

Henry Dorn
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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS BRANCH
BIOGRAPHICAL REPORT

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This report supersedes previous report on Buch.

Name: BUCH, Walter

Nationality: German

Positions: Oberster Parteirichter (Chairman of the Supreme NSDAP Court) and Vorsitzender (Chairman) of the First Chamber of the Supreme Party Court, 1 January 1934- 1945 1/ 2/

Reichsleiter of the NSDAP in his capacity as Supreme Party Judge, 1 January 1934- 1945 1/ 2/

Mitglied des Reichstags (member of the Reichstag), 1938-1945 1/ 2/

SS-Obergruppenführer, September 1934-1945 5/ 6/

SA-Obergruppenführer, as of 1945 7/ 8/

Mitglied des Sachverständigenbeirats für Bevölkerungs- und Rassepolitik beim Reichsministerium des Innern (Member of the Council of Experts on Population and Race Policy in the Reich Ministry of the Interior), 1933 - 1945 1/ 3/ 5/

Mitglied der Akademie für Deutsches Recht 2/ 5/ 8/

Birth Date and Place: 24 October 1883, Bruchsal, Baden 2/

Religion: Originally Protestant 3/, later (1938) gottgläubig (neo-pagan) 2/

Family History: His father, Hermann Buch, was Senatspräsident (President of a Senate) of the Oberlandesgericht (Court of Appeals) in Karlsruhe, Baden. 1/ 2/ Buch is the father-in-law of Martin Bormann, who was Chief of the NSDAP Party Chancellory. 1/ 2/ 3/

Education and Military History: After having attended Volksschule and Gymnasium in Constance and Karlsruhe, Buch entered the army. 10/ In 1902 he became a Fähnjunker (officer candidate) and on 27 January 1904 he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 6th Baden Infantry Regiment "Kaiser Friedrich III", No. 114. 3/ At the outbreak of war in 1914 he served as regimental adjutant, later as captain and company commander, and finally as major and battalion commander. 2/ 3/ He resigned his commission in December 1918 and left the army. 2/

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Work and Political History:

After his release from the army, Buch returned to Baden where he began to organize veterans (Kriegsvereine). His efforts to recruit veterans for free corps which were directed against the republicans of government brought him into conflict with the authorities. 2/ 8/ 9/ He found it expedient to leave Baden and took up residence in Solln near Munich. 2/ Buch met Hitler in 1921 in Munich. 8/ Thereafter Buch engaged in propaganda activities for the NSDAP. He joined the Nazi Party in 1922. 8/ In 1923 he moved to Munich, the mecca for anti-democratic elements in Germany, and devoted his full time to the cause of the Nazi Party. In August 1923 he became head of the SA in Franconia (with headquarters in Nurnberg) and later added the SA of Upper Bavaria and Swabia to his command. 8/ Buch took part in the Hitler Putsch in Munich in November 1923. 10/

After the Nazi Party had been outlawed as a result of the Putsch, Buch was appointed head of the SA in Upper Bavaria and Swabia by the secret executive committee of the then illegal party head. 4/ At that time Buch was active as a speaker at numerous Nazi meetings and contributed regularly to Nazi newspapers and periodicals. 8/

On 22 November 1927 Hitler appointed Buch head of the USCHIA, Untersuchungs- und Schlichtungsamt der NSDAP (Investigation and Adjustment Office of the NSDAP). 4/ In this capacity Buch had jurisdiction over investigations of the loyalty of members of the Party and over disputes within its ranks. Buch thus became a member of the central administration of the NSDAP. Buch's office was converted into the Oberstes Parteigericht (Supreme Party Court) on 1 January 1934. 1/ Buch received the title of Oberster Parteirichter (Supreme Party Judge) and, as such, held the rank of Reichsleiter of the NSDAP. He also became Vorsitzender der Ersten Kammer (Chairman of the First Chamber) of this court, with jurisdiction over all important cases. Buch conducted all major disciplinary proceedings within the Party. This Supreme Party Court exercised appellate jurisdiction and supervised the activities of Gau and Kreis party courts which, after January 1934, functioned only on a regional basis. 9/ 10/ On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday (24 October 1943), Buch was described in a laudatory article as the person who deserved the chief credit for having kept the Party free of "impure and undesirable elements." 10/

Buch was one of the first twelve Nazi deputies elected to the Reichstag in 1928. 10/ He continued in this position thereafter. His name appears in the last published list of Reichstag deputies (1942), and there has been no evidence to indicate that he was not still in the position in 1945. 11/

As of 1931, Buch was Chairman of the Nazi Party Sub-committee for Youth. 1/ He became a member of the Sachverständigenbeirat für Bevölkerungs- und Rassenpolitik beim Reichsministerium des Innern (member of the Council of Experts on Population and Race Policy in the Reich Ministry of the Interior) in 1933. (Although Buch is not again so listed in his own curriculum vitae in 1938 (2/), source 1/ mentions him in this capacity in 1945.

