

Dachauer Prozesse
13.2 Dachau Trials



3240 ») Dachauer Prozesse

Nach dem Sieg über Deutschland richteten die Alliierten Militärgerichte zur Verfolgung der nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen ein. In Gebäuden des SS-Lagers im KZ Dachau trat schon Ende 1945 ein amerikanisches Militärgericht zusammen. Das Hauptverfahren über die Verbrechen im KZ Dachau war der erste amerikanische Prozess dieser Art und wurde zum Modell für die folgenden Verfahren.

In weiteren Prozessen befasste sich das Gericht auch mit den KZ Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen und Mittelbau-Dora sowie mit Kriegsverbrechen an alliierten Soldaten. Mit Einsetzen des Kalten Krieges ging allerdings auf amerikanischer Seite das Interesse an einer konsequenten Strafverfolgung von NS-Verbrechen deutlich zurück.

1949 übernahm die bundesdeutsche Justiz die Zuständigkeit. Trotz zahlreicher Ermittlungsverfahren erfolgten nur wenige Verurteilungen. Außer Mord fielen bald alle Delikte unter Amnestie oder Verjährung. Viele der Verbrechen, die im KZ Dachau verübt wurden, blieben ungesühnt.

Dachau Trials

After the victory over Germany, the Allies established military courts to prosecute those involved in National Socialist crimes. An American military court had already been constituted in the buildings belonging to the SS camp at Dachau by the end of 1945. The main trial on the crimes committed in the Dachau concentration camp was the first American trial of its kind and became a model for the trials which followed. In further trials the court also dealt with crimes committed in the concentration camps at Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen and Mittelbau-Dora as well as war crimes against Allied soldiers. However, with the onset of the Cold War, the interest of the Americans in a thorough prosecution of Nazi crimes clearly receded.

In 1949 the West German justice system assumed responsibility. Despite numerous preliminary proceedings, only a few prosecutions resulted. Except for murder, all other offences were soon placed under amnesty or a statute of limitations. Many of the crimes committed at the Dachau concentration camp remained unpunished.

3243 Blick auf die Anklagebank im ersten KZ Dachau-Prozess, 1945
View of the dock during the First Dachau concentration camp trial, 1945
National Archives, Washington

3244 Sitzung des US-Militärgerichts im ersten KZ Dachau-Prozess, 1945
Session of the US Military Court during the first Dachau concentration camp trial, 1945
National Archives, Washington

Abschrift

1. wusste, dass die folgenden an Erschießungen dabei waren, während ich Lagerhelfer war:

St. Obersturmführer FRANZ HOPFmann
St. Obersturmführer ERNST LIPPMANN
St. Obersturmführer JOSEPH JASOLIN
St. Hauptsturmführer JOSEPH WILHELM RÖTZ

All executions which were ordered by higher authorities were under my supervision. I was responsible for the transports of prisoners from the camp to the execution site. All transports which were ordered by higher authorities took place near the crematorium.

Very transports could have been during my administration. One transport in this period was to the execution site in Landsberg. This transport was organized by the Reich Main Security Office in Berlin (RICH SICHERHEITS HAUPTAMT).

During my administration there were death cases due to typhus, TB, dysentry, pneumonia, etc. In the case of pneumonia, the mortality rate was very high. The latter was the case especially in the transports of prisoners who arrived very weak. As far as I know, there were no transports of prisoners to the execution site or of the distribution of food. I had nothing to do with the distribution of food. Many transports were to the execution site in Landsberg. The transports were in a very bad condition and many of them arrived dead. When prisoners arrived in Landsberg, they were sent to the Political Department which was headed by Pöhl.

Abschrift

DRAFT: THE U.S. JUDGE ADVOCATE'S OFFICE
BASIC CRIMES BRANCH
UNITED STATES FORCES EUROPEAN THEATER

1. TRIAL: The accused were tried at Dachau, Germany, from 15 November 1945 to 13 December 1945, by a General Military Government Court appointed by paragraph 4, Special Order No. 2, dated 15 October 1945, Headquarters Third United States Army and Eastern Military District, so amended by paragraph 4, Special Order No. 23, dated 15 November 1945.

2. PRINCIPLES: The offense involved was:

FIRST CHARGE: Violation of the Laws and Usages of War

Particulars: In this Martin Gottschall Weiß, and Friedrich Wetzel acting in pursuance of a common design to commit the acts hereinafter alleged, and as members of the staff of the concentration camp at Dachau, Germany, between about 1 January 1942 and about 1 January 1945, did violate the laws and usages of war, in that they planned and participated in the subjection of civilian nationals or nations than at war with the German Reich, to acts of violence, torture, maltreatment, ill-treatment, starvation, abuse and indignity, the exact names and numbers of such civilian nationalities being aggregated in the aggregate number of those who were held and there in the custody of the German Reich in exercise of belligerent control.

