz, April 16, 1947. [IPN]

6.

Photo: Albert Forster, governor of the Danzig-West Prussia Reich District, on his way to the trial. Gdańsk, 1948. [IPN]

7.

The last criminal to be tried by the Supreme National Tribunal was Josef Bühler, Secretary of State of the General Government. In July 1948, he was sentenced to death in Kraków. [PAP]

14.



1.

In Poland after the war, 4,500-5,500 Germans and Volksdeutsche were tried. Photo: Leah Konicpoler testifies in the case of Heinrich Kestner (on the left, standing), who was responsible for the liquidation of the so-called small ghetto in Częstochowa in June 1943, and was sentenced to death. Częstochowa, 1946. [Montreal Holocaust Museum]

2.

A significant part of those convicted in Poland were members of the concentration camp garrisons. Photo: Execution of former members of the KL Stutthof garrison on Wysoka Góra (formerly: Stoltzenberg) in Gdańsk, July 4, 1946. [IPN]



4.

After 1950, trials of German criminals in Poland were sporadic. Photo: SS-Gruppenführer Jürgen Stroop, responsible for the brutal suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943, stood trial in Warsaw, July 1951. [Ghetto Fighters' House]



3.

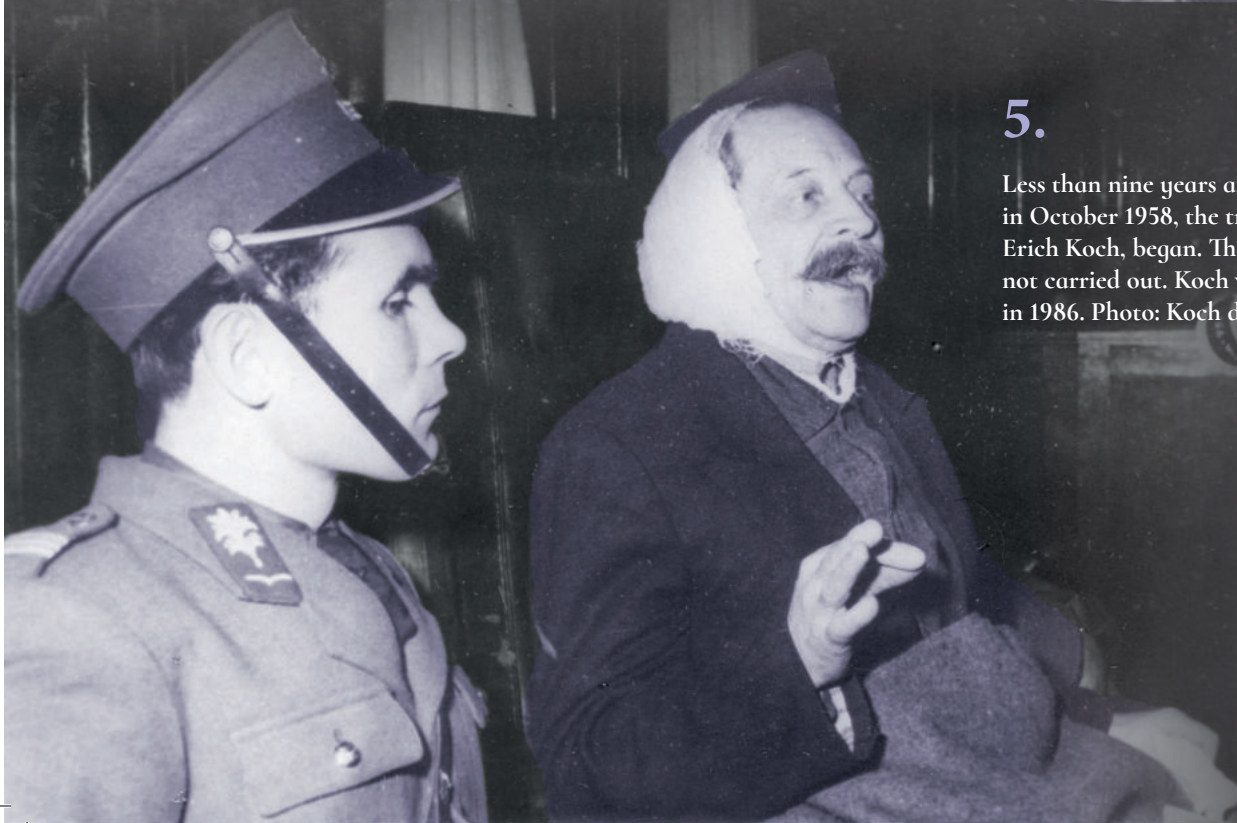
Photo: The trial of eighteen SS men serving in KL Plaszow, January 1948. [IPN]



POLAND | FINAL ACCOUNT

5.

Less than nine years after he was brought over to Poland, in October 1958, the trial of the Oberpräsident of East Prussia, Erich Koch, began. The death sentence passed in March 1959 was not carried out. Koch was imprisoned in Barczewo. He died there in 1986. Photo: Koch during his trial, 1959. [IPN]



DE L A Y E D J U S T I C E ?

AROUND THE EICHMANN TRIAL



1.

During the war, Adolf Eichmann coordinated the German plan for the extermination of Jews. He was the most wanted war criminal for over a decade. Tuvia Friedman, who headed the centre documenting crimes and searching for Nazi criminals, located in Vienna and later in Haifa, had joined the hunt for him already in the 1940s. Photo: Tuvia Friedman, 1945. [IPN]



2.

A significant contribution to finding Adolf Eichmann was made by Simon Wiesenthal, a former prisoner of six concentration camps. The activities of Wiesenthal and the documentation centre he founded also enabled the capture of: Franz Stangl, Josef Schwammberger, and the sadistic SS woman from the Majdanek camp Hermine Braunsteiner. Photo: Wiesenthal during the trial of Austrian policemen. Vienna, 1958. [Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies]



3.

The capture of Eichmann was possible thanks to the information conveyed to Tel Aviv by Fritz Bauer, the chief public prosecutor of the German province of Hesse, a supporter of settling accounts with Nazism in Germany. Photo: Fritz Bauer, at Club Voltaire in Frankfurt am Main, around 1965–1968. [Photo: S. Träger, Fritz Bauer Institut]



4.

