

STADT MÜNSTER

Villa ten Hompel

The Permanent Exhibition



HISTORY  
VIOLENCE  
CONSCIENCE

VILLA  
TEN HOMPEL  
GESCHICHTSORT

I.M  
A.UFTRAG

# Welcome!

**T**he history of Villa ten Hompel represents the stages of German and European contemporary history: From a factory owner's villa at the beginning of the twentieth century to an order police command centre during National Socialism, and after 1945, a place of denazification and "reparations". In 1999, a historic site was founded here whose permanent exhibition History – Violence – Conscience thematises and discusses the house's problematic history.

The work at a historic place goes hand in hand with a commitment to a democratic society. This is done through different formats which keep the past open to discussion and serve as a forum for living democracy. The Historic Site is a platform for learning and research, documentation, and networking with regional, national, and international partners.

With this guide through the history of the Villa ten Hompel we warmly welcome you.

## **Imprint**

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· p. 6 Villa ten Hompel, Deposit 034 · p. 7 left and right: Villa ten Hompel, Deposit 062, centre: Villa ten  
Hompel, Deposit 034 · p. 8 Annina Hofferberth · p. 9 left: „Der Großdeutscher Reichstag 1938“, right:  
Dortmund City Archive /Arnd Lülfig · p. 10 State Archive NRW, Rhineland Unit · p. 11 left: Villa ten  
Hompel, Primavesi Collection, right: Villa ten Hompel, Private Collection Hanken · p. 13 top left: Villa  
ten Hompel, Deposit 317, top right: Villa ten Hompel, Private collection, bottom left: Private collection  
Busalski, bottom right: Telgte Municipal Archives · p. 14 top: Villa ten Hompel, bottom left and right: Villa  
ten Hompel Dep 278, centre: Villa ten Hompel Deposit 446*



**The ten Hompel villa as a family residence during the Weimar Republic**  
The view of the back of the villa and garden in 1930 (left) and the furnishings of the villa's fireplace room (right) gives an impression of the ten Hompel family's wealth. The furnishings were based on Rudolf ten Hompel's designs.

The villa was named after its builder, Rudolf ten Hompel. Under his leadership as general manager, the Münster-based Wicking-Werke expanded in the 1920s to become Germany's largest cement corporation.

The estate on Kaiser-Wilhelm-Ring still conveys an impression of the family's stately lifestyle. Beginning in 1928, the ten Hompel couple lived here with their two youngest daughters and gave glittering receptions and lavish parties.

But by 1931, everything changed: Rudolf ten Hompel's corporation ran into payment difficulties due to risky investments at home and abroad. A trial in the Münster Regional Court ended with Rudolf ten Hompel's conviction. The property came into state ownership by 1940 at the latest.

## BIOGRAM

### The ten Hompel couple



**Group photos of the ten Hompel family**  
The silver wedding couple (centre) with guests on the veranda of the villa in 1929 (left) and with their children walking on the Norderney beach in 1926 (right).

Rudolf ten Hompel (1878-1948) and Johanna Schwartz (1881-1971) both came from manufacturing families and married in 1904. In 1915, Rudolf took over the Wicking-Werke business which had been founded by his grandfather. With the relocation of the company headquarters, the couple moved to Münster.

Rudolf ten Hompel was a member of the Catholic Centre Party, and from 1920 to 1928 he was one of its Reichstag members. After he had to give up the company due to financial difficulties, he moved closer to the Nazi Party (NSDAP).

In 1935, the Münster Regional Court sentences him to three years in prison and levied a fine for various economic crimes. After he had served the prison sentence, the family moved to Munich. There, they were able to live comfortably—but no longer lavishly—off of Johanna ten Hompel's fortune. After the death of her husband in 1948, Johanna ten Hompel moved back to Münster, where she died in 1971.



*The villa as Order Police headquarters*  
Employees in a group photo on the villa's terrace (left, Helmut Kaatz is standing in the bottom row, third from left). The commander of the order police's office (right).

Beginning in April 1940, Dr. Heinrich B. Lankenau was in charge of Villa ten Hompel. As commander of the order police (BdO) in Wehrkreis (military district) VI, he commanded about 200,000 police men who, until then, had been active in the local police departments.

In the course of the war, the tasks of the BdO expanded: Now the order police provided guards for deportation trains to the concentration and extermination camps. They also supervised forced labour camps and ghettos, as well as forced labourers and prisoners of war. 22 police battalions were also massively involved in the murders of Eastern Europe's Jewish and civilian population.

