Hans Wolfgang Sachs (1912–2000)

From Nazi Volkstumskämpfer and chief pathologist of the Reich Physician SS to chairholder in the Federal Republic of Germany. English version

Background

In June 1944, after the successful landing of the Allies in Normandy and the destruction of the Heeresgruppe Mitte (central army group) by the Soviet army, the military defeat of the German Reich became clearly apparent. In this situation, Reichsarzt SS (Reich Physician SS) Ernst-Robert Grawitz (1899–1945), the chief physician within the SS, wrote to the head of the SS personnel main office that after “endless efforts,” he had finally succeeded in “getting into the possession of a chief pathologist at the Reichsarzt SS and Police.” SS member Hans Wolfgang Sachs, who worked as a physician in the Luftwaffe, was to be immediately transferred to the Waffen-SS (Fig. 1; [20]).

The man whom Grawitz was able to convince to join the Waffen-SS was the 32-year-old Hans Wolfgang Sachs, who worked as a physician in the Luftwaffe, was to be immediately transferred to the Waffen-SS (Fig. 1; [20]).

The work is based in central parts on original documents. The sources are the contemporary SS files from the Federal Archives Berlin (BArch) and documents from the Federal Archives Ludwigsburg (BAL) and the State Archives Ludwigsburg (StAL), as well as documents from the University (UAM) and City Archives of Münster, Westphalia. The primary sources mentioned above are supplemented by the research literature available to date on the history of warfare agent research and human experiments in the Third Reich and the history of the universities Münster and Prague.

Childhood and youth

Hans Wolfgang Sachs was born on March 31, 1912, in Aussig (Czech: Ústí nad Labem) in the Sudetenland in Bohemia, at that time part of the Habsburg Monarchy [6, 11]. The industrial city on the Elbe, about 50 km south of Dresden, had more than 37,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 20th century, most of whom were German speaking. Sachs came from a middle-class family. His father Johann was headmaster of the local grammar school and his mother Olga brought up their son according to the Protestant faith [6, 11]. With the beginning of World War I in 1914, tensions between Czechs and Sudeten Germans in Bohemia grew. After the disintegration of Austria-Hungary, the territory fell to the newly founded Czechoslovakia in October 1918. The German minority represented about one third of the population of the new country. They felt disadvantaged and as losers of the war. The ethnic conflict between the ethnic groups led to excessive nationalism and determined the political and social climate in which Sachs was socialized [34].

Study and engagement as a political activist

In June 1930, Sachs passed his school-leaving examination at the Staatsrealgym-
Nasium Aussig and subsequently began to study medicine at the German Charles University in Prague [6, 11] (the Prague university had been divided into two independent institutions, one German and one Czech, in 1882 [40]).

In the German Reich, Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP)—until then an insignificant splinter party—achieved 18.3% of the votes in the Reichstag elections on September 14, 1930, making them the second strongest force behind the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). In Czechoslovakia in the 1920s, the originally “ethnic” German National Socialist Workers’ Party (DNSAP) developed into a fascist movement of the Sudeten Germans with similar aims to those of the NSDAP [39]. Sachs, by his own account, soon became involved in the National Socialist agenda and joined the DNSAP during his very first year of study. He also joined their paramilitary association, the Volksportverein, comparable to the Sturmabteilung (SA) of the NSDAP. Sachs was also involved in the National Socialist German Student Union (NSDStB) at Charles University. In 1931, he became their university group leader [11, 17]. He was thus known as a National Socialist activist to the university administration, the professors, and the public. The Czech authorities watched the activities of the National Socialists with suspicion, arrested numerous members of the Volksportverein in 1932, and initiated a trial [39].

In this context, Sachs and his comrades-in-arms sat in remand for 6 weeks, which later brought them the reputation of “martyrs” and “old fighters” of the NS movement. Sachs was finally released on his word of honor not to continue agitating against the state. The procedure was stopped [11, 17].

In addition to his manifold political activities and studies, Sachs worked as a volunteer and then as a demonstrator at the Institute of Pathology at the University of Prague from 1933. In 1935 he was employed there as a research assistant and then as a demonstrator at the Institute of Pathology at the University of Prague from 1933. In 1935 he was employed there as a research assistant. In February 1936 he received his doctorate as Dr. med and in 1937 he also passed the examination for medical officer [6].

