

## The Schenker Papers

**The Schenker Company had been one of the most important enterprises engaged in pillage and plunder during German aggressions and mass crimes throughout Europe in the period from 1938 to 1945. This German mega-company has been – and remains – state-owned. Today, operating under the name "DB Schenker," it is a branch of the Deutsche Bahn (DB, the German Railway Company) and is under the authority of the German Ministry of Transport.**

DB Schenker, with its 65,000 employees worldwide is, today, not only one of the leading addresses in the USA, but in Greece and throughout the rest of Europe. Its predecessor, Schenker, had played a significant role in the bloodletting of the European continent. The state-owned DB Schenker generates huge revenues and profits: in 2013, 19.7 billion Euros in revenues and 382 million Euros in profits.

**In the USA, DB Schenker is advertizing with the slogan "a long tradition of passion for transportation solutions." [1] Schenker's tradition also includes a "passion" for political diversion and spying on the Unites States. [2] It has already been subjected several times to public boycotts in the USA and Great Britain.**

**However, Schenker became particularly notorious for its gigantic plunder of private and public property throughout Europe. The full extent of Schenker's pillaging in France, Greece and Poland remains unknown. Schenker has never received the bill.**

**By remaining silent, Schenker-USA is denying its past. [3] The German DB Group, which includes Schenker, is also remaining silent about the company's criminal background by using a trick. In its official self-blurb, [4] the DB Group simply does not extend Schenker's history beyond 1932 and – completely obscuring the suffering Schenker caused in the Nazi period – continues the history in 1984. Hundreds of thousands of its pillaging victims have long since died and their heirs were usually unable to retrace Schenker's plunder during the Nazi years.**

In Nazi-Europe, whenever people were deported to the extermination and concentration camps, to slave labor and imprisonment, it was Schenker and the state-owned German railway that shared, both the tasks and the blood profits. On a grand scale and with thousands of trucks, Schenker looted homes, museums, synagogues and industrial complexes of the occupied countries, transporting the pillaged goods to Germany by train.

**Schenker was a direct accomplice to the crimes against humanity. The expropriation and annihilation of entire population groups, particularly European Jews, would not have been as extensive without the complicity of Schenker and the German railroad.**

**For more than a decade, the DB Group, including DB Schenker, has refused to meet the German civil society and numerous survivors' demands for compensation for their complicity in crime. Using judicial subterfuge, the German state, as proprietor of the DB Group, is avoiding payment of these debts.**

Germany, therefore, is repeating what it had already sought to do in the aftermath of WWI – prevent, at all costs, creditors' access to Schenker and their due reparations. At that time, Berlin used every means possible to deceive the victims about the obligations of the German Railway and Schenker.

Berlin was successful back then and used international appeasement to strive for world hegemony. Schenker and the German railway were criminal instruments for this policy.

## **Fraud**

When, Schenker was incorporated into the state-owned "Reichsbahn," in 1931, Berlin was seeking to conceal from the international public the fact that it had sufficient funds to purchase the privately owned Schenker Company. That was money, which actually should have been paid back to the WWI creditors. Berlin made this transaction secretly, to deceive its opponents – creditor fraud. It was not interested in paying the German Empire's debts and its victims. Germany again wanted to expand throughout Europe. And Schenker was to play the logistical role "to gain control of (European) transport" and give "it the desired orientation." [5]

Until 1935 (this means also the early years of the Nazi regime), the state owned Schenker company was already in control of more than 70 enterprises and 200 branch offices in 19 European countries, including outsourcings in the USA, where "Schenker & Co. Incorporated New York" as well as the "Continental Shipping Company" were active. In Great Britain, the German mother company was in control of "Schenker's Ltd, London" and "Northern Shipping and Packing Co. Ltd."

## **Deception**

Formally, these firms belonged to a Swiss holding – Berlin feared financial disadvantages and confiscations because of its unpaid reparations. Germany did not want to attract too much international attention to its economic and political expansion, because fears of a German Europe had already begun circulating by the mid-1930s. The Holding AG, located in Zürich, dissimulated Berlin's ambitions and furnished Schenker "the status of an international enterprise with its headquarters in a neutral country." [6]

Schenker added deliberate deception to creditor fraud.