Adolf Eichmann was captured by Israeli intelligence agents in Buenos Aires, in May 1960. Photo: Hearing on the decision to extend the criminal's detention. Jerusalem, March 9, 1961. [National Photograph Collection – Government Press Office]

5.

The trial in Jerusalem, which began in April 1961, aroused great interest around the world. For crimes against the Jewish people, war crimes and crimes against humanity, Eichmann was sentenced to death. Photo: Filmmaker Leo Hurwitz and police officer Michael Goldman (survivor of KL Auschwitz) watch the broadcast of the Eichmann trial. Jerusalem, April 18, 1961. [National Photograph Collection – Government Press Office]





1.

The trial of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau garrison members before the court in Frankfurt am Main attracted a lot of attention of the German media, although not of the public opinion, which was against further settlements. The sentences passed in 1965 were considered by many observers to be too lenient. Photo: The beginning of the Auschwitz trial, December 20, 1963. [Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main]



2.

Many sentences handed down in West Germany were grossly lenient. In 1958, in Ulm, ten members of the Einsatzkommando who shot thousands of Lithuanian Jews were sentenced to 3-15 years in prison as "accomplices in murder". Photo: Trial in Ulm, 1958. [ullstein bild]



3.

The West German attitudes to settlements with Nazism were reflected in the almost six-year-long trial of sixteen members of the Majdanek camp garrison before the court in Düsseldorf. One of the defendants died before the end of the trial, the charges against two more were dropped due to health reasons, and the remaining verdicts handed down in 1981 were mild. Photo: Beginning of the trial, 1975. [akg images]

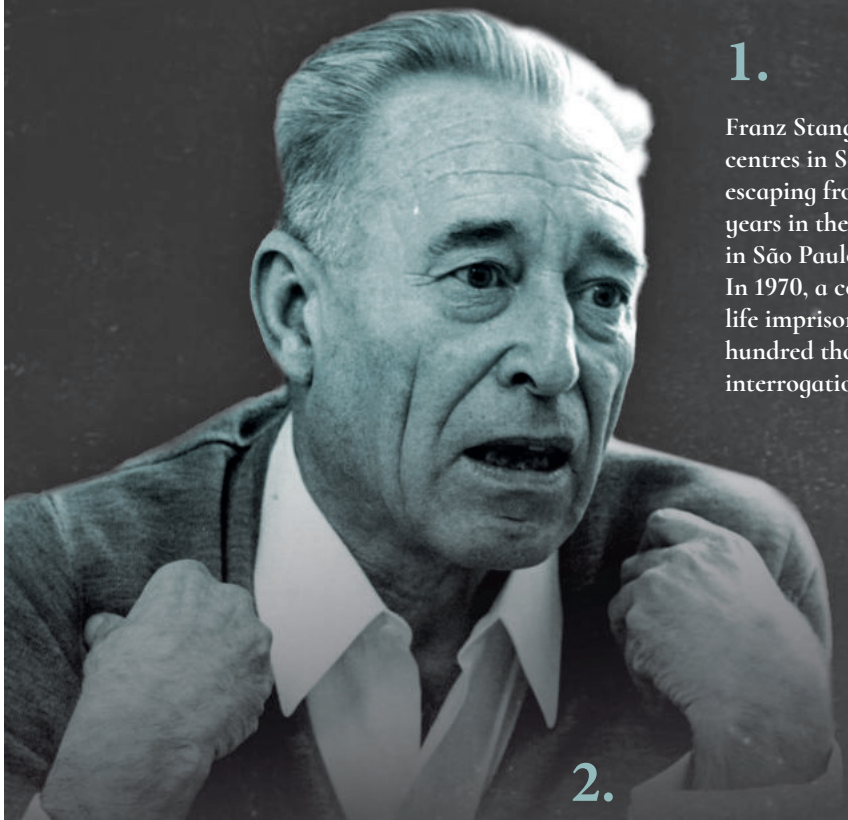
4.

At the same time, the German Democratic Republic practically abandoned further settlements. Between 1957 and 1989, only 120 people were convicted in East Germany for crimes from the National Socialist era. In contrast, in West Germany, in 1968 alone, 118 sentences were handed down. Photo: Horst Fischer, camp doctor at Auschwitz-Birkenau, sentenced to death in Berlin, 1966. [Stasi-Unterlagen-Archiv]

DE L A Y E D J U S T I C E ?

CONTINUATION OF SETTLEMENTS IN GERMANY





1.

Franz Stangl, the commandant of the extermination centres in Sobibór and Treblinka, left for Brazil after escaping from an Allied prison and spending several years in the Middle East. In 1967, he was arrested in São Paulo and extradited to West Germany. In 1970, a court in Düsseldorf sentenced him to life imprisonment for the murder of at least four hundred thousand Jews. Photo: Stangl during the interrogation. [Yad Vashem Photo Archive]

2.

The trial of Klaus Barbie, head of the Gestapo in Lyon, tracked down in 1971 in Bolivia by the Franco-German couple Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, received wide publicity around the world. Photo: Serge and Beate Klarsfeld before the start of the Barbie trial, 1987. [Ville de Lyon, Archives Municipales, copyright Barrier, 1518WP 1400]



3.

The infamous “Butcher of Lyon” was arrested and deported to France only in 1983, and four years later sentenced to life imprisonment. Photo. Klaus Barbie being escorted to trial. Lyon, July 4, 1987. [Associated Press]



4.

A few months after Klaus Barbie’s trial had ended, Josef Schwammberger, the ruthless commandant of labour camps for Jews in the Subcarpathian region of Poland during the war, was arrested in Argentina. Accused of participating in more than three thousand murders, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Photo: Schwamberger with his defence lawyer. Stuttgart, April 29, 1992. [Norbert Försterling/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images]



DE L A Y E D J U S T I C E ?

HIGH-PROFILE EXTRADITIONS

5.

In 1994, during an interview for the American television ABC in Argentina, former SS officer Erich Priebke confessed to his participation in the Ardeatine Caves massacre. After several years of legal battle, in 1998, a Roman court sentenced him to life imprisonment. He spent the last fifteen years of his life under house arrest. Photo: Priebke in court, surrounded by Carabinieri. Rome, May 17, 1996. [AP Photo/Plinio Lepri]



1.