## BIOGRAM

### Helmut Kaatz (1903– unknown)

Helmut Kaatz worked for the Reichsbahn (German Railway) before joining the police. As a chief inspector of the order police, he worked at the Villa ten Hompel. In 1943, he was first transferred to Kraków, then to Lublin.

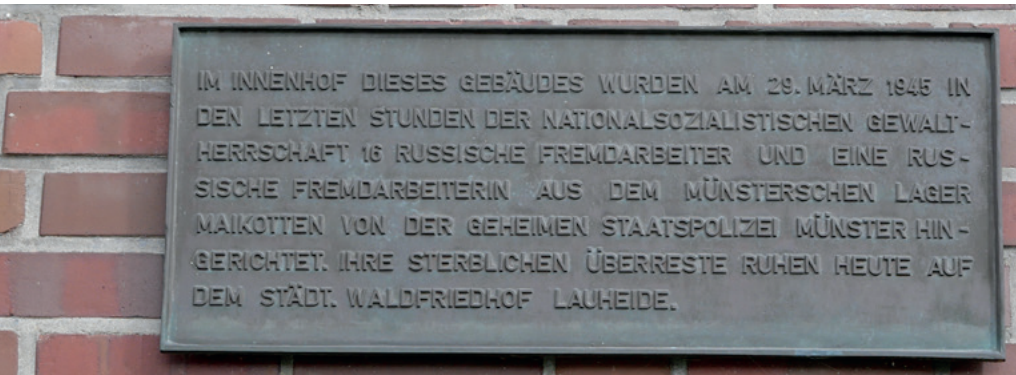
The police regiment assigned there took part in mass shootings of Jews, for example in "Operation Harvest Festival," in which they helped murder more than 43,000 Jews in November 1943. Kaatz's concrete role cannot be determined. He was considered missing from July 25, 1944, probably having perished in

the fighting in the Lublin area. For many years, his wife and daughter hoped that he would return, until, in 1975, he was declared dead.

Decades later, his daughter visited the historic site and rediscovered her father in photographs. Since then, she has intensively studied the phenomenon of Holocaust perpetrators. She provided the villa with further material.



*Helmut Kaatz in the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era and shortly before his disappearance*  
Kaatz in the police uniform of the Weimar Republic (left), at a party of the order police in the villa ca. 1942/43 (centre, Kaatz second from left) and in the portrait from June 21, 1944, a few days before his disappearance (right).



*One of the scenes of war crimes in Münster: the prison on Gartenstraße  
Memorial plaque on the outer wall of Münster Prison in memory of  
the 17 murdered forced labourers from the Maikotten camp.*

## BIOGRAM

### Karl Gutenberger (1905–1961)

A trained banker, he joined the SA and the NSDAP as early as 1925 and took part in beer hall and street fights. In 1937, as a Nazi “Old Fighter,” he was appointed police chief of Duisburg, and was later the police chief of Essen between 1939 and 1941. This period also saw his switch from the SA to the SS: he quickly rose to the position of “Higher SS and Police Leader West” in Düsseldorf, which he was to remain as until the end of the war in 1945.

In the final phase of the war, he set up four so-called “police combat groups.”

They were meant to close gaps in the front, support the Wehrmacht, and shoot at looters, deserters, and residents who fled towards the Allies.

It was also Karl Gutenberger who, on Heinrich Himmler’s instructions, ordered the assassination of Aachen’s mayor Franz Oppenhoff after American troops had liberated the city. He was put on trial for this after the war’s end. The initially decided prison sentence of four years was reduced to two years and six months after a new trial. He last worked as a wholesale merchant.

In October 1944, the BdO office moved from the Villa ten Hompel to Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth.

During this time, extensive war crimes also took place on the territory of what is now North Rhine-Westphalia: Under the guise of fighting crime, the police shot Polish and Soviet forced labourers and prisoners of war. A decree made the state-ordered killings possible without a court conviction.

Shortly before the war’s end, violence escalated on the home front: Gestapo members killed at least 230 foreign forced labourers and members of a resistance group in Dortmund between March and April 1945. In Münster, too, Gestapo members murdered 17 forced labourers from the Maikotten camp just three days before the end of the war, including the 16-year-old Tossja Possochowskaja.

When Münster was liberated by American and British units on April 3, Villa ten Hompel stood empty. Only a post office for the police remained in the house.

