

Jake Ricci

HIST 133C

20 November 2024

### **Hans Globke Trial in East Berlin 1963**

Hans Globke was a lawyer in The Reich Ministry of the Interior in WW2. Although he held a high-ranking position as a Nazi civil servant, he was never officially a member of the Nazi Party. Globke played a significant role in drafting and interpreting Nazi racial laws which included the Reich Citizenship Law in 1935 and the Nuremberg Laws which were a set of anti-semitic laws that stripped Jews of their German citizenship. This led to the persecution of Jews in Germany and German-occupied territories which laid the path to the start of the Holocaust. He worked on the legal framework to establish racial discrimination and the laws were implemented across Germany. Some of the other laws that he worked on were that Jewish men were forced to take the middle name Israel and Jewish women to take the name Sara so they would be easier to identify and target. <sup>1</sup>

Once the war ended, Globke sought to maintain his political career. He worked for the British Administration for around a year, focusing on drafting election law. Once he was done there, he worked as the city treasurer in Aachen for three years. During this time he was summoned to testify twice at the Nuremberg trials, the first time in 1946 regarding the

---

<sup>1</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*. New York: The Universal Library, 1968, pp. 327–35. Republished with permission from University of Wisconsin Press.

annexation of French territories after the German victory in 1940. The second time, in 1948, he testified against his former superior, Wilhelm Stuckart, regarding his involvement in the atrocities committed by the Nazi Party.<sup>2</sup>

After the Nuremberg trials, Globke rose to become one of the most influential figures in the West German government. He served as the State Secretary of the Chancellery from 1953-1963 and was one of the closest advisors to Chancellor Adenauer. Additionally, he ran the Chancellery, West German Intelligence service, and was the main liaison between West Germany and NATO. In East Berlin in 1963 East Germany had a show trial accusing Globke of war crimes and crimes against humanity during his time at the Ministry of Interior with the Nazi Party.<sup>2</sup> In July of 1963 he was convicted of these crimes and sentenced to life in prison in East Berlin. However, since East German trials weren't recognized outside of the Soviet sector he had no issues in the West.<sup>3</sup> This article brought to light that Globke's hands weren't completely clean from what the Nazis did in WW2. However, this trial showed that the Soviets were trying to take down any former Nazi they could get their hands on to discredit the West, even though Globke was never an official Nazi Party member and he claimed he was part of the resistance against National Socialism. This article shows how little Globke was really involved with the Nazi Party.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Wikimedia Foundation. (2024, November 11). *Hans Globke*. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Globke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Globke)

<sup>3</sup> Le Bourhis, E., Černeva, I., & Voisin, V. *Seeking Accountability for Nazi and War Crimes in East and Central Europe: A People's Justice?* University of Rochester Press. (2022)  
Goes in detail about the trial of Hans Globke in East Berlin 1963

### **Annotated Bibliography**

George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*. New York: The Universal Library, 1968, pp. 327–35. Republished with permission from University of Wisconsin Press.

This document is the oldest source that I used, providing insight into Globke's history with the Nazi Party. It highlights his role in announcing the Reich Citizenship Laws and the Nuremberg Laws. This is when he mentions the Volk, which is essentially the Aryan race, stating a "German national or citizen of kindred blood is a full member of the Volkish community" which gives them full political rights and duties. In this same document, he explicitly targets Jews saying "All persons of alien blood-hence, especially Jews- are automatically excluded from obtaining Reich citizenship." Published in 1936, this document was the first step in starting the Holocaust. This legally labeled Jews as "non-German" and promoted anti-semitism. This document showed early on where the Nazi party's ideology was and their plan to remove the Jewish population from Germany.

Shuster, George. "German Official Defended: Documents to Be Published Said to Clear Dr. Globke." *The New York Times*, February 26, 1960

<https://www.proquest.com/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/115060923/9AF73BBE0B224787PQ/1?accountid=14522&sourcetype=Newspapers>

This article was published just a few years before Globke's trial and it played a key role in clearing his name and disassociating him from the Nazi Party. The article explains how he was never a member of the Nazi Party and he's been a loyal Catholic his whole life. He said that he stayed in his position when the Nazis took power because he was advised by higher authorities to do so and the vital importance of his area. He was exonerated three times by the British authority, the High Commission, and the German resistance. I believe The New York Times published this article to shape public opinion, anticipating an upcoming trial regarding Globke in Germany. Since the US backed Globke in West Germany they aimed to portray him as having minimal involvement with the Nazi Party.

Daniel E. Rogers, Restoring a German Career, 1945-1950: The Ambiguity of Being Hans Globke, "*German Studies Review*", Vol. 31, No. 2 (May, 2008), pp. 303-324

This article highlights Globke's activities from 1945 to 1950 and how he redeemed himself after the fall of the Nazi Party. Due to his high-ranking position at the Ministry of the Interior during the Nazi Regime, he was automatically arrested after the war. The article says

Globke only survived the Nazi Regime because of good luck as he was suspected of espionage and was being looked into by the Gestapo. Then it shifts to his involvement with the Nazis and what role he played in the Reich Citizenship Laws and the Nuremberg Laws, so he had to clear his name with the Allies. He showed them past letters he sent to certain members of the Catholic church including espionage and details about the July 20, 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler. He showed all of this to the Allies hoping to get back into politics and clear his name, it ended up working out. He worked for the British for a short time after the war and they very much liked his work. Over the next few years, he worked on providing documents to the Allies showing he had little association with the Nazis and trying to distance himself from Nazism to become a member of the new West German government. Then in 1953, Globke was appointed Chief of Staff by Adenauer and he played a crucial role in shaping the policies of West Germany.

Le Bourhis, E., Černeva, I., & Voisin, V. *Seeking Accountability for Nazi and War Crimes in East and Central Europe: A People's Justice?* University of Rochester Press. (2022)

This source goes in depth about his postwar life and his trial in East Berlin in 1963. Globke was accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, East Germany's government's main point of this trial was to delegitimize West Germany and Adenauer's administration. They focused on Globke's Nazi past as they very much wanted to challenge the legitimacy of West Germany trying to say that they still had Nazi leadership this long after the war. It was even used as propaganda against the West during the Cold War. This trial showed how legal arrangements

can be used for political purposes. The East German court convicted him and sentenced him to life in prison. But Globke just stayed in West Germany as they didn't recognize the East German legal system.

Wikimedia Foundation. (2024, November 11). *Hans Globke*. Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Globke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Globke)

The final source is Wikipedia, which covers his entire political career and life. Since I already went in-depth about his trial I will be using the Wikipedia source to show the final days of his life and what he did after the trial. He bought a home in Switzerland in 1957 and planned on retiring there but, in 1963 the Swiss declared him an unwanted foreigner and denied him a residence permit. So with that and the trial being over he moved and retired in Bonn which was the capital of West Germany at the time. His life was relatively quiet there for a while, until his death in 1973 putting an end to this story. I used this last source to discuss the end of his life because Wikipedia all by itself covers everything I have already mentioned.