During the war, or just after it had ended, Wehrmacht soldiers committed crimes against prisoners of war and civilians. In the autumn of 1939 in Poland, the Germans bombed 160 towns and residential areas, burned hundreds of villages and shot at least several thousand people.

Photo: A burning village in Poland, September 1939. [GHWK Berlin]

U N A C C O U N T A B L E F O R . . .

CRIMES OF THE WEHRMACHT

3.

In September 1939, Friedrich Gollwitzer commanded the 41st Wehrmacht Infantry Regiment, which committed numerous war crimes against civilians. The prosecutor's office in Amberg discontinued the case against Gollwitzer for the pacification of the Greater Poland village of Torzeniec, in which on September 1-2, 1939, German soldiers had killed 37 people, including women and children. Photo: General Gollwitzer being greeted after returning from the Soviet camp, Friedland, 1955. [ullstein bild]



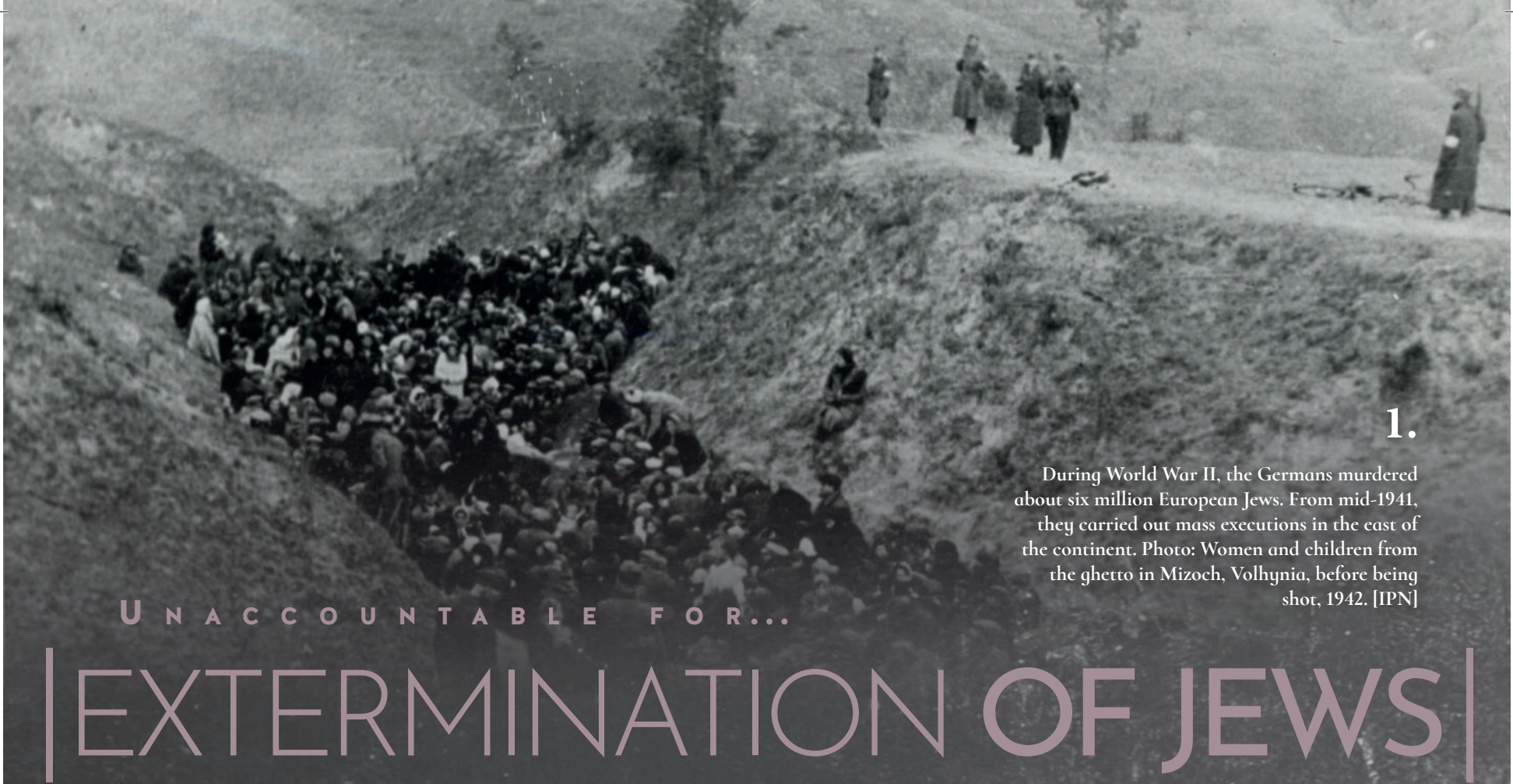
2.

General Kurt Student, who commanded the German invasion of Crete, ordered the use of "exemplary terror" against civilians to punish the inhabitants of the island for their resistance. In June 1941, German paratroopers committed numerous crimes in Cretan villages. Photo: Kondomari massacre, 1941. [Photo: Franz P. Weixel, Bundesarchiv]

4.

After the war, General Kurt Student was briefly imprisoned for crimes against British soldiers. The British acquitted him of the charge of crimes against civilians, while refusing to extradite him to Greece, where he was wanted for trial. His subordinates also avoided responsibility. Photo: General Student signing autographs at the Nuremberg train station, 1952. [Interfoto]





U N A C C O U N T A B L E F O R . . .