Buch is reported to have played an important part in the preparation of the Nazi blood purge of 30 June 1934. 8/ The same source claims that Buch himself shot Heines and Count Spretti. At any rate, Buch presided over the Party

court which sentenced the "party rebels" to death. 11/

In September 1934 Buch given the rank of SS-Obergruppenführer (honorary), that is he held an SS rank commensurate with his party rank, although he is not known to have held an active command in the SS. 5/ Source 1/ also mentions him as an SA-Obergruppenführer (as of 1945), a title which would logically follow from his earlier SA commands in Bavaria, but this statement lacks confirmation by other sources.

From 1927 on, as head of the Party Investigating and Adjustment (Disciplinary) Committee, and, after 1934, as Supreme Party Judge, Buch was in charge of the maintenance of discipline and loyalty to the Führer within the Party. From that time on, his activities were more and more veiled in secrecy. He was generally believed to have considerable influence on Nazi Party politics. 9/ In reality, Buch confined himself to his disciplinary functions. Without trying to influence the decisions of Hitler, he saw to it that those decisions were carried out by the Party without questions. Buch is therefore, in the last analysis, personally responsible for disciplinary measures taken within the Nazi Party. 9/ Although he has not received the publicity that other Nazis holding comparable titles and posts have received, he is nevertheless one of the key men in the Party leadership because of his functions as the highest disciplinary authority after Hitler. 12/

Buch avoided publicity but occasionally appeared at party functions. Thus, in the spring of 1942, he took part in the SS-Führertagung (meeting of SS leaders) and in September of the same year he appeared at the Europa-Jugendkongress (European Youth Congress) in Vienna. 8/

According to an unconfirmed statement made by Heinrich Lammers (Chief of the Reich Chancellery) to American interrogators on 29 May 1945, Buch had difficulties with his son-in-law, Martin Bormann (q.v.), who is said to have brought about Buch's dismissal as Supreme Party Judge. 15/

As of 15 June 1945, Buch was being held at the Allied detention camp, ASCHAN. 13/

Appendix

The functions and legal basis of the Party courts under the jurisdiction of Buch are clearly stated in the Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch, 1944 (p. 186f.):

Nach dem Willen des Führers sind die Parteigerichte (Oberstes Parteigericht, Gaugerichte, Kreisgerichte) ein Mittel der politischen Führung zur Sauberhaltung und inneren Festigung der Bewegung. Die nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung und die politischen Ziele der Bewegung sind für sie oberstes Gesetz und Grundlage ihrer Rechtsfindung. An Einzelbestimmungen sind sie nicht gebunden. Die Parteigerichte haben Pflichtverletzungen von Parteigenossen zu ahnden; ihnen ist die Schlichtung von persönlichen Zwistigkeiten unter Parteigenossen ebenso anvertraut wie der Schutz der Ehre eines zu Unrecht angegriffenen Parteigenossen.

In keeping with the will of the Führer, the Party courts (Supreme Party Court, Gau courts, Kreis courts) are a means of political leadership for keeping the NS movement clean and inwardly firm. National Socialist philosophy and the political goals of the movement are the supreme law for these courts and the foundation of their verdicts. They are not bound by individual regulations. The party court must punish infractions of duty by Party members; these courts are likewise entrusted with the adjustment of personal differences between Party members as well as with the

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protection of the honor of a party member who has been unjustly attacked.

sources:

- 1/ Who's Who in Germany and Austria, 1945
- 2/ Der Grossdeutsche Reichstag, 1938
- 3/ Reichstagshandbuch, 1933
- 4/ Volz: Daten der Geschichte der NSDAP, 1939
- 5/ OSS BR 70.7
- 6/ OSS Source F, July 1944
- 7/ Who's Who in Nazi Germany, 1944
- 8/ Wurdenträger im Dritten Reich, 1943
- 9/ OSS Source T, 17 August 1945
- 10/ Völkischer Beobachter, 25 October 1943
- 11/ Verwaltung und Wirtschaft des Deutschen Reichs, 1942
- 12/ OSS Source F, 29 November 1943
- 13/ OSS Source D, 21 June 1945
- 14/ Heiden, Conrad: Der Führer (Hitler's Rise to Power), Boston, 1944
- 15/ OSS XL-1114.9

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