

Summary

Max Rostock was born September 29, 1912 in the family of a trader in Ludwigshafen am Rhein. After having finished the elementary school (1918–1927) he got training as a shop assistant (1930) and a decorator (1933).

The 1st March 1933 he became a member of the Sturmabteilung (shock troops) and 2 months later he joined the NSDAP. He worked shortly in the company of his father and tried to start up a business but without success. In September 1933 he was admitted to the Sicherheitsdienst (security service) as a civilian employee. In 1935 he became a serviceman in the Schutzstaffeln (safety troops), starting 1940 in the officer rank and finally as the SS-Obersturmführer. During the years 1934–1939 he was on active service at different stations of the Sicherheitsdienst in the southwestern Germany (Ludwigshafen, Neustadt, Stuttgart, Lörrach). As a member of the intelligence service he worked mainly against France and Switzerland.

The 26th August 1939 he was posted to the station of the Sicherheitsdienst in Prague and in March next year he was put in charge of the independent station of the Sicherheitsdienst in Kladno, which he directed till September 1942 (or March 1943). He was very efficient in his function. Besides his active participation on the obliteration of the village Lidice he took part in the search for Czechoslovak parachutists and in other actions of the Nazi repressive bodies, which he often tried to instigate. He was even decorated several times for his activity.

After his posting from Kladno he worked as a deputy commanding officer at the station of the Sicherheitsdienst in České Budějovice (1943) and Hradec Králové (early 1944). Due to a violent delict he was seconded to Hungary where he was on active service in Budapest and Cluj. He played an important role in introducing the terrorist regime of the Arrow Crosses in autumn 1944.

In January 1945 he was shortly incorporated in the unit Wehrwolf and then till the end of the war he worked at the station of the Sicherheitsdienst in Constance.

After the war he was in hiding under a false name in Heidelberg. In June 1946 he was arrested by the Americans, in September of the same year he succeeded to escape from his prison. In between he became one of the most wanted war criminals in the Czechoslovak Republic and was inscribed on respective international registers.

Using a new false identity he lived till June 1948 when he was arrested by french occupation authorities in his native Ludwigshafen. In January 1949 started the more than one year lasting extradition proceedings between France and Czechoslovakia which finished by the extradition of the accused offender to the Czechoslovak Republic.

Max Rostock was brought before court in August 1951 in Prague together with 4 other Nazi war criminals (two has-been brigadier generals of the Wehrmacht R. Schmidt and F. C. Gottschalk, one has-been SS-Gruppenführer and major general of the police E. Hitzegrad and a member of the Gestapo in Jičín K. M. W. Richter) who were extradited to Czechoslovakia from the Soviet Union. They were all condemned to death. The Appellate Court which was in that case the Supreme Court confirmed the judgments (except the judgment for Gottschalk) in March 1952. The execution was however with the assistance of the State Security delayed till September 1953 when the political secretariat of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia under the upto now unexplained circumstances decided to suggest to grant amnesty by the President. The 14th October 1953 based on the written suggestion of the Minister of Justice the President A. Zápotocký commuted the death penalties to life sentences to all the 4 convicted.

During the following years Rostock went through different jails in Prague Pankrác, Leopoldov, Valdice and Mírov. In 1955 due another amnesty his life sentence was mitigated to 25 years.

In 1959 Rostock (partly due to his previous offers from 1951–1953) was acquired for collaboration with the then Ist Administration of the Ministry of the Interior (reconnaissance patrol of the State Security) under a cover name FRITZ. After a certain intelligence service training and the settlement of the necessary technicalities Rostock was released from prison and expeled to West Germany. He was expected to contact his previous colleagues from the Sicherheitsdienst and inform about their present activities. In fact he entred into relations with our State Security according to the instructions from Prague, however in a short time he deconspirated his collaboration. After that the State Security had to finish the cooperation with FRITZ. Max Rostock worked then as employee in a commercial firm in Bremen. Still there he was several times questioned by the local police due to his war past. He dyed in Germany in 1986.