

Report on the First Belsen Trial (November 1945)

Abstract

This newsreel clip reports on the final days of the first Belsen trial, which was held before a British military court in Lüneburg in the British occupation zone from September – November 1945. The 45 defendants brought to trial included both male and female members of the SS who had worked as guards in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as well as some *kapos*, prisoner functionaries who had been given administrative tasks or supervised other prisoners carrying out forced labor in exchange for certain privileges. The report singles out Josef Kramer, the former camp commandant, and Irma Grese, the former warden of the women's section at Belsen, who had both become notorious for their brutality. Both were sentenced to death and executed. The clip is taken from a November 1945 edition of the German-language newsreel *Welt im Film*, which was produced by the American and British military governments.

Source

/The last days of the trial in Belsen. The 45 defendants are brought to trial. This is Josef Kramer, whom the world calls "the Beast of Belsen."

/Irma Grese, blonde and neatly turned out – and the cruelest of them all.

/The verdict cannot erase the thousandfold suffering of this disgraceful camp, but it judges those who degraded themselves to become the executioners and torturers of National Socialism.

Source: *Welt im Film* 26/1945. November 9, 1945. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv

Recommended Citation: Report on the First Belsen Trial (November 1945), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:video-5050>> [May 18, 2024].