Fritz Thyssen at his *Spruchkammerverfahren* in Königstein im Taunus (August 17, 1948)

Abstract

On August 16, 1948, denazification proceedings [*Spruchkammerverfahren*] began against the industrialist Fritz Thyssen (middle). Because Thyssen had supported the National Socialists before 1933 – and because his relationship with them had been laid bare in the widely-read book *I Paid Hitler*, which appeared in 1941 under his own name – he was regarded as a Nazi, especially in the U.S. The book, however, had actually been written by the American journalist Emery Reves and had not been fully authorized by Thyssen. A devout Catholic, Thyssen had begun distancing himself from the Nazi regime in the mid-1930s on account of its actions against the Catholic Church. In 1939, he went into exile in France to protest the war. In December 1940, the Vichy regime handed him over to Germany. He was held in a private sanatorium until May 1943, at which point he was sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp as a privileged "honorable prisoner" [*Ehrenhäftling*]. In the spring of 1945, he was taken via the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps to South Tyrol, where he was freed by U.S. troops a few days before the end of the war. He was interned again shortly thereafter. On October 2, 1948, the Obertaunus denazification tribunal declared Thyssen a lesser offender and sentenced him to a fine of 15 percent of his assets.

Source

Source: Spruchkammer proceedings against Fritz Thyssen (center) in Frankfurt/M. Unknown photographer.
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