Business partners in east and southeast European countries were led to believe that they were dealing with a Vienna-based company, founded by Schenker, a Swiss citizen in 1872. The name's origin is not false, but it had nothing to do with the actual German state control of the company. The Deutsche Bahn AG still uses this name today, [7] also in the USA. [8]

## **Espionage**

As soon as it had expanded, Berlin used the Reichsbahn-subsiary Schenker Company as an economic weapon for the German state's political ambitions. The Polish government in Warsaw was prompted to withdraw Schenker's tariff concession. Schenker seemed to be waging an "economic war," [9] and was suspected of spying. Prague harbored similar suspicions, and the social-democratic daily "Rudé Právo" accused Schenker of bribing Czech politicians and being a "Nazi-Germany center of espionage." [10] In Austria, Schenker was "openly accused of being the 'fifth column' of the German Reich." [11]

## **"Elimination of Jews"**

**Schenker's leadership was applying a radical program of racist persecution against its own employees – a dress rehearsal for the anti-Semitic crimes, in which the Aryanized staff participated in the following years. The SS ruled Schenker. Edmund Veesenmayer, a member of the Supervisory Committee, (a company surveillance organ under the railway's aegis) ensured compliance with the "Aryanisation program." [12]**

By 1941, 464 employees in the overseas subsidiaries had been fired for being Jewish. The logistics company had not permitted Jewish Germans, who, before 1939, had been able to flee persecution and emigrate with their household belongings to take their valuables. If their household goods included silver, for example, "only two spoons, forks, and knives" were allowed, "none of which weighing more than 40 grams a piece."[13]

### **Boycott**

**The anti-Semitism exported to the European subsidiaries by Schenker and the German Reichsbahn was met with protests. Appeals for boycotting the company were raised in Great Britain. Schenker's Queen's Road branch office in London burned down under unresolved circumstances. Schenker's 1938 annual report noted also a drop in profits in Hungary and Rumania, because local customers had begun to shun the company. The logistics company was considered not only to be a ruthless business competitor in the "reorganization" of Europe, but was also involved in rightwing-extremist "purges" accompanying German megalomania that had been motivated by Supervisory Committee's SS member, Veesenmayer, in his anti-Jewish rage.**

### **War**

Veesebmayer was assisted in his subversive activities on the continent by Schenker's civilian cloak. During his August 1939 stay in Danzig (Gdansk), serving as an "agent provocateur" in the shadow of the Schenker branch, he heightened German-Polish tensions.[14] He was subsequently charged with planning secrete ventures to incite Ireland to go to war against Great Britain. As if by coincidence, Schenker opened a branch office in the Irish capital. Dublin was to be used to help mitigate the English boycott against Schenker. After the German-Irish conspiracy, Veesebmayer showed up at another Schenker branch, in Zagreb and was involved in secret preparations for the aggression against Yugoslavia. Veesebmayer maintained his position in Schenker until 1944, while working simultaneously for the German Foreign Ministry.

### **Mass Murder**

**In June 1944, Veesebmayer reported to Berlin that "a total of 289,357 Jews had been deported in 92 trains" from Hungary.[15] Those doomed to die arrived in Auschwitz with the German railroad several days later in "45 wagons at a time." The profits Schenker reaped from these transports were transferred to the Reichsbahn. A member of the SS made a series of photos of the deportees upon their arrival. These shocking photos document the complicity of several murderous administrations of the German state – including the railroad and Schenker as accessories. Today, DB Schenker is consistently obscuring these ties. Customers of this leading international enterprise have the right to know the ethical traditions of their service provider and should have reassurance that Schenker has paid off its debts.**

### **Plunder**

The debts are enormous. Throughout the war, Schenker had systematically plundered the occupied countries. **Beginning in 1941, "numerous trucks went to and from Greece"[16], transporting military equipment to the country, to suppress the Greek population, and bringing back goods pillaged from the Greek population and state, including countless**

**religious cult objects. This is how the property stolen from the 48,000 Thessalonians, abducted and murdered in Auschwitz was transported with Schenker-Athens' complicity.**

In just one month, September 1943, Schenker-Paris transported 237,476 tons.[17] Because of disparate contracts, it is hardly possible to differentiate between this civilian-military commodity trade and their pillaging operations. The profit was transferred to the German railway. Schenker-Paris was particularly productive pillaging French museums, private galleries, and family households.

