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# Medicine and the Holocaust: Learning More of the Lessons

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It is no exaggeration to declare that the greatest blot on the record of medicine in the 20th century is the role played by German physicians in the Nazi era. At the postwar trial at Nuremberg, the court found 15 German physicians guilty of war crimes and sentenced 7 of them to death [1]. After the trial, the German medical establishment carefully cultivated the theory that the violations that had occurred were the acts of this handful of physicians working in a few notorious concentration camps [2]. Until the mid-1960s, most commentators accepted this version of the events. Not the profession of medicine, but only a few Nazi henchmen—more madmen than men of science—were implicated in the Holocaust. Indeed, the trial of the Nazi physicians at Nuremberg, the verdict, and even the Nuremberg Code did not receive sustained attention between 1945 and 1965. Events in Nazi Germany seemed altogether irrelevant to physicians in the United States.



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