The annexation of the Sudetenland

In the German Reich, Hitler consolidated his power after his appointment to Reich Chancellor in January 1933. One of his foreign policy objectives towards Czechoslovakia was the annexation of the Sudetenland. By signing the Munich Agreement in September 1938, Great Britain and France gave in to Hitler’s demands. The Sudetenland was occupied and incorporated by German troops until October 10, 1938. Sachs was a passionate supporter of the Sudetenland annexation and joined the Sudeten German Party in March 1938. He had also registered for the Freiwilliger Schutzdienst (Voluntary Protection Service), a paramilitary organization in which he held a leading position [6, 11, 17]. As already at the beginning of the 1930s, Sachs was thus not only a committed party member, but a true political activist who was ready to fight for the National Socialist agenda. Like the members of the Wehrmacht who had taken part in the occupation of the Sudetenland, Sachs received the Medal in Memory of October 1, 1938, colloquially known as the Sudetenland Medal [17], for his active role in this action.

Sachs continued to work as a research assistant at the Institute of Pathology at the German University of Prague. His research interests clearly showed how much he had become absorbed in Nazi ideology. In the winter semester of 1938/39, for example, he gave lectures on hereditary pathology and racial hygiene [6]. In December 1938, Sachs married Hildegard Krippner (born July 26, 1919), who was 5 years younger. She came from a Catholic family from the small village of Nedraschitz (Nedražice), about 25 km west of Pilsen (Plzeň). Her father worked as an authorized signatory in Prague. Hildegard shared her husband’s political convictions, belonged to the NS Women’s Association and the NSDAP (membership no. 7,077,758) [17].

After the “smashing of the rest of Czechia” and establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939, German troops began to pursue and arrest German emigrants and communists as well as representatives of the Czech ruling elite. The German Charles University in Prague was soon assigned a new task: it was to serve as a research center for Southeast Europe and for “racial studies:” Reichsdeutsche (Germans from the Reich) were appointed to

---

**Fig. 1** Grawitz’s letter of 23.06.1944 concerning the takeover of Sachs by the Waffen-SS [20]
Hans Wolfgang Sachs (1912–2000). From Nazi Volkstumskämpfer and chief pathologist of the Reich Physician SS to chairholder in the Federal Republic of Germany. English version

Abstract

During the Second World War, the German Wehrmacht and the SS tested various chemical warfare agents on prisoners of concentration camps. The SS needed a pathologist to do this. Therefore, Reichsarzt SS Ernst-Robert Grawitz recruited the 32-year-old Hans Wolfgang Sachs. Despite his position as senior pathologist at the office of the Reichsarzt SS, Sachs was spared interrogation and prosecution after 1945, although the prosecution presented a document about chemical warfare and human experiments during the Nuremberg medical trial. In this, Sachs was named as a participant in so-called "N-Stoff" (chlorine trifluoride) experiments. Little is known about Sachs to this day. This article is intended to close this gap. Of particular interest are the motives and reasons why Sachs joined the party and the SS, as well as his career after 1945.

Keywords

Chemical warfare agents · Concentration camps · National Socialism · Pathology · World War II

The Second World War

On September 1, 1939, the German Reich invaded Poland—the beginning of the Second World War. Sachs was promoted on this day to SS-Untersturmführer and thus to an SS officer of the Allgemeine SS. In the following weeks there were protests by Czech students at the University of Prague, which led to the closure of the Czech University in Prague in November 1939. Of the demonstrators, nine were executed and several hundred students and 55 professors and lecturers were deported to concentration camps [49]. It is not known whether Sachs was on site at this time, but the events cannot have remained hidden from him.

On January 15, 1940, Sachs was drafted into the Wehrmacht as a medical officer in the air force and received his basic training in the Luftwaffe Sanitäts-Ersatz Company in Baden near Vienna. From December 1940 to February 1941, he completed a course for reserve officers at the Luftkriegsschule 1 (School
for Aerial Warfare 1) in Dresden. Afterwards, he participated in the so-called Balkan campaign and the conquest of the island of Crete as head of the motorized field laboratory 2 and pathologist of an air force hospital at the medical service of air fleet 4 (Unternehmen Merkur [Operation Mercury]; May 20 to June 1, 1941). After the end of the fighting he was awarded the cuff "Crete" and the Iron Cross 2nd Class in every respect—both by the first reviewer, his boss Hamperl, and by Maximilian Watzka (1905–1981), director of the Histological Institute and SS comrade of Sachs [7, 8]. The NS-Dozentenbund strongly supported his appointment as a lecturer, since Sachs had "always been in the forefront of the fight for German nationality" [9]. This seemed to have been more important than his actual professional achievements, for Sachs had published only 11 papers in specialist journals between 1935 and 1943. There is no evidence of a detailed habilitation thesis, nor is it mentioned in his list of publications from the period after the war [60]. The appointment as lecturer by the Reich Minister for Science, Education, and National Education took place on June 11, 1943 [10].

