

Institute of National Remembrance

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Discontinuance of the investigation regarding the Nazi crimes in the euthanasia center in the Hartheim Castle

Szczecin, December 2, 2009

Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Szczecin announces that due to the decision of December 2, 2009, the investigation S 55/05/Zn has been discontinued. The investigation concerns the crimes carried out by officers of the Nazi Third Reich in the euthanasia center located in Castle Hartheim in Alkoven near Linz, Austria. There, from April 2, 1940 until mid-December 1944 no less than 1143 Polish citizens were killed in a gas chamber.

This is an offence under Article 1, point 1 of the Decree of August 31, 1944 on the punishment of Fascist and Nazi war criminals guilty of murdering and abusing civilians and prisoners of war. In accordance with the Article 3 of the Act of December 18, 1998 on the Institute of National Remembrance, the proceedings were discontinued against Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Philip Bouhler, Leonardo Conti, Rudolf

Lonauer, Georg Renno, Christian Wirth, Franz Stangl, Franz Reichleitner, Gustav Wagner, Kurt Bolender, Hubert Gomerski, Josef Vallaster, Josef Grömer, Anton Streitwieser - on the basis of Article 17 § 1 point 5, due to the death of offenders. Against Karl Brandt, Victor Brack, Anna Griessenberger (Aichinger), Maria Hammelsböck (Auer), Hermina Gruber, Maria Raab (Draxler), Maria Witmann, Margaret Haider, Maria Brandstätter, Helena Hintersteiner, Franc Hödl and Herman Merta, Vincenzo Nohel, Karl Schulz, Erich Wasicky, Gerhard Bohne, Hans Bodo Gorgass, Albert Widmann the investigation has been discontinued on the basis of Article 17 § 1 point 7, due to the fact that the criminal proceedings against the perpetrators have been validly terminated. With regards to Stefan Schachermayer, Heinrich Barbel, Karl Schiffner, Franz Peterseil, Johann Anziger, Hans Lenz, Marianne Lenz, Rosa Haas, Annelies Gindl the investigation has been discontinued on the basis of the Article 17 § 1 point 1 due to the absence of sufficient data on committing the offense by the aforementioned defendants.

As a result of an extensive investigation proceedings, domestic as well as international, supported by the historical divisions of the Institute, it has been established that 1143 Polish citizens had been killed at the Third Reich euthanasia center in the Hartheim Castle. The fate of several victims has been documented during the process. The conducted proceedings also enabled the process of verifying false information provided by the authorities of the Third Reich on the victims' place and cause of death.

During the investigation also the center's personnel, individual responsibilities, as well as the identities of other people responsible for the murders, especially from the administration of concentration camps at Mauthausen and Dachau-Gusen have been established.

In the course of the investigation rich process and historical material has been collected. It concerns the organization, implementation and the conduct of criminal plans regarding the murders - Aktion T-4 and Aktion 14f13, Aktion H-13. The material reveals details of the center's activities, its scope and the course of execution. The collected information also contains data on the pending criminal prosecutions against Nazi criminals responsible for the crime in question and their fate after the war, as well as the activities of the Austrian resistance movement in Hartheim.

The Head of
Branch I Commission for the Investigation of Crimes
Against the Polish Nation
Szczecin

Dariusz Wituszko
Prosecutor

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