

German Communist Party (KPD) Functionaries Wanted by the German Criminal Police (1933)

Abstract

The KPD's party organization was destroyed by the wave of Communist arrests that followed the Reichstag fire. Thousands of party functionaries were put into so-called protective custody. There are no precise figures on the number of victims involved in this first massive wave of violence, but according to the most conservative data, the Nazis arrested at least 100,000 political opponents in 1933 alone, and of those arrested, 600 died. The KPD leadership, however, put those estimates at 130,000 and 2,500, respectively.

The first wanted poster (on top) shows, among others, Walter Ulbricht (bottom row, middle) and Wilhelm Pieck (top row, middle). Both were KPD deputies in the Reichstag in 1933; when the National Socialists came after them, they went into exile, first in Paris, and later in Moscow. After the war, both returned to Berlin and began their political careers in the German Democratic Republic. Pieck first became chairman of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany [*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* or SED] and then president of the GDR. After Pieck's death in 1960, the office of president was abolished and Ulbricht was named chairman of the Council of State and the new head of state.

The second wanted poster (below) shows, among others, Ernst Thälmann (top row, left), then chairman of the KPD. Thälmann had opposed Hitler and Hindenburg in the presidential election of 1932. On March 3, 1933, he was arrested and spent years in "protective custody" without trial. The circumstances of his death have still not been fully explained. Presumably he was shot in August 1944 in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Source



Source: The following KPD functionaries are wanted: Ernst Thälmann, Franz Dahlem, Hermann Remmele, Helene Overlach, Frieda Krüger, Artur Golke. Picture publication No. 1490 of the German Criminal Police Bulletin. Leaflet (1933).

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