In addition to his teaching activities, Sachs again served in the air force, namely at the Air Force Hospital in Prague. With the support of Karl Frank, Sachs was seconded to the SS hospital in Prague with effect from July 14, 1943, and finally, in the fall of 1943, he was transferred to the conduct of the business of the Chief Medical Officer SS and Police for the Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer Böhmische-Mährische Front. In this relatively prominent position, Sachs also became acquainted with the Reichsarzt SS Ernst-Robert Grawitz. For the time being, he remained a member of the Luftwaffe. However, Frank and Grawitz had already supported a takeover in the Waffen-SS (armed SS) for some time [15]. In the early summer of 1944, Grawitz offered Sachs the position as chief pathologist at the Reichsarzt SS and Police as well as the simultaneous transfer to the Waffen-SS [20].

The exact tasks that were linked to this position are not documented. As a rule, membership in the staff was accompanied by advisory functions in the respective fields and the assumption of special tasks for the Reichsarzt SS [35], and at the same time meant a kind of distinction.

Furthermore, one can assume that the position was accompanied by the prospect of rapid promotions. After all, other members of the staff held general ranks in the SS, such as the chief dentist Hugo Blaschke [24], the SS medical supply quartermaster Carl Blumenreuter [48], and the chief SS surgeon Karl Gebhardt [35]. In comparison, Sachs had by far the lowest rank as a subordinate SS leader.

Sachs accepted the offer, agreed to the change, and was transferred to the Waffen-SS as SS-Obersturmführer with effect from May 3, 1944, i.e., he no longer belonged to the Luftwaffe and now wore the SS uniform. On June 21, 1944, he was promoted to SS-Hauptsturmführer of the Reserve of the Waffen-SS [19]. Himmler had also awarded him the SS skull ring [17]. With effect from May 1, 1944, Sachs was transferred from Prague to Berlin—to his new office, the Stab Reichsarzt SS [18].

**Secret chemical weapons program “N-Substance”**

Within the framework of biological and chemical warfare, the Germans worked on the development and production of highly toxic nerve toxins such as tabun, sarin, and soman. From 1942, they also dealt with the military applications of the so-called Normal-Stoff (normal substance, N-substance), which was chemically chlorine trifluoride or trichlorofluoride. This is a colorless gas that reacts with almost all organic and inorganic substances and corrodes or ignites them, including mucous membranes, eyes, and the respiratory tract of living beings, as well as metals, plastics, and concrete. Gas masks as well as bunkers, tanks, and airplanes would not have offered adequate protection against N-substance ammunition or as a chemical weapon during the Second World War. However, these actual effects had hardly been researched at that time and chlorine trifluoride was classified by the Wehrmacht as comparatively harmless [30, 43, 44, 47].

In March 1944, SS-Gruppenführer Karl Brandt (1904–1948), authorized
representative for medical and health services, issued a Fuehrer’s order in which he stated the urgency of experiments with warfare agents. These included “lost experiments”—experiments in which about 50 Russian, Czech, and German prisoners had already been killed in the Natzweiler concentration camp in 1942/43 [1, 41]. Other tests concerned the compatibility of seawater, which the chief of the Air Force Medical Service in the Dachau concentration camp had proposed under the auspices of the air force. There were also tests on the threat to the water supply from warfare agents. In these tests, active acids intended for detoxification were used [2, 3, 38, 47, 61].

On July 7, 1944, Hitler ordered that Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler should carry out further experiments with N-substances as soon as possible [43, 44, 47]. Sachs had just taken over the position of chief pathologist at the Reichsarzt SS. Himmler assigned the head of the technical office of the Waffen-SS, SS-Brigadeführer Professor Dr. Otto Schwab (1889–1959), with further N-Stoff research.