3. SENTENCE: The Court, by at least a two-thirds vote of the members present at the time of the trial, sentenced the accused to the following:

Martin Gottschall Weiß To be hanged by the neck until dead
Friedrich Wilhelm Ruppert To be hanged by the neck until dead
Joachim Augustin Schindfußer To be hanged by the neck until dead
Franz Xaver Tränkle To be hanged by the neck until dead
Georg Albert Valentin Niedermayer To be hanged by the neck until dead
Oskar Karl Heinrich Schmid To be hanged by the neck until dead
Leonhard Armin Eschberger To be hanged by the neck until dead
Walter Augustin To be hanged by the neck until dead
Johann Kroll To be hanged by the neck until dead
Dr. Wilhelm Wittig To be hanged by the neck until dead
Julius Antonius Schindfußer To be hanged by the neck until dead
Ottos Fenzl To be hanged by the neck until dead
Dr. Rudolf Karl Pühr To be hanged by the neck until dead
Albert Göttsche To be hanged by the neck until dead
Sylvester Filiberto To be hanged by the neck until dead
Viktor Klemm To be hanged by the neck until dead
Johann Viktor Kirch To be hanged by the neck until dead
Walter Augustin To be hanged by the neck until dead
Arno Lippmann To be hanged by the neck until dead
Franz Schmid To be hanged by the neck until dead
Ottos Moll To be hanged by the neck until dead
Friedrich Wetzel To be hanged by the neck until dead
Dr. Max Joseph Stieglitz To be hanged by the neck until dead
Dr. Friedolin Karl Pühr To be hanged by the neck until dead
Peter Ritz To be confined at hard labor for life
August Ernst Lauterer To be confined at hard labor for 10 years
Albert Göttsche To be confined at hard labor for 10 years
Johann Schöpp To be confined at hard labor for 10 years

3245 Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Martin Weiß, Kommandant des KZ Dachau, 1942/43, 30. Oktober 1945 (Auszug)
Sworn statement given by Martin Weiß, commandant of the Dachau concentration camp 1942/43, October 30, 1945 (excerpt)

3246 Verfahren vor dem amerikanischen Militägericht im ehemaligen KZ Dachau, 1945–1947
1945 KZ-Dachau-Hauptverfahren (121 Nachfolgeverfahren)

1946 KZ-Mauthausen-Hauptverfahren (60 Nachfolgeverfahren)
KZ-Flossenbürg-Hauptverfahren (18 Nachfolgeverfahren)

1947 KZ-Außenlager Mühlendorf-Hauptverfahren
KZ Mittelbau-Dora-Hauptverfahren (6 Nachfolgeverfahren)
KZ-Buchenwald-Hauptverfahren (24 Nachfolgeverfahren)

Neben den Konzentrationscamp-Verfahren wurden noch Prozesse wegen von SS-Männern begangener Kriegsverbrechen durchgeführt (Flieger-, Skozzeny- und Malmedy-Prozesse). Insgesamt wurden 489 Verfahren mit 1.672 Angeklagten verhandelt. 426 Angeklagte wurden zum Tod verurteilt, 256 freigesprochen. Der Rest erhielt Freiheitsstrafen. Die meisten dieser Urteile wurden in den 1950er Jahren amnestiert oder vorzeitig aus der Haft entlassen.

Cases tried by the US-Military Court in the former Dachau Concentration Camp 1945–1947

1945 Dachau concentration camp case, main trial (121 successive trials)

1946 Mauthausen concentration camp case, main trial (60 successive trials)
Flossenbürg concentration camp case, main trial (18 successive trials)

1947 Mühlendorf subcamp case, main trial
Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp case, main trial (6 successive trials)
Buchenwald concentration camp case, main trial (24 successive trials)

Besides the concentration camp cases further war crimes trials were conducted against members of the SS (Armen, Skozzeny and Malmedy cases). Altogether 489 trials with 1,672 accused were conducted. 426 accused were sentenced to death, 256 were acquitted. The rest were sentenced to imprisonment terms. The majority of these accused were amnestied in the 50's or were released before ending their prison term.