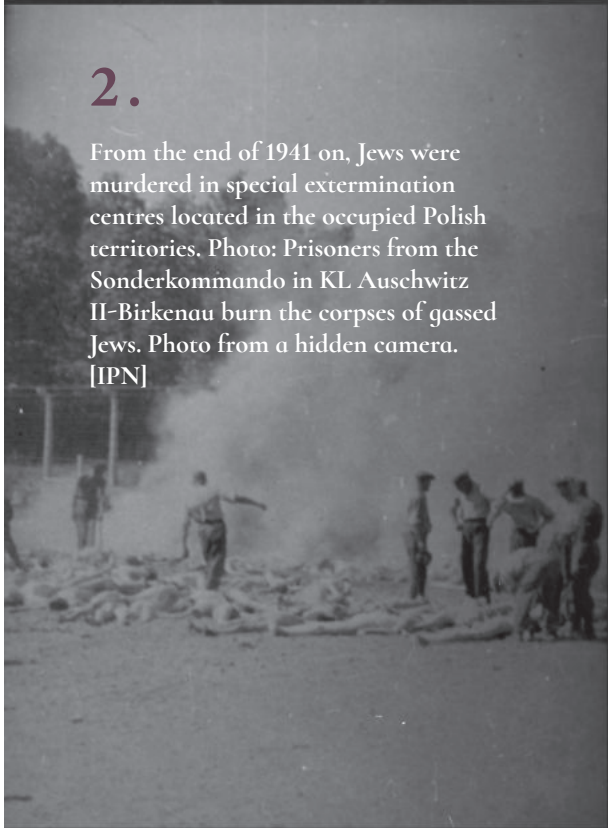
| EXTERMINATION OF JEWS |

1.

During World War II, the Germans murdered about six million European Jews. From mid-1941, they carried out mass executions in the east of the continent. Photo: Women and children from the ghetto in Mizoch, Volhynia, before being shot, 1942. [IPN]

2.

From the end of 1941 on, Jews were murdered in special extermination centres located in the occupied Polish territories. Photo: Prisoners from the Sonderkommando in KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau burn the corpses of gassed Jews. Photo from a hidden camera. [IPN]



3.

Alois Brunner, an Austrian responsible for the deportation of nearly 130,000 Jews from Greece, Bulgaria, Vichy France and Slovakia, lived in Syria from 1954 on. He was twice convicted in absentia by French courts. Syrian authorities refused to extradite him. Brunner spent the last years of his life under house arrest as Abu Hussain. He probably died in 2001. Photo: Protest against hiding Brunner, held outside of the Syrian embassy in Paris on the day of the visit of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, July 16, 1998. [Reuters Photographer/Reuters/Forum]



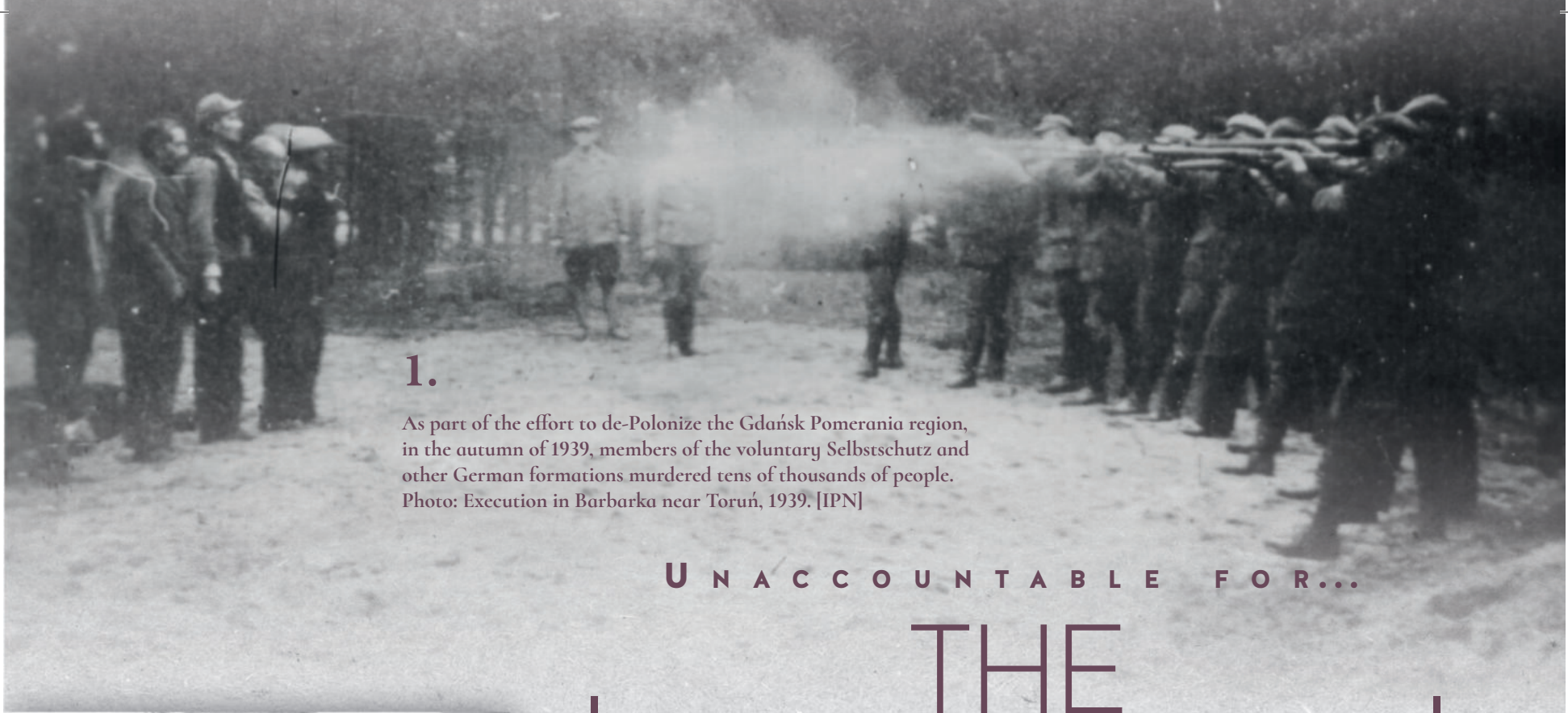
4.

Condemnation was also expressed against the acquittal of Frantz Murer, the administrator of the Vilnius ghetto, who shared responsibility for the deaths of tens of thousands of Jews. In 1948, the "Butcher from Vilnius" had been sentenced in the Soviet Union to 25 years in a labour camp, but already in 1955 he was handed over to the Austrian justice system. Only after Simon Wiesenthal had repeatedly called for his trial, was Murer summoned by the court in Graz, which, however, acquitted the criminal, despite the incriminating testimonies of witnesses. Photo: Protest against Murer's acquittal. Vienna, June 27, 1963. [Österreichische Nationalbibliothek]

MÖRDER
MURER
HINTER
GITTER!

