

Thierack, Otto

(1889--1946), Nazi judge and later Reich Minister of Justice.

A lawyer from Saxony, Thierack was named public prosecutor in Leipzig in 1921 and in 1926, in Dresden. He joined the Nazi Party in 1932, at which point he began his career as a leading Nazi judge. He held various high-ranking posts in Nazi courts, which prosecuted people accused of crimes against the Third Reich in closed sessions and without the right of appeal.

In 1942 Thierack was named Reich Minister of Justice. He used his position to twist laws into what the Nazis wanted them to be, and actively supported their murderous activities through his rulings. He made it legal to send certain types of foreign prisoners or forced laborers to concentration camps, where they would be "exterminated through work." He also made it legal for Jews, Poles, Gypsies, Russians, and Ukrainians *not* to be sentenced by regular courts, but to be taken care of directly by the SS---meaning, of course, that they would be sent to their deaths at Nazi camps in the east.

At the end of the war Thierack was arrested and imprisoned, but took his own life in jail before he could be put on trial.