

The Headquarters of the American Forces in Germany in the Former I.G. Farben Building in Frankfurt am Main (1949)

Abstract

I.G. Farben, the largest chemical company in Europe until 1945, was implicated in National Socialist crimes in a very specific way. It was one of the leading suppliers of the war economy and profited greatly from the Nazi regime's exploitation of foreign and forced laborers. In early 1941, the company leadership decided to build a "Buna" (i.e., synthetic rubber) factory in Monowitz (Poland) near the Auschwitz concentration camp. About 28,000 of the camp inmates who were forced to work for I.G. Farben as slave laborers fell victim to annihilation. In addition, the German Corporation for Pest Control [*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung* or *Degesch*], a company in which I.G. Farben had a significant share, supplied death camps in eastern Europe with the poisonous gas Zyklon B. On November 30, 1945, with Law No. 9, the Allied Control Council seized I.G. Farben and put it under Allied control. Furthermore, in 1947-48, company decision-makers had to answer for their actions in one of the later Nuremberg trials.

On March 27, 1945, American troops occupied I.G. Farben's enormous Frankfurt headquarters (below). Designed by architect Hans Poelzig and built between 1928-1930, this six-wing, nine-story structure included more than 25,000 square meters of office space, making it one of Europe's largest buildings until the 1950s. After the war, the I.G. Farben building served as the headquarters of various Allied and American organizations: General Dwight D. Eisenhower resided there as commander of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) and of the United States Forces, European Theater (USFET). In 1948, the building became the headquarters of the American armed forces in Germany. Today, the building is part of the University of Frankfurt.

Source



Source: The headquarters of the American forces in Germany in the former IG Farben building in Frankfurt am Main. Date: spring 1949. Photo: Benno Wundshammer.
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