One area of research was the effect of N-Stoff on humans [30, 43, 44, 47, 61]. Schwab asked Grawitz for the secondment of two doctors, “who should attend experiments with N-substance as medical experts” [36]. Grawitz thereupon commanded SS-Hauptsturmführer Dr. Kurt Plötner (1905–1984), head of department at the Institut für wehrwissenschaftliche Zweckforschung des SS-Ahnenerbe (Institute for military Purpose Research of the SS-Ahnenerbe), as well as Sachs to test the effect of the N-substance.

In September 1944, a first test was carried out to determine further research needs. No further information is available on this. The only evidence of this trial is a letter from the Reichsarzt SS in November 1944, in which concentration camp prisoners are requested for experiments with N-substance [36].

As a result of the September experiment, the SS planned, with Himmler’s permission, to further investigate the effects of N-substance in human experiments to test the suitability of N-substance as a chemical weapon [30, 43, 44, 47, 61]. In November 1944, five concentration camp prisoners from Sachsenhausen were requested as test persons via the above-mentioned letter [36]. According to current sources it is only certain that there were further experiments with N-substance, about which Plötner informed his superior. However, it cannot be clarified how these experiments were conducted [43, 44, 47]. It is very likely, however, that Plötner performed experiments on humans [44]. In a hearing in 1967, Plötner merely stated in his defense that no prisoners were harmed in the experiments with N-substance, since the substance was allegedly harmless [47].

Since Sachs had no special expertise in the field of chemical warfare agents, he was presumably to collaborate in the experiments in his function as a pathologist, especially to test the effect of N-substance on internal organs. Moreover, in his function as a member of the staff of the Reichsarzt SS, he was only obligated to the latter [35] and not to the staff of the SS-Ahnenerbe, which was responsible for the experiments. The Reichsarzt may have wanted him to be present as an independent reporter.

Whether Sachs was actually privy to the research with chemical substances or actively involved cannot be determined on the basis of the current file situation, since his name is not mentioned in the relevant documents. However, he certainly had more in-depth knowledge of the initial plans regarding the N-substance tests and probably took part in the first test. Shortly after further experiments with N-substance had taken place in late November 1944 or the first half of December 1944 [43, 44, 47], Sachs was transferred to the Western Front by the Reichsarzt SS [21]. It is possible that Sachs was involved in the experiments until he was given the new task (however, N-substance experiments continued until early 1945 [44]). It is also possible, however, that he was no longer involved in the experiments and was transferred to the front due to the worsening war situation.

Grawitz applied to Himmler for further experiments with Gelbkreuz (mustard gas) and related warfare agents in February 1945, since he wanted to use prisoners here as well [4], but Himmler refused [5]. Ultimately, one can only speculate about the exact interests of the SS regarding the N-substance. It is possible that the initiative came from individuals who wanted to make a name for themselves with Himmler [47], or that the SS Ahnenerbe or Himmler himself planned to gain access to German chemical weapons research via N-Stoff [44].

End of the war, internment, and denazification

In mid-December 1944, Sachs was transferred to the High Command of the 6th SS Panzer Army, the largest combat unit ever set up under an SS command. He was assigned to the army doctor in charge as consulting pathologist. The 6th SS Panzer Army led the attack focus of the Ardennes Offensive and was subsequently transferred to Hungary. However, the units had nothing left to oppose the Red Army and withdrew to Austria. Sachs described his activities in 1948: “I drove from one field hospital to another to see if the wounded were properly fed or if anything could be improved.” He claimed to have examined only corpses of people who had been medically treated for a long time, because everything else had fallen into the domain of the forensic doctor [50]. Together with the remains of the 6th SS Panzer Army, Sachs was taken prisoner of war by the United States on May 8, 1945, near Linz [25].

Among the Allies’ war aims were the punishment of Nazi crimes of violence and the denazification of the Germans. Unlike members of the Wehrmacht, who were considered regular prisoners of war, NS functionaries, potential war criminals, and SS members were subject to automatic arrest and were held in internment camps, to prevent an escape and to be able to investigate in detail.

Sachs was transferred to internment custody as SS-Hauptsturmführer on May 21. He passed through the American internment camps Haid (August 1945 to 1946), Gmunden (August 1946), Glasenbach (August 1946 to March 1947), Dachau (March to April 1947), and Kornwestheim (April to September 1947) [25, 53, 55].
In December 1946, the medical trial against leading Nazi doctors began. The human experiments in the concentration camps were also negotiated in this process [28]. Although the prosecution was in possession of the document already discussed in connection with the experiments on warfare agents, which mentioned Sachs’ name [36], the Allies apparently had no interest in questioning him. In any case, for various reasons, the subject of biological and chemical weapons was only marginally addressed in the Nuremberg trials [30]. It is possible that Sachs was not given too much importance, since his name was only mentioned in the documents at the beginning and since he was later demonstrably transferred to the front.

