

Bach-Zelewski, Erich Von Dem

(1899--1972), SS commander. Bach-Zelewski joined the Nazi Party in 1930 and the SS in 1931. After the Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933, Bach-Zelewski rose quickly through the party ranks. In 1938 he became SS commander in Silesia. After World War II broke out in September 1939, the Polish part of Silesia was annexed to his area of authority. Bach-Zelewski later was in charge of deporting tens of thousands of Jews from the region.

Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. At that point, Bach-Zelewski was named Higher SS and Police Leader in central Russia, and several months later became general of police. In this capacity he was responsible for the Einsatzgruppe B unit that massacred Jews in Belorussia. In 1942 Heinrich Himmler made Bach-Zelewski his representative in the fight against the Partisans and in 1943 Bach-Zelewski became the head of all anti-partisan forces in Eastern Europe. From August to October 1944 he led the troops that put down the Warsaw Polish Uprising. His troops were known for their brutality and the massacre of innocent civilians.

After the war, Bach-Zelewski served as a witness for the prosecution at various war crimes trials, including the Nuremberg Trials. He himself was sentenced to several years in jail.