

## Koch, Karl and Ilse

(1897--1945 and 1906--1967), Commandant of Nazi concentration camps and his wife. During the 1930s Karl Koch served in senior positions at several camps. In August 1937 he became commandant at Buchenwald and his wife was made a camp overseer. The two soon became infamous for treating the prisoners brutally---Ilse was known for riding through the camp on a horse and whipping prisoners with her horsewhip.

Koch was transferred to Majdanek in September 1941. During the couple's stay there, they amassed a collection of tattooed human skin and shrunken skulls. Before their extermination, Ilse would choose the living prisoners whose skin she coveted.

In July 1942 Koch was removed from Majdanek in the wake of a mass prisoner escape. He was arrested in August 1943 for forgery, embezzlement, threatening officials, and other charges (including their skin collection). Ilse was arrested as an accomplice. In April 1945 Koch was executed by the SS; Ilse was acquitted. After the war she was arrested by the Americans and sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1949 she was pardoned, but then re-arrested. In 1951 she was again sentenced to life in jail; in 1967 she committed suicide in her cell.