OPERNMÖRDER
GESUCHT
JUDENMÖRDER
FREIGESPROCHENKEIT
MORD-
INGLICH
RDE-
UCH





1.

As part of the effort to de-Polonize the Gdańsk Pomerania region, in the autumn of 1939, members of the voluntary Selbstschutz and other German formations murdered tens of thousands of people. Photo: Execution in Barbarka near Toruń, 1939. [IPN]

U N A C C O U N T A B L E F O R . . .

THE POMERANIAN MASSACRE



3.

The commander of the Selbstschutz Westpreussen, Ludolf von Alvensleben, escaped from British captivity and took refuge in Argentina, where he was granted citizenship. Although the court in Toruń issued a death sentence in absentia and the court in Munich ordered his arrest, Alvensleben avoided responsibility. He died in Argentina in 1970. Photo: Alvensleben with Selbstschutz members, 1939. [IPN]

2.

Most of the victims were representatives of the Polish intelligentsia. Few perpetrators of the Pomeranian massacre were sentenced. Photo: Anna Mystkowska kneeling next to the corpse of her husband, Mayor of Włocławek Witold Mystkowski, 1945. [Muzeum Ziemi Kujawskiej i Dobrzyńskiej we Włocławku]

4.

Jakob Lölgen, the commander of the execution squad of the Gdańsk Gestapo, returned to work in the police in Trier after the war. In 1966, he stood trial in Munich, together with his wartime deputy, Horst Eichler. Despite evidence of their participation in the murder of 349 representatives of the Bydgoszcz intelligentsia, they were acquitted as carrying out unlawful orders. Photo: Eichler and Lölgen (wearing glasses) after the announcement of the sentence, April 1, 1966. [Klaus Heirler/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images]





1.

During the war, the fate of children did not differ from that of adults – they died during military operations, in ghettos or camps, during the pacification of villages, they were victims of the euthanasia program or forced resettlements. In December 1941, a special labour camp for children was established in Łódź. 2-3 thousand children were held there, almost two hundred of whom died.

Photo: Camp commander Camillo Ehrlich during a roll call. [IPN]

UNACCOUNTABLE FOR...

BESTIALITY TOWARDS CHILDREN

2.

The Germans abducted many children from Eastern Europe – up to two hundred thousand from Poland alone. They were handed over to families in the Third Reich through Lebensborn, an institution created by the SS as formally a welfare organization. Only some of the children returned home after the war. In 1948, the abducting of children was recognized as a crime against humanity. Photo: Racial screening of Polish children, 1942. [SZ Photo/Süddeutsche Zeitung Photo/Forum]



Name (mit Präfix nach Geburtsort): <i>Ehrlich</i>		Ort der Festnahme: <i>Czajana PL</i>	Aktenzeichen: <i>2094/Br</i>
Vorname: <i>Camillo Friedrich</i>		Letzte Wohnung: <i>Czajana PL Hauptstr. 17, 24</i>	Tag der Festnahme: <i>29.11.41</i>
Geburtsdatum und -ort: <i>2.8.1898 Lohausen/Kr. Jhr.</i>		Jetzige Anschrift der Familienangehörigen: <i>Ehrlich, Elisabeth u. o.</i>	wo <i>Waldheim</i> Karteikarte ausgestellt
Beruf: <i>Straßenkehrer</i> Arbeitsort: <i>Kriegsmarinepol. Kommando 100/100</i>		Größe: <i>1,70 cm</i>	 M. - D. P. - P. Abtd. NS Führerstand, Waldheim
Zuletzt beschäftigt mit: <i>Kriegsmarinepol. Kommando 100/100</i>		Geburt: <i>1910</i>	
Familienstand: <i>verh.</i>		Bauart: <i>normal</i>	von: <i>Waldheim</i>
Kinder: <i>—</i>		Augenfarbe: <i>blau</i>	Übersahme durch die Dtsch. V.-Pol. am: <i>16.8.47</i>
Staatsangehörigkeit: <i>DR</i>		Hautfarbe: <i>hell</i>	Parteizugehörigkeit n. d. R. S. 4): <i>—</i>
Deck-Namen: <i>—</i>		Besondere Kenntnisse: <i>keine</i>	hin: <i>—</i>
Einstritt: <i>1937</i>	SS	SA	SD
Austritt: <i>Nov. 1945</i>			
Sonstige Organisationen u. Verbände: <i>NSDAP</i>		Vorstrafen: <i>—</i>	Öffentliche Ämter: <i>—</i>
Mitt. Verbände u. Ausbildung: <i>—</i>		Mitt. Verbände u. Ausbildung: <i>—</i>	
Innehaltende Funktionen (z. B. Kreisleiter, SA-Sturmführer usw.): <i>Sturm- und Gruppenführer im S.O.</i>			
D 09 HS 1 1. 00 330 Nachdruck und Änderung nur gemäß DA 113/36 der LBEVP			

3.

SS-Sturmabführer Camillo Ehrlich, commandant of the labour camp for children in Łódź, was sentenced to life imprisonment in Waldheim. In 1956, after signing a declaration of cooperation with the Stasi, he left prison and emigrated to West Germany. He had not been accused of crimes against children in Łódź until 1973. He died a year later without seeing the trial. Photo: Prison card of Camillo Ehrlich from Waldheim Prison, 1950. [Sächsisches Staatsarchiv – Staatsarchiv Leipzig]

4.

The leaders of Lebensborn were not prosecuted in Nuremberg for lack of evidence. It was not until 1950 that a court in Munich recognized Lebensborn as a criminal organization, and years later its involvement in the forced Germanization of children saw the light of day. Photo: Arrested leaders of the Lebensborn organization. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]



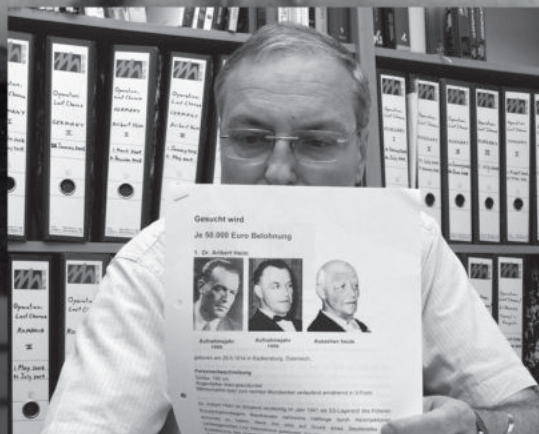
1.

