

## Erna Petri (1920-2000)



Profession: Farmer

1938: Marries SS officer **Horst Petri**

1942: Moves to the SS estate of **Grzenda** managed by her husband; from June onwards she runs the household and, in his absence, replaces her husband on the SS estate. She behaves like a lady of the manor with absolute power

1943: Shoots herself fugitive Jews and also Jewish children; because Ukrainian country people refuse to work on the estate, she drives three Ukrainian peasant women to the Janowska camp to make an example.

Contrary to expectations, they are not killed, but return after a few weeks.

1942-44: Abuses Ukrainian workers on the estate

after 1946: self-employed female farmer, then joining the LPG "Drei Tannen" (Agricultural Production Cooperative 'Three Firs') in Pfuhsborn (Apolda county)

1962: Sentenced to life imprisonment (Erfurt district court); Detention at Hoheneck Fortress

1990: Review of the judgement - West German court confirms judgement

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»Erna Petri, although not rehabilitated or pardoned, was eventually released from prison. She came home in 1992, for health reasons. One account claims that an underground SS organization, *Stille Hilfe* (Silent Aid) [...] may have paid for Petri's apartment when she was released, and may also have been responsible for her being invited to Bavaria, where she enjoyed the Alpine mountains and lakes with Gudrun Burwitz, the daughter of Heinrich Himmler and a prominent member of Silent Aid. Erna died in July 2000; she had celebrated her eightieth birthday a few months earlier. Two hundred people – everyone in the village and a number of others whom the family did not know – came to the funeral.« (Lower, p. 194/195)

Sources: Lower, Hitler's furies; BG Erfurt, I Bs 8/62, 15.09.1962, in: DDRJuNSV, nr. 1073