In the Kornwestheim camp, the public plaintiff of the camp’s verdict chamber started an investigation against Sachs. The decision was made to release Sachs from internment and to have the proceedings conducted by the local chamber of appeal. On September 16, 1947, Sachs was released to Bad Mergentheim in what is now Baden-Württemberg [53, 55]. His wife Hildegard had lived there since September 1945, having moved back from Prague to her hometown at the end of 1944, where her second child was born a week after the end of the war in May 1945. The Americans had already occupied the area by the end of April 1945. Probably with the withdrawal of US troops to the occupation zone established in Yalta and in view of a possible retaliation by the Soviets, she had fled with both daughters to Bad Mergentheim [54].

Sachs had to go through the denazification proceedings still pending before the Bad Mergentheim court. His defense strategy was simple: he claimed that he had only been commanded to the Waffen-SS, but had never really been a member of the Waffen-SS.

Because of the war he had only served 6 months in the SS anyway. In his experience, the SS was by no means a criminal organization. He stated that his membership in the NSDAP and various other Nazi organizations had to be seen in the light of the years of disenfranchisement of the German minority in the Czech Republic.

Sachs was able to present a statement by his teacher Herwig Hamperl, who in the meantime had taken up a position at the Salzburg Regional Hospital. However, Hamperl was conspicuously reticent in his letter. He stated that Sachs had worked extremely conscientiously at the institute and had “never missed official hours or lectures for the purpose of working in the party or SS.” This was anything but a typical “clean bill of health” in the tone of a general apology. Hamperl rather used the letter to put his own institute in a good light. He wrote that he could not remember that Sachs had engaged in National Socialist propaganda at the institute. “This corresponded to my own attitude that a scientific institute was there for work and not for politicizing” [51]. Perhaps Hamperl did not want to risk too much at the time, since he was still working on his “clean slate” and posing as an apolitical scientist himself [33].

The public applicant requested, after inspection of the file, that Sachs be placed in the group of the main culprits (group I). However, the court was deceived by Sachs and held that he had lost everything as a displaced person. The SS leader and political activist had thus turned into a “victim of the world war.” Sachs was finally classified as a follower (group IV) and sanctioned with the payment of 50 RM [52]. With this denazification notice, he fulfilled the requirements to be reinstated into the civil service. Initially he worked as a general practitioner in Bad Mergentheim, before he became head of the bacteriological and serological examination department there for 3 months.

**Career in the Federal Republic of Germany—chair at the University of Münster**

In 1948, Sachs was offered a position as a research assistant at the Institute for Forensic Medicine at the University of Münster via old networks from the Nazi era. The institute there had developed into a refuge for former SS members. Albert Ponsold (1900–1983), full professor of forensic medicine at the Reich University of Posen from 1941 to 1945, had taken over as director of the institute in 1948 and brought former SS men to Münster [26]. In September 1948, the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia had not yet considered a scheduled appointment of Sachs to be opportune in view of his SS past. However, in February 1949, she gave her approval after a meeting with Ponsold [58, 59]. It is a reality of contemporary history that after the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, the social integration of even heavily criminated Nazi perpetrators became one of the most important elements of Adenauer’s dealing with the past [29].

As a habilitated pathologist, Sachs now worked primarily on the implementation of forensic sections and the subsequent microscopic examination of the preserved body material. His scientific activity was mainly in the field of forensic pathology. On July 25, 1949, the Medical Faculty of the Westphalian Wilhelms University of Münster appointed Sachs as a private lecturer in forensic medicine. This was not a re-habilitation, but a renewed habilitation through recognition of his previous publications and activities. He gave his inaugural lecture on “Problems in the assessment of criminal abortion.” On April 23, 1951, he was appointed extraordinary professor. For a manual by Ponsold, Sachs contributed the chapters “Death by burning and scalding” and “Death by electricity” [45, 46]. The family had settled down well in Münster. After the birth of a son in Bad Mergentheim, two more children followed, so that the number of children had grown to five. Sachs was elected an extraordinary member of the International Academy for Forensic and Social Medicine in 1955 [60].