Concentration camps were the place of direct or indirect extermination of millions of prisoners. Pseudo-medical experiments were also carried out there, such as infecting prisoners with diseases, testing drugs, conducting surgical or nutritional experiments. Photo: A group of doctors around the operating table. The first from the left is Carl Clauberg, KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. [IPN]



3.

The Austrian Aribert Heim gained the infamous nickname “Doctor Death” due to his criminal experiments on prisoners in KL Mauthausen. After the warrant for his arrest was issued in 1950, he went into hiding. He spent the last years of his life in Egypt, where he died in 1992 as Tarek Hussein Farid. His death was confirmed in 2009. Photo: The director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem Efraim Zuroff presenting the wanted notice for Heim, October 24, 2007. [Gil Cohen Magen /Reuters/Forum]



2.

Tests on prisoners were carried out in order to meet the needs of the army, pharmaceutical companies, medical institutes, to confirm racist theories or to satisfy the demand for personal “scientific” development. Of the approximately three hundred doctors who supported these practices, only some were convicted. Photo: A collection of human organs at the “pathological ward” of KL Mauthausen-Gusen. [Mauthausen Memorial/KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen]



U N A C C O U N T A B L E F O R . . .

EXPERIMENTS ON PRISONERS

4.

Josef Mengele, the infamous “Angel of Death” from KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, escaped to Argentina in 1949. Later he hid in Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil. Despite a large reward for the aid in capturing him, he was never arrested. He died in 1979. Photo: Items found by members of the Brazilian Federal Police in 1985 in the house where Mengele was believed to have been hiding. [Associated Press]



1.

About two hundred thousand people with mental and physical disabilities were systematically murdered in the years 1939-1941 as part of "Aktion T4" as well as "wild euthanasia" practices that lasted until 1945. Only some of the 350 doctors and the SS men involved in this criminal practice were brought to justice. Photo: A U.S. Army soldier inspects the cemetery at the Hadamar euthanasia centre, where victims of the Nazi euthanasia program were buried in mass graves, April 5, 1945. [Photo: Troy A. Peters, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]

U N A C C O U N T A B L E F O R . . .

MURDERING THE SICK and DISABLED

2.

In the psychiatric hospital in Obrawalde (today: Obrzyce), about ten thousand people of various nationalities were murdered by 1945. Photo: Amanda Anna Ratajczak, the head nurse at the hospital in Obrawalde, during a trial in a Soviet military court, demonstrates how to kill patients, May 1945. [Samodzielny Publiczny Szpital dla Nerwowo i Psychicznie Chorych w Międzyrzeczu]