### **Art Theft**

The former Paris representative of the Deutsche Bahn, Karl Streibel, had stolen "three truckloads of furniture, carpets etc." – " obviously looted and transported by Schenker & Co. Paris," reported the US OSS intelligence service, at the end of the war.[18] Based on evidence discovered in the Schenker & Co. Paris offices ("The Schenker Papers"), it is estimated that "more than 20,000 paintings, sculptures and graphics" had been robbed and plundered. **An OSS expertise considered Schenker to be "the most important German company in the business of transporting stolen art"[19] in the occupied countries. Schenker was blacklisted by the Allies.**

### **Horrors**

For Schenker, it was not enough merely to use the war to obtain the economic domination over Europe, ransacking and pillaging all over the continent. The subsidiary of the state-owned railway company and its Aryanized staff encouraged the German front to kill as many of the enemy as possible.

Schenker took over "sponsorship" of the "U 94," a ship of the 7<sup>th</sup> German Submarine Fleet. Docked in St. Nazaire, France, the U 94 sailed ten "combat patrols." [20] Schenker's "sponsorship" led to the killing of 455 sailors serving on British, Norwegian, Swedish and Greek steamers. It accounted for thirty-six deaths in an artillery barrage on the Portuguese "Maria da Gloria" sailing ship, an obvious fishing vessel.

**The name "Schenker" has become synonymous with these horrors and could become a liability for DB Schenker's current customers, as long as Berlin persists in neither begging forgiveness nor meeting its material obligations. Those in power in Germany, as the heirs of "Schenker," appear prepared to take this risk.**

### **Profits**

As the war was coming to an end, Schenker had a balance sheet it could be proud of: creditor fraud, anti-Semitic hate mongering, agitation to militarist barbarism, espionage; robbery; plunder and accessory to mass murder, all seemed to have paid off.

In January 1945 – three months before German capitulation – the Schenker accounts showed – "exceedingly high" – liquid assets valued at 26 million Reichsmark (RM), according to specialized literature.[21] 16.8 million RM were deposited in an accessible bank deposit in Germany. Its real estate in Germany, valued at 10 million RM must be added to this sum. These assets alone, add up to at least 343 million Euros (current value). However, this calculation is deceiving.

## **Blood Money**

Foreign bank assets and real estate must be included. These assets were inaccessible at the date of accounting, but immediately after the war, Schenker laid claim to and even entered litigation to retrieve them. What, above all, is missing, are the capital gains from those 343 million Euros, turned over to the Schenker main company, and to its proprietor, the German state, paid in the form of taxes for the years 1938 to 1945.

**In 1943 alone, Schenker paid "no less than 14 million RM" in taxes.[22] In 1942, the German railroad was paid 1.5 million RM and 2.4 million RM in 1943 from its profits. The German railway took in an additional 4 – 6 percent dividend from Schenker. An average of these statistics, extrapolated to the duration of the war, would result in a yield of at least a billion Euros, to which the 343 million must be added. These abstract figures represent an unknown portion of blood money.**

## **Questions**

**There is no indication that DB Schenker has ever reimbursed even a cent of this blood money. The mother company – the Deutsche Bahn AG – and, therefore, the German state, are refusing not only to acknowledge and fulfill the full extent of their debt obligations – they are even hiding these obligations from their – often unaware – creditors, who think DB Schenker is an unencumbered, serious enterprise. Today, DB Schenker, is running flourishing branch offices in Paris, Athens, Warsaw or New York – at the scenes of the criminal operations of its predecessor, almost under the same name.**

**Has DB Schenker's proprietor – the German state – ever acknowledged Schenker's complicity in the above described mass murder of Greece's Jewish Communities? Has DB Schenker ever investigated Schenker's role in the crimes against humanity perpetrated in hundreds of Greek communities? These and similar questions could also be posed concerning Amsterdam, London or Budapest. The answers would always be identical.**

## **Continuity**

Schenker and its current proprietors' silence have endured for 70 years. The state-owned enterprise has seen no grounds for regret, even in the immediate aftermath of the war, when the wounds Germany had inflicted on the European nations were still fresh. On the contrary. Schenker and its Greek collaborators had met in Vienna in 1947, as if nothing had happened. "They were right back in business,"[23] Athens signaled continuity.