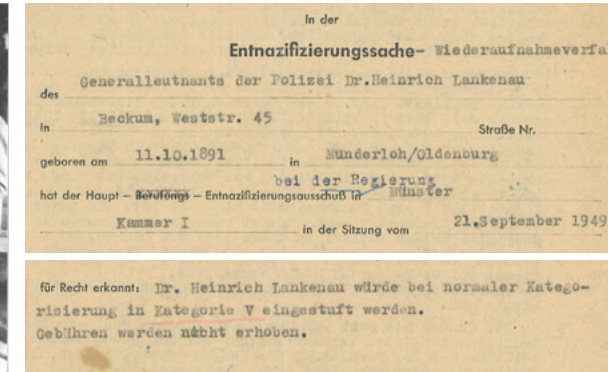


*Karl Gutenberger and the remembrance of the crimes ordered by him  
Portrait photo of Karl Gutenberger in uniform (left) and the memorial in Dortmund’s Bittermark city  
forest in memory of the murder of forced labourers at the end of the war.*

At the end of the war, Villa ten Hompel was one of the few administrative buildings in Münster’s city centre that had not been destroyed. The state police chief and the “Police Denazification Main Committee” he had set up quickly moved in. This committee examined every police officer in the urban district for his or her individual political liability.

After the British occupation authorities transferred responsibility to German hands at the end of 1947, politics and administration worked toward an end to denazification. Now, an “appeals committee” mostly handled revisions and questions of reinstatement.

Some of the former functionaries thus re-entered police service or gained rehabilitation—as did the former commander of the order police, Dr. Heinrich Lankenau, who received a pension commensurate with his former high position. In 1951, the “appeals committee” transferred his offices to the Water Police, who were also based here.



*The villa as the seat of the “Denazification Main Committee”*  
“Denazification committees” like the one in Dortmund (left) decided whether police officers were political-ly charged. The former BdO Lankenau, classified as exonerated (category V) in 1949 (right).

## BIOGRAM

### Rolf-Joachim Buchs (1900–after 1975)



**Rolf-Joachim Buchs and denazification**  
Buchs, circa 1939 as platoon leader in Police Battalion 63 (left, Buchs is standing in the centre), and during the war as company commander in Battalion 309 (right, Buchs is on the right in the photo).

The order policeman Rolf-Joachim Buchs arrived in Białystok on June 27, 1941, as a company commander in the Cologne Police Battalion 309. He ordered raids against Jews, which were accompanied by mistreatment and shootings. His unit herded 800 of them into the local synagogue before it was set on fire. A month later, he was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class for his actions in Białystok.

After the war, Buchs continued his police career: he became police chief, chief inspector, and course director at the state police school in Düsseldorf.

In the 1967/68 Wuppertal Białystok trial, he and 13 other former members of the police battalion were charged with murder, accessory to murder, and aggravated arson. Buchs received a life sentence. But because of a procedural error, retrials were ordered. Now, Buchs was considered only an accessory to the crime and received a four-year suspended sentence.

# “Department for Reparations”

1954–1968

In 1954, the “Department for Reparations” moved into the villa. It provided a contact point for the formerly persecuted to file applications for compensation. But the struggle for compensation or restitution became an arduous, emotionally charged undertaking. A total of around 12,000 people from the entire Münster administrative district submitted applications to the department, and 100 million marks were paid out.

The government made sure that mainly young, politically unencumbered civil servants worked in the villa. The head of the department, Dr. Hans Kluge, had himself been politically persecuted. However, in order to assess the applications, the officials had to think their way into the supposed Nazi logic of grouping the persecuted. As a result, numerous persecuted groups were excluded from compensation, including homosexuals and people who had been forcibly sterilised, foreign forced labourers, or German women who had had relationships with the latter.



*The employees of the “Department for Reparation”  
Group photos ca. 1954/55 staff on the terrace stairs (left) and in one of the rooms of the villa (right).*

Maria Reefke, née Unger, was persecuted as a Sintesa during the Nazi era. Her two children were forcibly placed in homes. In 1942, Reefke was deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Her children were taken to Auschwitz and murdered in 1943 according to Himmler’s “Auschwitz Decree”.

After returning to Telgte in 1945, she was no longer able to work due to the bodily harm she had suffered. In 1953, she was officially recognized as a Nazi victim. She only received small compensation pay-

ments. She never filed an application for her murdered children. Her confiscated property was not returned because of a deadline that had passed.

The fact that she received compensation at all was only because the responsible officials had classified her as a “racially” persecuted person and not—as was the case with many other Sinti and Romanies—as “asocial.” Reefke died at the age of 61 from the aftereffects of her persecution.