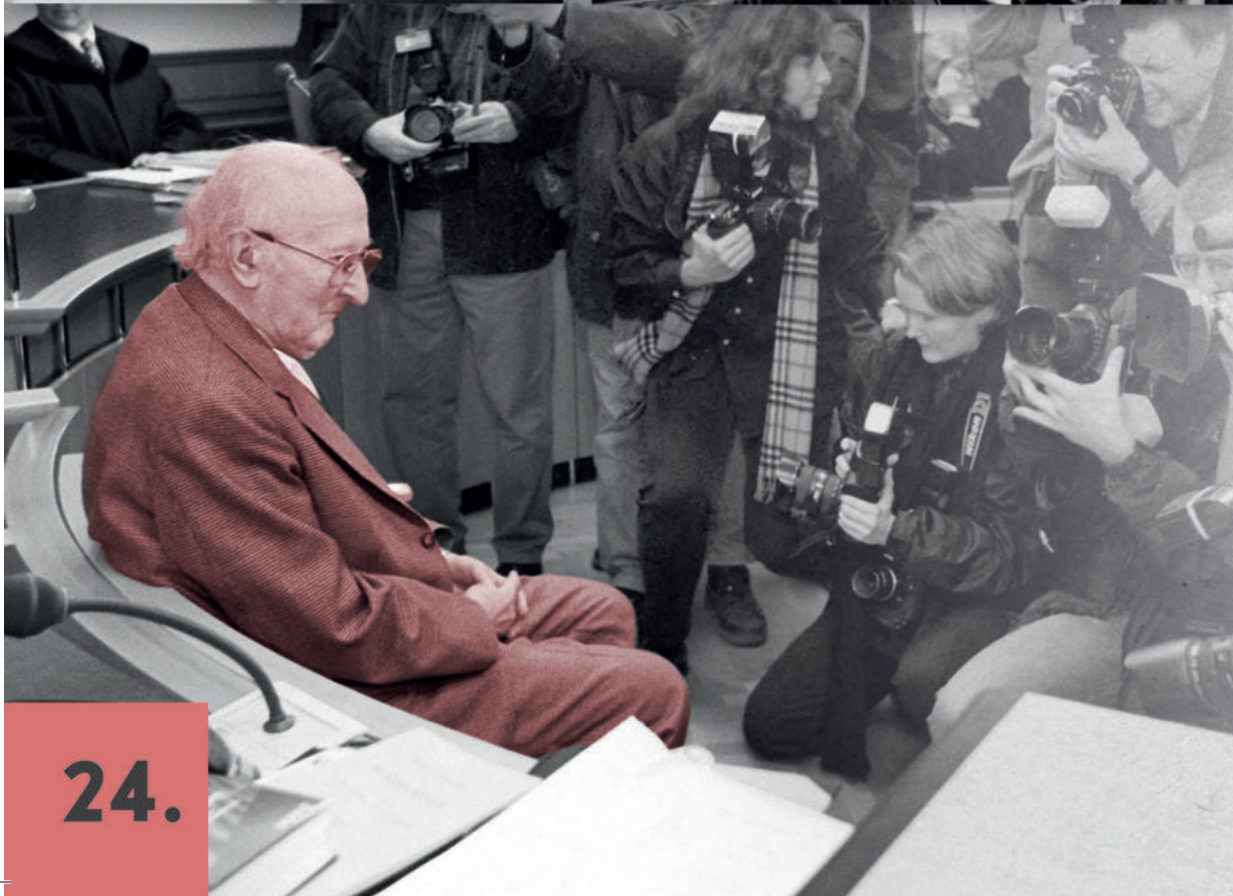


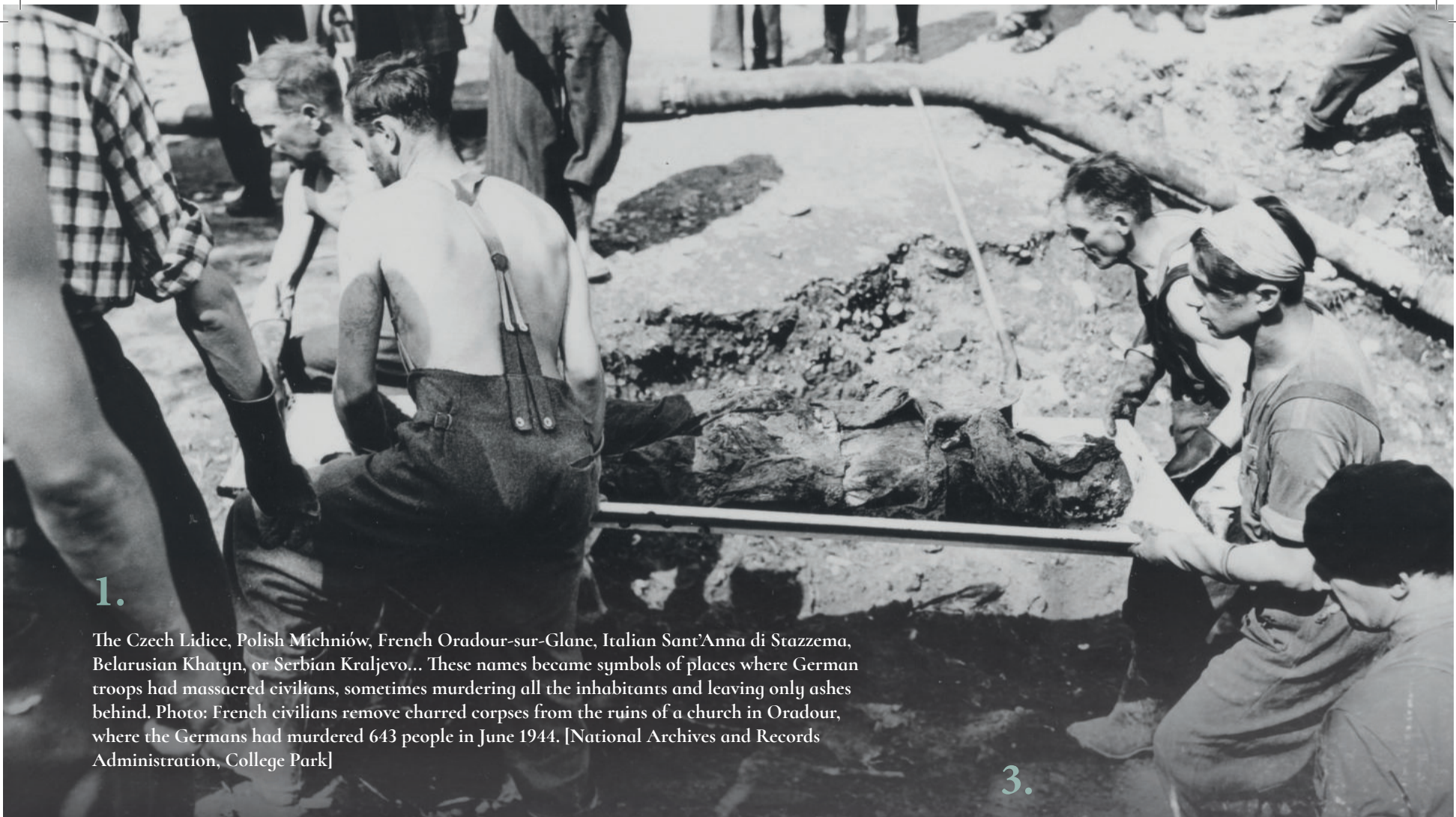
3.

In 1945-1946, several perpetrators were convicted of crimes in Obrawalde. The main organizer of the criminal organization, the economic director of the hospital, Walter Grabowski, and many members of the staff escaped justice, however. In the trial of fourteen nurses in 1965, the court in Munich found that the defendants had acted on orders, and the case fell under the statute of limitations as that of an ordinary homicide. Photo: Announcement of the verdict in the case of nurses from the hospital in Obrawalde. Munich, March 3, 1965. [Keystone Pictures USA/Zuma Press/Forum]

4.

From 1940 on, the Austrian psychiatrist Heinrich Gross worked in the Spiegelgrund clinic in Vienna, where up to eight hundred children were murdered. Accusations of crimes did not prevent him from continuing his career as a doctor and forensic expert. In 2000, the court decided that Gross could not be tried due to dementia. Photo: Gross waiting for the trial to start. Vienna, March 21, 2000. [Reuters Photographer/Reuters/Forum]





1.

The Czech Lidice, Polish Michniów, French Oradour-sur-Glane, Italian Sant'Anna di Stazzema, Belarusian Khatyn, or Serbian Kraljevo... These names became symbols of places where German troops had massacred civilians, sometimes murdering all the inhabitants and leaving only ashes behind. Photo: French civilians remove charred corpses from the ruins of a church in Oradour, where the Germans had murdered 643 people in June 1944. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]



2.

The Tuscan village of Sant'Anna di Stazzema was pacified on August 12, 1944 by soldiers from the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Reichsführer SS". Only its commander, SS-Gruppenführer Max Simon, was prosecuted, and he spent nine years in prison. Among the 560 victims of the massacre, a large proportion were women and children. Photo: Survivor of the massacre looking at the grave of the victims. [National Archives and Records Administration, College Park]



3.

In January 1953, seven Germans and fourteen French citizens were tried in Bordeaux for the Oradour massacre. Another 44 Germans were tried in absentia and sentenced to death. Among them was the commander of the 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich", SS-Gruppenführer Hans Lammerding. He was never extradited to France. Photo: The Bordeaux trial. [Photo@ AGIP/Bridgeman Images]

LA LEGGE E' UGUALE PER TUTTI



UNACCOUNTABLE FOR...