However, the good relationship between Sachs and Ponsold broke down in the mid-1950s due to disputes over the financial remuneration of private expert opinions. Ponsold was not only the director of the institute, but also ran a private practice, where expert opinions as well as blood group and blood alcohol analyses were carried out and invoiced. According to Ponsold, Sachs refused to give up part of the additional earnings thus gained to finance laboratory and personnel. On April 1, 1957, Sachs was made a civil servant as a lecturer and left the institute,
Sachs responded by filing a disciplinary complaint. Furious, Ponsold wrote to the rector of the University of Münster that Sachs was only interested in his own profit, while he himself was using this money to finance four employees of the institute. He was to ensure that Sachs did not work in Ponsold’s domain. In a sharp tone, the director demanded that Ponsold write the job reference for Sachs, otherwise he would have to hand the matter over to the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs. On the same day, Ponsold handed over a very good reference for Sachs. On July 31, 1958, Sachs was added to the list of blood group experts at the expert advisory service at the state level, and the announcement was made in the Ministerialblatt [56].

Thus, Sachs had a lucrative source of income in addition to his civil servant lectureship at the University of Münster. In the following years, Ponsold tried unsuccessfully to get rid of Sachs. For example, he suggested to the curator that Sachs be transferred to the RWTH Aachen University to teach engineering (Aachen did not yet have a medical faculty at that time). The curator then had to make it clear to Ponsold that such a decision fell within the competence of the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs and that it would have to be preceded by an appeal from the university concerned [57].

In April 1967, Sachs was appointed scientific councilor and professor at the University of Münster. He took on teaching positions at the University of Bochum and the University Hospital in Essen as a paid part-time job. In 1968 Ponsold was finally retired, but subsequently tried by all means available to prevent Sachs from succeeding him. The position remained vacant for over 2 years, and all appointment negotiations failed. Finally, for purely factual reasons, the medical faculty decided to propose Sachs to the Ministry of Education as the first and only candidate (primo et unico loco). On December 15, 1970, Sachs was appointed full professor and took over as director of the Institute for Forensic Medicine at the Westphalian Wilhelms University of Münster.

The Münstersche Zeitung published a big report and introduced the scientist in more detail. There was not a word about his SS past; instead, it was mentioned that he had worked as a consulting pathologist in a Panzer Army and that he had fallen into American captivity (instead of internment). On March 31, 1980, Sachs was retired after reaching the age of 68 [56]. The Westfälische Nachrichten and the Münstersche Zeitung reported even later on the occasion of Sachs’ “round” birthdays [56]. On the occasion of his 80th birthday in 1992, there is also a tribute in the Deutsches Ärzteblatt [27], and an obituary can be found in Rechtsmedizin.
“service in the Waffen-SS” was changed slightly to “service in the Wehrmacht,” and “internment as a member of the SS” became a “normal” captivity of war (Fig. 2). In the young Federal Republic of Germany, many biographies of former SS members were “reinterpreted” in this way, thus disguising their own Nazi past [62]. Usually, there were no critical questions—on the contrary: well established “silence cartels” and intact networks from the Nazi era helped Sachs to pursue a career at the University of Münster.

**Conclusion**

Hans Sachs belonged to the group of German university professors whose academic careers in the Third Reich received special protection and impetus due to their National Socialist convictions, their position in the system, and their activities. In 1944, Sachs joined the Waffen-SS and was involved in experiments with chemical warfare agents as chief pathologist in the staff of the Reichsarzt SS. Even if Sachs’ role in this context cannot be enlightened in detail, it could not have escaped his notice that in various experiments by the SS in the concentration camps, prisoners were murdered. Sachs must also have known the conditions in the concentration camps, since according to the Dachau prisoner doctor and pathologist Franz Blaha, he participated in an inspection of the Dachau camp in 1944 [37].

Although he was heavily burdened politically as a National Socialist Volkstumskämpfer and SS leader, he managed to gloss over his biography after 1945 and ascribe an apolitical role to himself. He had rendered lasting services to science at the medical faculty.”

