

# The Records of the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities of the Federal States for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg

## Short Introduction into Records and Terms of Use

In 2000, the Federal Archives established a branch office located at the residence of the Central Office of the Judicial Authorities of the Federal States for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in Ludwigsburg. The task of this branch is to preserve those records which are no longer required by the Central Office for fulfilling its duties, and make them accessible to researchers. Access is granted according to the regulations of the Law on the Preservation and Use of Federal Archival Documents.

The mandate for the Central Office pursuant to administrative agreements states that it should collect and examine all relevant records on criminal acts inspired by a Nazi mentality which are obtainable, that it should define delimited series of crimes and that it should determine the whereabouts of the perpetrators. The facts ascertained are then to be handed over to the public prosecutor who institutes the formal preliminary and criminal proceeding. Besides, the public prosecutors are obliged to forward all findings they obtain to the Central Office and to notify legal measures and decisions pronounced during the proceedings.

The amount of files in itself offers an almost complete survey of investigation and prosecution of Nazi crimes in the Federal Republic of Germany. The documents deal with a wide as various range of violent crimes under the National Socialist regime 1933-1945, as, for example, with murder of political opponents, homicidal crimes within the so-called Euthanasia-program, mass crimes committed by members of the SS and security police within the operational groups in Poland and in former Soviet Union, in the concentration and extermination camps, in the numerous forced labour as well as POW camps and in other institutions for detention.

A large and detailed card index contains some 1,6 million entries naming persons, institutions or units and locations. This index provides exceptional conditions for Holocaust researchers and other historians. The records reveal the involvement of perpetrators and their motivation. Witnesses and to a smaller extent surviving victims testify the vast number of crimes extending on all territories occupied by the Germans. The documents give outstanding evidence of the difficulties of prosecution of Nazi crimes due to legal measures and are therefore an important source for the research of judicial history of the post-war German democracy.