

## *Chapter 19*

The Dachau Trial Continued, Mid-November 1945

**S**itting next to the wall behind the prosecutors' table gives me the best view of the proceedings. As we learned earlier, on-the-spot SS-guard beatings of prisoners were impulsive and brutal. Now we hear that when the gas chamber at Dachau failed to work because of sabotage by the prisoners building it, other means to kill were found.

Otto Edward Jendrian, a German prisoner, testifies:

I saw [SS defendant Sylvester Filleboeck] with a machine-pistol under his arm [also defendant Moll and crematorium head Bongartz] with pistols. They fired at naked bodies and [after the shootings I discovered] the victims were French officers up to the rank of general. I saw bodies lying on the ground and just at that time a new group of naked people arrived . . . They had to kneel down, hands tied behind back,

## Witness to Barbarism

and the reports [of the guns] sounded, and these naked bodies collapsed. They were shot in the back of the neck.

Dr. Franz Blaha and several others testify about the shooting of 90 or more Russian officers at the crematory:

We heard single shots fired. Afterward I went inside and saw the bodies [of the] Russian officers . . . many of whom I knew personally . . . They had shots in the neck, and [the guards] had taken out the gold teeth from them.

Additional testimony describes the efficiency of a method of killing often used in the camps. The victim was stripped naked (to keep blood away from reusable clothing), forced to his knees, head bent. A single shot in the back of the neck toward the brain brought instant death.

Gabriel Brzustovskj, 27, a prisoner from Poland, testifies:

I saw [SS defendant Vinzenz Shoettl] shoot a man . . . One shot to his cheek. The second one was a head shot . . . The man got out of the line because he wanted to get a drink of water.

A still cleaner method—hanging—was also used. Another German prisoner, Rudolf Wolf, testifies:

I saw across the street from the entrance of the hospital a group of prisoners. I walked over and joined them to see what

was going on. There at the gate [defendant] Mahl and Bongartz were standing. In the middle of this group . . . was a young Russian . . . 18 or 20 years old. I saw Mahl put the noose of the rope, which was tied to the gate, around the neck of the young Russian. Then the stool under [his] feet was kicked away . . . I saw how Mahl was grabbing the Russian by the legs and pulling downward like a professional hangman; and as such he was known in the camp.

Then Helmut Opitz, a German textile worker and prisoner at Dachau, describes how SS defendant Josef Jarolin beat prisoners while they were hanging:

Jarolin pushed hanging men [so] they swung to and fro [then] beat these prisoners . . . with a bull's penis that was twisted and dried hard . . . on their faces and their backs, in front and on their shoulders. The prisoners were bleeding. They were Germans, foreigners, all nationalities . . . [This happened] throughout his tour of duty . . . from 1942 until 1943 when Jarolin was transferred from here.

The women prisoners were also subject to killings. Riva Levy testifies again, about impulsive hangings by defendant Emil Mahl:

Five prisoners made foot coverings from a blanket and [for that] were hanged . . . in camp number one on the formation ground [at Landsberg/Kaufering subcamps]. A hangman came from Dachau.

Another method used for deliberate execution was lethal injection. Ludwig Woehrl, from Munich, was a nurse while a prisoner at Dachau. He testifies about injections at the prison hospital:

I saw there that [SS defendant Anton Endres] made an injection into the veins [of] a Polish clergyman. I saw him a short while later over in the morgue. He was dead.

Then we hear from a German tailor, Eugene Seybold, 41, a prisoner in Dachau from 1942 to 1945, who worked at the crematory. He testifies to executions by injection by SS chief camp physician Fritz Hintermayer and by shooting and hangings at or near the crematory by Hintermayer, who made the death certificates. Seybold testifies that he was present when this doctor injected two pregnant women prisoners. Hintermayer's voluntary pretrial statement reads:

[There was an order for] the hanging of two pregnant Russian women. [A superior] demanded that I should kill the women by an injection instead. Though I did not know for sure whether [he] had the right to change the mode of death . . . I injected the two women . . . out of humanity, the more so since I knew that it is the usual custom of civilized nations not to execute pregnant women before delivery.

After Seybold testifies, Hintermayer changes his story:

I gave 1.5 grams of [evapanatrium, a narcotic] and ten cubic centimeters of distilled water. It was an intravenous injection

. . . into the arm. The sleep, or the anesthesia, comes in about ten minutes . . . I returned to the crematory after the air-raid alarm that had been called in between . . . The women had shots through their heads. They were dead.

Heinrich Stoehr, 41, a former general hospital administrator and Dachau prisoner for five years, worked in the prison hospital. He says:

I was a nurse in the septic surgical department . . . I saw with my own eyes when the patients were sent into the shower room. There they were injected . . . in the presence of a doctor and after a few minutes the dead people started coming [were carried] out.

Capo [prisoner block chief] Heiden under the pretense of anesthesia often sent people into the hereafter. He gave injections . . . frequently . . . [SS defendant Anton Endres] never stopped Capo Heiden from carrying out his terrible operations without anesthesia. Instead he assisted him.

The testimony about deliberate executions is overwhelming. Further testimony shows that those who died from executions, beatings, and torture were generally cremated. Those dying from diseases often were buried in mass graves. The crematory ran day and night, still not enough to dispose of all the bodies. A large addition for more ovens was built with the labor of Catholic priests, by order of the SS. The priests were forced to dig their own graves, so to speak.

The defendants testify again that executions were carried out by “superior orders.” They deny any personal responsibility.



*A 1939 magazine published this oil portrait of Adolf Hitler.*