**References**

1. Bundesarchiv Ludwigsburg (BAL), B 182/2004, Aktenvermerk
2. BAL, B 162/20014, Dokumentenanlage, Schreiben Grawitz an RFSS v. 8. Sept. 1944
3. BAL, B 162/20014, Dokumentenanlage, Schreiben Grawitz an RFSS v. 23. Nov. 1944
4. BAL, B 162/20014, Dokumentenanlage, Schreiben Grawitz an RFSS v. 8. Febr. 1945
5. BAL, B 162/20014, Dokumentenanlage, Schreiben RFSS an Grawitz v. 17. Febr. 1945
6. Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArch), R 31/3009, Deutsche-Karls-Universität, Personalkarte Sachs, Lebenslauf 1942
7. BArch, R 31/3009, Deutsche-Karls-Universität, Personalkarte Sachs, Gutachten-Hamperl
8. BArch, R 31/3009, Deutsche-Karls-Universität, Personalkarte Sachs, Gutachten-Watzko vom 3. Dez. 1942
9. BArch, R 31/3009, Deutsche-Karls-Universität, Personalkarte Sachs, Schreiben NSDOV vom 29. Apr. 1943
10. BArch, R 31/3009, Deutsche-Karls-Universität, Personalkarte Sachs, Schreiben RMWVE vom 11. Juni 1943
11. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Lebenslauf 1939
12. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Aktennotiz o.D. [1941]
13. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Meldung SS-San. Sturm XXXIX vom 28. Apr. 1942
14. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Bescheinigung über die Dienstlaufbahn o.D. [1943]
15. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Schreiben Grawitz an SS-Personalhauptamt vom 7. Okt. 1943
16. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Personalantrag vom 24. Febr. 1944
17. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Personalangaben Sachs vom 27. März 1944
18. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Schreiben SS-Führungshauptamt vom 25. Apr. 1944
19. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Schreiben SS-Personalhauptamt vom 22. Juni 1944
20. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Schreiben RFSS von 23. Juni 1944
21. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Schreiben SS-Führungshauptamt vom 18. Dez. 1944
22. BArch, R 9361-III/551823, SS-Akte Sachs, Schreiben RFSS von 9. Mai 1945
23. Brinkmann B, Teige K (2000) In memoriam Prof. Dr. med. Hans Wolfgang Sachs. Rechtsmedizin 11/1:31
24. Deprem-Hennen M, Westemeier J (2018) SS-Brigadeführer Hugo Johannes Blasche – Hitler’s „Leibzahnarzt“. In: Schmidt M, Groß D, Westemeier J (eds) Die Ärzte der Nazi-Führer: Karrieren und Netzwerke. Medizin und Nationalsozialismus, vol 5. LIT, Berlin, Münster, pp 105–128
25. Deutsche Dienststelle (WAST), Karteikarten Hans Sachs
26. Droste D (2012) Der Fall Bruno K. Schultz. NS-Täter, ihre wissenschaftliche Reintegration und die Kontinuität nationalsozialistischer Netzwerke an der Universität Münster. In: Thamer HU, Droste D, Happ S (eds) Die Universität Münster im Nationalsozialismus. Kontinuitäten und Brüche 1930 und 1960. Universitätarchiv Münster: Veröffentlichungen des Universitätsarchivs Münster, 5, vol 2. Aschendorf Münster, pp 1055–1082
27. Deutsches Ärzteblatt (1992) 89/16:A1465
28. Ebbinghaus A, Dörner K (eds) (2002) Vernichten und Heilen: der Nürnberger Ärzteprozeß und seine Folgen. Aufbau TB, Berlin
29. Frei N (1996) Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit. C.H. Beck, München
30. Geißler E (1999) Biologische Waffen – nicht in Hitlers Arsenalen: biologische und Toxin-Kampfmittel in Deutschland von 1915 bis 1945. Studien zur Friedensforschung. 13. Lit, Münster, pp 738–742
31. Groß D (2018) Zahnärzte als Täter. Zwischenergebnisse zur Rolle der Zahnärzte im „Dritten Reich“. Dtch Zahnärztl Z 73(3):164–178
32. Groß D, Graf C, Uhlendahl H, Schmidt M, Westemeier J (2019) Carl August Krauspe (1895–1983) – Founder and honorary member of the “European Society of Pathology” and “politically reliable” National Socialist. Pathol Res Pract 215(2):395–403
33. Gross D, Kaiser S, Gräf C, Uhlendahl H, Schmidt M (2019) Between fiction and reality: Herwig Hamperl (1899–1976) and the Third Reich as reflected in his autobiography. Pathol Res Pract 215(4):832–841