## BIOGRAM

## Maria Reefke (1907–1969)



Stadt Telgte Hausstandskarte für Kirchspiel Telgte Westbevern						
Namen	Vornamen	Stand oder Gewerbe	Fami- lien- stand	Religion	Geburt	
					Ort	Tag
<del>Unger</del>	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1907
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1911
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1915
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1918
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1921
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1924
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1927
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1930
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1933
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1936
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1939
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1942
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1945
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1948
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1951
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1954
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1957
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1960
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1963
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1966
	Maria	Lehrerin	l.	A	Telgte	1969

*x Antiziganismus*

**Maria Reefke as persecuted person**  
Maria Reefke (back row, 4th from left) with friends (left, year unknown). In addition to information such as place and year of birth about Maria Reefke and her children, the household card also contains a crossed-out antiziganist remark.



**The Villa as a living Historic Site**

The doors of the villa are now open to visitors (left) who visit the permanent exhibition (centre), attend lectures, or participate in various theme days (right).

There have been discussions about the use of the historic building since the early 1990s, when politician and historian Winfried Nachtwei investigated the history of the villa. Partners from the urban community, the culture of remembrance, and the university developed an innovative concept for the use of this Historic Site. On December 13, 1999, the Historic Site was opened as an institute for research, commemoration, and remembrance.

The permanent exhibition *History – Violence – Conscience* presents the house’s problematic history. The villa also offers a diverse educational program, with guided tours and theme days for various professional groups and schools. It is also a contact point for questions about historical culture and about dealing with current right-wing extremism and anti-Semitism.

## BIOGRAM

### Henriette Hertz (1913–2001)



**Henriette Hertz in the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era, and the postwar era**

Henriette Hertz (far left) with friends during a family vacation on Norderney 1925 (left), in hiding with the code name “Hanne Halm” in 1944 (centre), and in the post-war era (right).

Henriette Hertz descended from a family of Jewish lawyers from Münster. In 1933, she was unable to find an apprenticeship because of the beginning of persecution. In 1936, her parents’ house was expropriated and forcibly sold, and her new home was converted into a “Jew House” in 1939. She only escaped the deportations in 1941/1942 because she had to care for her seriously ill father and was warned by an acquaintance in the SS. Finally, she went into hiding in the Rhineland for the next three years under a false identity as the blonde “Aryan” Hanne Halm.

In 1949, a long legal battle began for the restitution of her stolen property. She had to draw up detailed lists for this purpose. After 1953, she was awarded only a fraction of her stolen assets, and the payments were made late. In a letter to the tax office, she wrote that she felt “transported to the deepest part of the Nazi era.” Her daughter donated some rescued family pieces to the Historic Site.



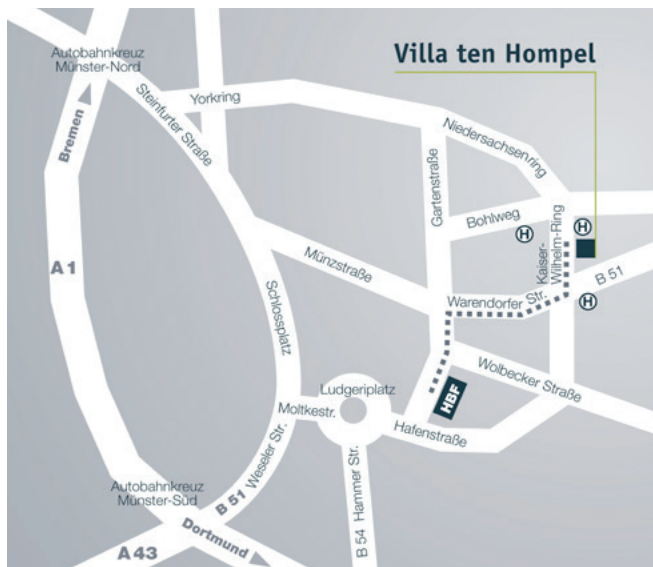
## How to get to the memorial

### Bus:

Lines 2 and 10 (stop: Hohenzollernring) and line 4 (stop: Elisabet-Ney-Straße and Villa ten Hompel)

### Car:

There are a limited number of marked parking spaces behind Villa ten Hompel.



## Contact

### Villa ten Hompel

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[www.tiktok.com/@villatenhompel](https://www.tiktok.com/@villatenhompel)

Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Fri: 9 a.m. to noon · Thurs: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Exhibition Hours: Mon, Wed, Thurs: 6 to 9 p.m. · Sat, Sun: 2 to 5 p.m.

