

“Lischka-Trial”: They knew what they were doing ... Evidence on the Nazi-genocide*

It is important to understand that in the Lischka trial, four different aspects were considered to provide evidence of the knowledge of the accused.

First, in the trial before the jury court in Munich in 1967 against Nazi functionaries responsible for the deportations from the Netherlands, former commander of the Security Police and Security Service in the Netherlands Wilhelm Harster had confessed that he had known about the annihilation practices in the Nazi camps.²⁴ As the chief judge in the Lischka trial, Heinz Fassbender, emphasized, this should also have been true for the German SS functionaries in France who had been in even closer contact with RSHA than Harster’s staff officers in Amsterdam had been.²⁵

Second, in the historical expert report that historian Wolfgang Scheffler prepared for the Cologne trial, the role of the RSHA and the bureaucratic organization in the deportations from France to the gas chambers were analyzed as part of the core elements of Nazi genocide. As Brunner notes, the commands on the “cleanup” operations against Jews that had been circulated at a conference of the officials in charge for Jewish matters in Paris at the end of June 1942 underlay the main argument against the “careless ignorance” (*Ahnungslosigkeit*) of the Nazi functionaries.²⁶

Third, when German officials hastily fled Paris during the liberation in 1944, they left behind many of their documents, including administrative orders for the seizure raids and deportations, signed by the accused. These documents had come into the possession of the Resistance and were later stored in the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center in Paris.²⁷ In the Lischka trial in Cologne, they served as decisive pieces of evidence.

Fourth, the obvious contradictions between historical facts and the denials of the accused could not be ignored. The defendants could not argue convincingly, for instance, that they were unaware that the aim of the deportation of small children and elderly people had nothing to do with providing forced labor in “the East.”²⁸

***Reference:**

The *Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France* and the Lischka trial in Cologne, 1971–1980 (together with Birte Klarzyk). In: Eric Le Bourhis, Irina Tscherneva, Vanessa Voisin (eds.), *Seeking accountability for Nazi and war crimes in East and Central Europe: a people's justice?* Rochester/NY: Boydell & Brewer Inc., 2022, 387-428, here 396-397

24 Christian Ritz, *Schreibtischtäter vor Gericht: Das Verfahren vor dem Münchner Landgericht wegen der Deportation der niederländischen Juden (1959–1967)* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012), 170ff.

25 Christiaan F. Ruter and Dirk W. de Mildt, eds., *Die westdeutschen Strafverfahren wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1997: Eine systematische Verfahrensbeschreibung mit Karten und Registern* (Amsterdam/Munich: APA Holland University Press/K. G. Saur, 1998), 201f.

26 Brunner, *Der Frankreich-Komplex*, 246.

27 Centre de documentation juive contemporaine [hereafter CDJC, now Centre de documentation du Memorial de la Shoah]. Files marked with provenance of the CDJC can be found in the archival collection on the Lischka trial, in LAV NRW Dpt Rhineland, 130 JS 1/66 and 130 Js 4/78 (Z), folder 7834. See also Johannes Heuman, *The Holocaust and French Historical Culture, 1945–65* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 38.

28 Brunner, *Der Frankreich-Komplex*, 346.