34. Hahn HH (ed) (2007) Hundert Jahre Sudetendeutsche Geschichte. Eine völkische Bewegung in drei Staaten. Die Deutschen und das östliche Europa. Studien und Quellen, 1. Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main
35. Hahn J (2008) Grawitz, Genzken, Gebhardt. Drei Karrieren im Sanitätsdienst der SS. Klemm & Oelschläger, Münster
36. International Military Tribunal (Hrsg) (1949) Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10, Vol. 1: The Medical Case: Nuremberg October 1946–April 1949, 1. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, S344–345. English Document Book No. 13, p56, Document NO-005/Prosecution Exhibit 273: Grawitz an Himmler am 22. Nov. 1944
37. Klee E (1997) Auschwitz, die NS-Medizin und ihre Opfer. Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, p42
38. Kopke C, Schultz G (2001) Menschenversuche mit chemischen Kampfstoffen bei Wehrmacht und SS. Ein Forschungsbericht. In: Kopke C (ed) Medizin und Verbrechen: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Walter Wuttke. Klemm & Oelschläger, Ulm, pp239–258
39. Luh A (1991) Die Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei im Sudetenland: Völkische Arbeitserpartei und faschistische Bewegung. Bohemia 32:23–38
40. Míšková A (2007) Die deutsche (Karls-)Universität vom Münchner Abkommen bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs. Universitätsleitung und Wandel des Professorenkollegiums. Karolinum, Prag, p123, 250
41. Mitscherlich A, Mielke F (1978) Medizin ohne Menschlichkeit. Dokumente der Nürnberger Ärzteprozesse. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, pp170–171
42. Nachruf Hans Wolfgang Sachs. In: Westfälische Nachrichten vom 22. Sept. 2000.
43. Nagel G (2012) Wissenschaft für den Krieg. Die geheimen Arbeiten der Abteilung Forschung des Heereswaffenamtes. Palla Athenæ 43. Steiner, Stuttgart, pp308–309
44. Reitzenstein J (2014) Himmlers Forscher. Wehrwissenschaft und Medizinverbrechen im „Ahnenerbe“ der SS. Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, pp228–231
45. Sachs HW (1950) Tod durch Verbrennung und Verbrühung. In: Ponsold A (ed) Lehrbuch der Gerichtlichen Medizin einschliesslich der ärztlichen Rechtskunde und der Versicherungsmedizin. Thieme, Stuttgart, pp315–322
46. Schmalz F (2005) Kampfstoff-Forschung im Nationalsozialismus: zur Kooperation von Kaiser-Wilhelm-Instituten, Militär und Industrie. Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften: Geschichte der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus, 11. Wallstein, Göttingen, p175
47. Schmidt M, Groß D, Westemeier J (2018) Karl Blumenreuter (1881–1969): Himmlers’ chief pharmacist and medical supply quartermaster of the SS. Pharmazie 73(4):244–247
48. von Schmoller G (1979) Die deutschen Vergeltungsmaßnahmen nach den tschechischen Studentendemonstrationen in Prag im Oktober und November 1939. Bohemia 20(1):156–174
50. Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg (StAL), EL 902/16, Bü 2414, Aussage Sachs, etwa 1948
51. StAL, EL 902/16, Bü 2415, Schreiben Hamperl vom 10. Juni 1947
52. StAL, EL 902/16, Bü 2415, Protokoll öffentliche Sitzung vom 14. Jan. 1948
53. StAL, EL 903/3, Bü 4058, Karteikarte Intemungslager Kornwestheim: Hans Sachs
54. Stadtarchiv Münster, 50/2214, Antrag Vertriebenenausweis Hildegard Krippner vom 4. Sept. 1954
55. Stadtarchiv Münster, Sozialamt 50/2214, Entschädigungsantrag vom 31. Jan. 1955
56. Universitätsarchiv Münster (UAM), Bestand 5, Nr. 367, Hans Sachs
57. UAM, Bestand 242, Nr. 389, Hans Sachs
58. UAM, Bestand 242, Nr. 389, Schreiben Kultusminister NRW vom 11. Sept. 1948
59. UAM, Bestand 242, Nr. 389, Schreiben Ponsold vom 7. Febr. 1949
60. UAM, Bestand 242, Nr. 389, Bd. 1, Lebenslauf Hans W. Sachs, o.D. [nach 1969]
61. Weindling P (2015) Victims and survivors of Nazi human experiments: science and suffering in the Holocaust. Bloomsbury Academic, London, New York
62. Westemeier J (2016) Hans Robert Jauss. Jugend, Krieg und Internierung. Konstanz University Press, Konstanz