3247 Urteil im ersten KZ Dachau-Verfahren, 13. Dezember 1945 (Auszug)
Verdict passed in the first Dachau concentration camp trial, December 13, 1945 (excerpt)

Das Urteil war drakonisch. Von 36 Todesurteilen wurden 28 am 28. und 29. November 1945 in Landsberg am Lech vollstreckt. Acht wurden im Überprüfungsverfahren in Haftraten umgewandelt, die allerdings meist nur zum geringen Verlust verdonnert wurden.

Verdicts passed in the first Dachau concentration camp trial, December 13, 1945 (excerpt)

The verdict was draconian. Of 36 death sentences, 28 were carried out on May 28 and 29, 1946 at the Landsberg prison for war crimes. Eight were converted into prison sentences after review proceedings, most of which however were only partially served.



3251 Dienstgebäude des amerikanischen Militärgerichts auf dem Gelände des ehemaligen KZ Dachau, 1945/46
Administrative building of the American Military Court on the grounds of the former Dachau concentration camp, 1945-46



3251 Franzisk Blaha (1941-1945 im KZ Dachau) als Zeuge im Nürnberger Ärzteprozess, 1947
Franzisk Blaha (1941-1945 in Dachau) as witness at the Nuremberg doctors trials, 1947
Stadtarchiv Nürnberg



3252 Wilhelm Bröckel (2. Reihe, dritter von links) als Angeklagter beim Nürnberger Ärzteprozess, 1947
Wilhelm Bröckel (2. row, 3. from left) as an accused at the Nuremberg trial against Nazi doctors, 1947
Anklage gegen unter anderem die Höhner, Küppers und Meissner wurde im KZ Dachau behandelt. Von den angeklagten Ärzten wurde nur Bröckel verurteilt.



3254 Zeitungsbuch über das Ende des Verfahrens gegen Egon Zill, den Schutzhaftlagerführer des KZ Dachau 1940-41, 1951
Zeitungsbuch Zeitung, 3. Dezember 1951
Zill war im Januar 1955 wegen zweifachen Mordes und anderer schwerer Verbrechen im ehemaligen Konzentrationslager Dachau verurteilt worden. Im Dezember 1961 hob das gleiche Gericht die Urteile auf. Zill wurde im April 1963 auf Bewährungsträger auf 15 Jahre, Zill wurde im April 1963 auf Bewährungsträger auf 15 Jahre entlassen und zog nach Dachau, wo er 1974 starb.



3253 Urteil des Landgerichts München II gegen Willy Bach, den Führer der Polizeiabteilung (Gestapo) des KZ Dachau, 26. Juni 1957
Landgericht München II
Bach, SA und Nazi party member since 1933, was worked in the SS and the Gestapo since 1933. He was a member of the political office of the Dachau concentration camp, and was there from 1941 to 1945. From 1941 to 1945 he was interrogator in the political section (Gestapo). On the basis of the evidence of the prosecution, Bach was sentenced to life imprisonment for the crime of murder and reduced sentence to 15 years. Zill was released from prison in April 1963 and died in Dachau, where he died in 1974.



3255 Verfahren vor dem Landgericht München II wegen Verbrechen im KZ Dachau 1948-1970
Verurteilt wurden unter anderem:

- Wolfgang Seuss, SS-Hauptsturmführer, lebenslänglich wegen der Ermordung von zwei jüdischen Häftlingen, 1960
- Franz Hoffmann, Schutzhaftlagerführer 1938-1942, lebenslänglich wegen der Tötung von Häftlingen, 1961
- Egon Zill, Schutzhaftlagerführer 1940-1941, 15 Jahre Zuchthaus wegen Anteisepressen, 1961
- Dr. Heinrich Schütz, SS-Arzt, zehn Jahre Gefängnis wegen der Tötung von Häftlingen bei medizinischen Versuchen, 1975

Aus Mangel an Beweisen oder wegen Verjährung eingestellt wurden unter anderem die Verfahren gegen:

- Heinrich Deubel, Lagerkommandant 1934-1936, wegen Beihilfe zum Mord und Körperverletzung, 1951
- die Ärzte Ruff, Romberg, Weitz
- Georg August Weitz wegen medizinischer Versuche an Häftlingen, 1959

The State Attorney's Office conducted more than one hundred trials over the period of time. Due to the lack of evidence or time-barred prosecution following proceedings were closed:

- Heinrich Deubel, camp commandant 1934-1936, for assisting murder and bodily injury, 1951
- the doctors Siegfried Ruff, Hans Wolfgang Romberg, Georg August Weitz, for medical experiments on prisoners, 1959