MASSACRES of CIVILIANS

4.

In 2005, a military court in La Spezia, Italy, sentenced ten German officers in absentia to life imprisonment for their involvement in the Sant'Anna di Stazzema massacre. Germany, however, refused to extradite the convicts, and in 2012 discontinued the investigation. Photo: President of the Military Tribunal, Francesco Ufilugelli, reads out the verdict. La Spezia, June 22, 2005. [PAP/EPA]



1.

On the day the Warsaw Uprising began, Hitler gave the order to raze the city to the ground and murder its inhabitants. Only on August 5-7, 1944, about fifty thousand people were murdered in Wola and Ochota districts. Photo: Post-war exhumations at the church of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Warsaw's Ochota district, 1945. [Photo: E. Haneman, Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego]



3.

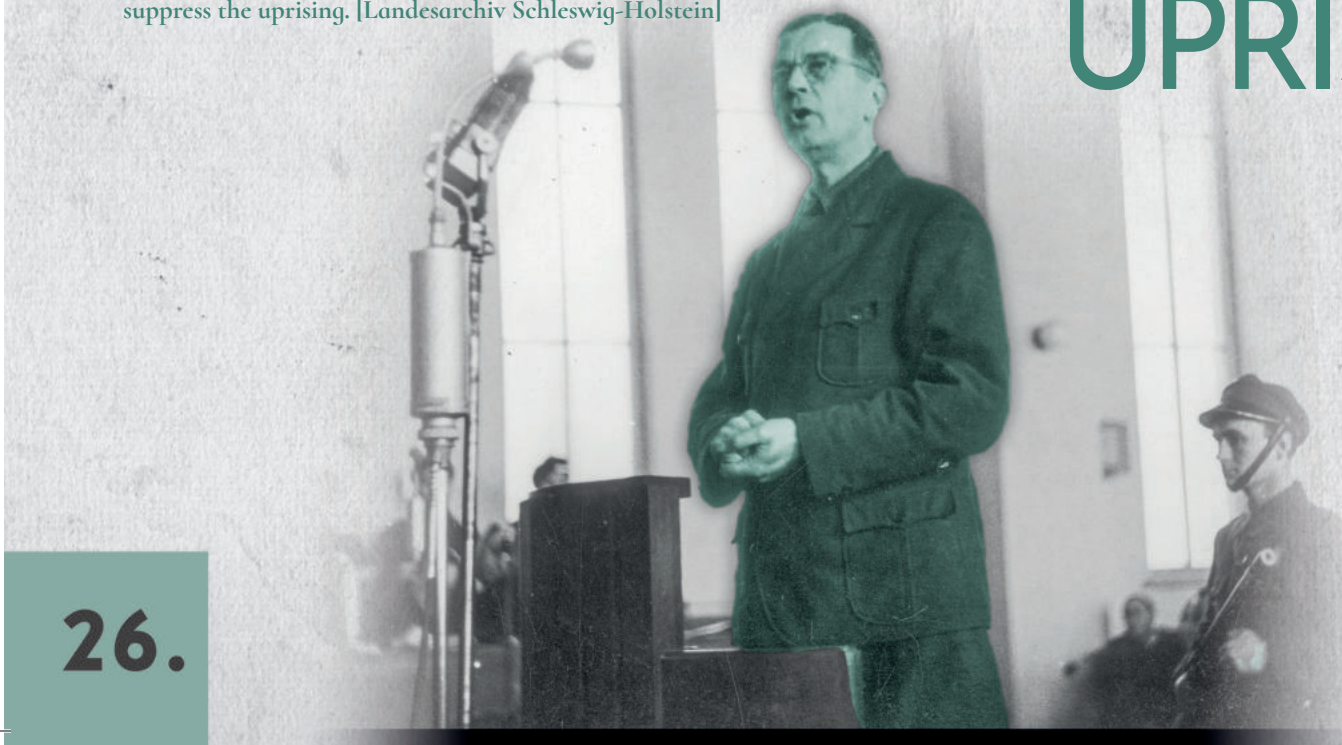
Heinz Reinefarth was arrested by the Americans already in 1945. Released three years later, he passed through the denazification procedures. In 1951, he was elected mayor of the town of Westerland on the island of Sylt, and in 1958 he became a member of parliament in the state of Schleswig-Holstein. Later he worked as a lawyer. In 1967, the prosecutor's office discontinued the investigation into Reinefarth's war crimes. Photo: Reinefarth as Mayor of Westerland. [Sylter Archiv, photo by: Hansa-Photo]

2.

Crimes against civilians were committed by various German and collaborationist formations. The commander of the troops that crushed the uprising was the General of Waffen-SS Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, while SS-Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth was in charge of the police units that shot civilians. Photo: Bach-Zelewski and Reinefarth address the punitive company ordered to suppress the uprising. [Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein]


U N A C C O U N T A B L E F O R . . .

CRUSHING of THE WARSAW UPRISING



4.

In 1945, the Americans also captured Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, but refused to extradite him to Poland. He testified as a witness in Nuremberg and Warsaw. He was later sentenced to life imprisonment, but for crimes committed before 1939. Photo: Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski during the trial of Ludwig Fischer in Warsaw, 1947. [Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe]



In recent years, attempts have been made in Germany to prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes who are still alive. In 2015, Oskar Gröning, who worked in the administration of the KL Auschwitz camp, was sentenced. He died before his appeal trial. So did the former guard of the Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen camps, Reinhold Hanning, who had been convicted in 2016. Four years later, Brunon Dey, a former guard at the KL Stutthof camp, received a suspended sentence. At the end of 2022, a court in Itzehoe sentenced 96-year-old Irmgard Furchner, who had worked as a secretary at KL Stutthof, to a two-year suspended prison sentence. Photo: Irmgard Furchner during her trial.
[Marcus Brandt/ Reuters/Forum]

| EPILOGUE |

Author of the exhibition: dr Michał Zawisza
In cooperation with: Edyta Krężolek, Ilona Religa-Gola, Jakub Mularczyk
Graphic design: Katarzyna Niklas, Urszula Zalejska-Smoleń
Reviewers: dr Paweł Kosiński,
Magdalena Śladecka



INSTYTUT PAMIĘCI
NARODOWEJ

Delegatura w Kielcach