Schenker-USA revived its business activities in 1947. The western Allies imposed a moratorium on the payment of debts accrued before the capitulation date in May 1945. When foreign creditors demanded to have at least their claims covered on a frozen account, Schenker refused. Veessenmayer, who had been originally sentenced to 20 years for murderous crimes, was freed in 1951. The cold war was already in full swing. The 1953 London Debt Agreement postponed German obligations, Schenker's included. These were supposed to be negotiated later in the course of a peace treaty with Germany.

## Worth Billions and Leading

**Germany has found its peace, but DB Schenker is still keeping its inherited debts secret from the families of its victims. DB Schenker is an appreciated, billion-Euro German state-enterprise soon floated on the stock exchanges with branch offices around the world.**

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[1] A long tradition of passion. DB Schenker in the USA. History. [www.dbschenkerusa.com/log-us-en/aboutdbschenker/dbs\\_in\\_the\\_us/history.html](http://www.dbschenkerusa.com/log-us-en/aboutdbschenker/dbs_in_the_us/history.html) . Last modified: August 22, 2014. Accessed April 12, 2015.

[2] Report, on microfilm, regarding Schenker and Co. National Archives. Holocaust-Era Assets. Military Agency Records. Records of the Office of Strategic Studies. RG 226/13429.

[3] A long tradition of passion. DB Schenker in the USA. History.

[4] Schenker-Geschichte. Teil I: Die Gründung von Schenker in Wien. Teil II: Schenker und die Deutsche Reichsbahn. Teil III: Schenker und die Deutsche Bundesbahn. [www.logistics.dbschenker.de/de/konzern/geschichte/themen/schenker\\_geschichte.html](http://www.logistics.dbschenker.de/de/konzern/geschichte/themen/schenker_geschichte.html). Letzte Aktualisierung July 30, 2014. Accessed April 12, 2015.

[5], [6] Zit. nach: Herbert Matis, Dieter Stiefel: "Grenzenlos". Die Geschichte der internationalen Spedition Schenker 1931 bis 1990, Wien 2002, S.22/ "Unlimited". The History of the International Forwarding Company Schenker 1931 to 1990. Vienna 2002. (Herbert Matis, Dieter Stiefel, "The Schenker Dynasty")

[7] Schenker-Geschichte. Teil I: Die Gründung von Schenker in Wien. [www.logistics.dbschenker.de/de/konzern/geschichte/themen/schenker\\_geschichte.html](http://www.logistics.dbschenker.de/de/konzern/geschichte/themen/schenker_geschichte.html). Latest update July 30, 2014. Accessed April 12, 2015.

[8] . DB Schenker in the USA. History. [www.dbschenkerusa.com/log-us-en/aboutdbschenker/dbs\\_in\\_the\\_us/history.html](http://www.dbschenkerusa.com/log-us-en/aboutdbschenker/dbs_in_the_us/history.html). Last modified: August 22, 2014. Accessed April 12, 2015.

[9], [10], [11] Zit. nach: Herbert Matis, Dieter Stiefel: "Grenzenlos". S.40 f., S.45.

[12], [13] *ibid.*, S.46

[14] Hermann Weiß (Hg.): Personenlexikon 1933-1945. Wien 2003.

[15] Ernst Klee: Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945. Frankfurt am Main 2005.

[16], [17] Zit. nach: Herbert Matis, Dieter Stiefel: "Grenzenlos". S.40 f., S.56, S. 59.

[18] Safehaven report on Karl Streibel. National Archives. Holocaust-Era Assets. Military Agency Records. Records of the Office of Strategic Studies. RG 226/ 12516.

[19] Quoted in: Herbert Matis, Dieter Stiefel: "Grenzenlos". S.60.

[20] U 94 (German Navy)

[21], [22] We owe these and the following statistics, along with numerous details about Schenker's operations to Herbert Matis, Dieter Stiefel's meritorious work, "The Schenker Dynasty".

[23] *ibid.*, S.80.