

The Accused in the Rathenau Trial (October 13, 1922)

Abstract

The Organization Consul was a secret, ultra-nationalist, terrorist organization that was formed from elements of the Ehrhardt naval brigade [*Marinebrigade Erhardt*] after the brigade was dissolved by the government in the wake of the Kapp Putsch. The group was named after “Consul Eichmann,” the alias of its leader, Hermann Ehrhardt. The Organization Consul pursued the destruction of the Weimar Republic through the assassination of leading politicians. It hoped to foment a revolt on the Left, and to use that opportunity to lead a right-wing counterrevolution. The Organization Consul was widely assumed to have been responsible for the murders of Matthias Erzberger and Walther Rathenau, and the attempted murder of Phillip Scheidemann. In direct response to Rathenau’s assassination on June 24, 1922, the government passed the Law for the Protection of the Republic [*Republikenschutzgesetz*] in 1922. The law gave the security forces enhanced power to repress groups that conspired against the state. The two main perpetrators, Erwin Kern and Hermann Fischer, were found a few weeks later in their hiding place. Kern died by police gunfire, Fischer by suicide to escape arrest. The rest of those involved in the assassination attempt were charged in October 1922 before the newly established State Court for the Protection of the Republic. This photo shows six of the 13 defendants in the Rathenau murder trial (from left to right): Ernst von Salomon, Ernst Werner Techow, Karl Tillesen, Waldemar Niedrig, Friedrich Warnecke, Hans Gert Techow. Ten of the defendants were sentenced to prison. However, the role the Organization Consul played in the assassination could not be proven in court.

Source



Source: The defendants in the Rathenau trial.

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