

## **The „Lischka Trial“, Cologne 1979/80**

Cologne Newspapers of the 1970's coined the formula "Lischka-Prozeß" for the trial against the former SS-Officers Herbert Hagen, Ernst Heinrichsohn and Kurt Lischka – three members of the German occupation force who were responsible for the deportation of more than 73.000 Jews from France to Sobibór and Auschwitz between 1942 and 1944.

The trial took place from 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 1979 to 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1980 in the court house opposite the EL-DE-House, the former residence of Lischka as head of Cologne Gestapo (1939–1940). The process was accomplished by protests of French Jews who survived the Shoah and their children. In the course of the trial they founded the F.F.D.J.F. (Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France) to represent their interests. After 30 days of intensive dealing with the case, judge Dr. Heinz Fassbender passed the verdict. The accused were sentenced to jail for 6, 10 and 12 years.

The "Cologne-trial" was one of the latest of the Nazi-Trials that were carried out in post-Nazi Germany. Historians agree that the "Lischka-Trial" was exemplary because of its shortness (only 3 months), the adequate treatment of the victim-witnesses and the (relatively) high verdicts. Beyond that the trial had a "thrilling" pre-story: Beate Klarsfeld, who was well known for her slap against the former chancellor Kiesinger (because of his NS-past) in 1968, tried to kidnap Kurt Lischka in 1974. Together with her husband Serge, whose father was deported to Auschwitz, Beate Klarsfeld wanted to bring the former Obersturmbannführer to France, where he had been condemned in absentia for lifelong jail in the 1950th. Lischka – as the other two accused Heinrichsohn and Hagen – has well been integrated in the democratic society of the FRG. Lischka worked in Cologne as a manager for a company that dealt in crop and lived a contemplative life in a suburb. He didn't even use a pseudonym. It was easy to find out his address in a local phone book – but the attempt to hijack Lischka and bring him to Paris failed.

Significantly the abduction caused no reactions of the German press, so Beate Klarsfeld decided to accuse herself of the kidnapping and a lawsuit against her took place in Cologne in 1974. The trial provoked a real scandal: The Nazi-delinquent Lischka appeared as witness. The pressure on German politics and justice grew enormously. As a consequence, judicial barriers were dismantled and in 1979 the proceedings against Hagen (as well a manager), Heinrichsohn (lawyer and mayor of small German city in Bavaria) and Lischka finally took place. A trial against only three of more than 200 persons who were mainly responsible for the Shoah in France.