

Spoken text accompanying the PPT on Resources: Personal Files

Welcome dear user! We are Heinz Fehlauer and Jana Blumberg from the German Federal Archives' division Inneres, Justiz und personenbezogene Unterlagen der NS-Zeit or Nazi-era documents regarding domestic affairs, the judiciary, and personal files. We would like to present just a few of the numerous personal files in our holdings that can be used to prove membership in the NSDAP and its subgroups. Research on individuals in the Federal Archives' Third Reich Division are usually successful when the person in question:

- worked in a top-level or high-level Reich agency
- was employed by the judiciary or involved in a court trial before
- was of Jewish ancestry
- was a victim of the first, centralized, "euthanasia" operation
- was Sinti or Roma and subject to study by the Criminal Biological Research Centre of the Reich Ministry of Health
- was a known member of the resistance to the Nazi regime and/or discriminated against or persecuted by the regime
- was relocated as a so-called Volksdeutsche, and ethnic Germans who lived outside Germany or Austria, from central, eastern or south-eastern Europe into the Reich or the occupied eastern territories and was therefore naturalized at the central migration office or Einwandererzentralstelle
- was a member of the NSDAP or one of its subgroups—in particular the SS—or an affiliated organisation, or worked in the cultural sector during the Third Reich

In the search for incriminating documents that show membership in the NSDAP, SA, SS, or other Nazi organisations, we regularly use holdings previously archived in the Berlin Document Center or BDC.

Of main interest are applications for membership in the NSDAP. Every person who wished to become a member had to fill out and sign an application form. These membership applications were collected in the district offices and then sent to the NSDAP membership office or Mitgliedschaftsamt in Munich. This central office, which handled applications from the entire Reich, was under the aegis of the Reich Treasurer, the Reichsschatzmeister. There, applications were reviewed and membership cards were created and stamped with a chronological membership number. When an application was incomplete, for example, missing a signature, membership was not granted and the form was sent back to the district with a request for correction. Today, as a result of the war, only around 600,000 of over ten million applications were preserved. Here you see Hans Filbinger's application. Filbinger served as Minister-President

of Baden-Wuerttemberg in the Federal Republic of Germany until he was forced to resign due to his Nazi past. Membership cards were kept in a district file and in a central file. The district file was originally sorted according to place of residence, today it is also alphabetized according to name. Like all membership file cards, it contains personal data, the membership number, the acceptance date, and the address. This is Adolf Eichmann's card. The central file includes the same information and was and still is sorted alphabetically. Until 1937, many cards also included a photo on the back. This is the card of a member of the SS. Often, it is possible to determine unit and rank from the collar tab.

A survey of NSDAP members was conducted in tandem with the 1939 census. Data entry forms from this survey can be found in two places. First, in special holdings of Berlin party members, second scattered among files containing correspondence between party members. The Berlin Document Center filed forms filled out by non-Berliners with the relevant case. These forms included not only information about the individual and their party membership, but also on their membership in other party organisations, or adjacent clubs and associations. In this form, there are entries claiming membership in the NS-Fliegerkorps or Nazi air corps, the Volkswohlfahrt or People's Welfare Service, the Reichsluftschutzbund or Reich Air-Raid Protection League, the Kolonialbund or Colonial League and the Kriegsgräberfürsorge or War Graves Commission. Concrete information on the person's rank or function within the party was sometimes written on the back of the form, which was also supposed to be signed. The "functionary index" or Funktionärskartei contains information on people who were awarded the Kriegsverdienstkreuz, the War Merit Cross. These cards are stamped with the date of presentation. The reason for conferring the cross was almost always written on the back of the file card. In this case the medal was awarded for setting up and working at the Nazi Welfare Service. Usually, functionaries did not have to serve in the war and were awarded distinctions in this way instead. The NS-Lehrerbund or Nazi Teachers' League was initially founded as an organisation adjacent to the Nazi-party. From 1933, it was the sole organisation responsible for all teachers and early childhood educators in the Reich. Most of the Nazi Teachers' League files have been preserved. They contain information not only about membership in the Teacher's League, but also in other organisations. The card pictured here also contains the date of membership in the NS-Volkswohlfahrt or Nazi Welfare Agency, the NS-Kulturgemeinde or Nazi Cultural Community, and the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland, or People's League for Germanness Abroad. It is not always possible to decipher all abbreviations, as in this case NSO, which perhaps stands for National Socialist Opfergemeinschaft or Nazi Community of Sacrifice. In 1935, The NS deutsche Dozentenbund or National Socialist German Instructors League, was founded as a party organisation that came out of the NS-Lehrerbund. By 1938, one quarter of all professors were members in the Dozentenbund. Dozentenbund cards such as the ones shown here are sometimes found in the files of the NS-Lehrerbund. The printed title in the upper right-hand corner of the file card show how intertwined the Dozentenbund and the Lehrerbund were. It should be noted that a membership number is only given for the Lehrerbund, not for the NSDAP. The second card

in contrast has only an NSDAP membership number. It seems clear that not all file cards were not always kept up to date.

There are far fewer extant files on Nazi doctors than on teachers. This is a file from the Reichsärztekammer or Reich Medical Chamber. It is the card of the chamber's most prominent member, the infamous Auschwitz doctor Josef Mengele. Mostly, the file cards contain information on the person's career. There is however also space for information on membership in the Nazi party and its subgroups as well as in the NS deutschen Ärztabund (National Socialist German Physicians' League) as subordinate organisation. Mengele must have been in the middle of a qualifying period for both organisations at the time. The doctor's place of work is noted on the back of the card. In Mengele's case, it was the Universitätsinstitut für Erbbiologie und Rassenhygiene or University Institute for Genetics and Racial Hygiene in Frankfurt am Main. From 1931, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler decreed what became known as the Heiratsbefehl or "marriage order" for all members of the SS. If an SS man wanted to marry, he had to go through a regimented procedure. Various documents had to be submitted before the SS Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt, the Race and Settlement Main Office or RuSHA approved an engagement. The RuSHA form includes questions about personal data, military service, and membership in Nazi organizations, as well as whether a church wedding was planned. Applicants, both the SS man and his fiancée, also had to submit a curriculum vitae, a portrait photo, and a full-body photo.

Here you see a physical examination form. An SS doctor was required to examine the future spouses and assess their physical condition. He also had to give an opinion on whether the so-called racial characteristics of the fiancée were desirable and fitting to the SS community (it was assumed that this was true of an SS man) and whether the couple should have children in the future. In some cases, the chosen partner was rejected by the Race and Settlement Main Office. The SS man could then either leave the SS or find another wife. Both partners had to fill out an SS hereditary health form, an Erbgesundheitsbogen, in which they provided information on the physical and mental health history of all family members. In this form, both partners were required to disclose any abnormalities in the medical history of parents, siblings, aunts and uncles. In an SS family tree, the couple had to provide proof of their lineage. SS Führer had to be able to trace their genealogy back to the year 1750, SS-Untersführer and non-commissioned officers or Mannschaften had to name their ancestors up to 1800. Thus a completed SS family tree contained 127 names. Each person had to be corroborated with documents and all entries were checked by clerks at the Race and Settlement Main Office. Today, these family trees are invaluable to (hobby) genealogists.

Thank you for your attention. Please don't hesitate to contact us, we are happy to answer any questions you might have.

Translation: Laura Radosh