THE LIVES AND AFTERLIVES OF THE MAUTHAUSEN SUBCAMP COMMUNITIES

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‘The Lives and Afterlives of the Mauthausen Subcamp Communities’

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SUMMARY

Concentration camp scholarship has been impacted by an ‘island syndrome’: most research limits itself to one site, focuses either on its life or afterlife, and overlooks interactions among functionaries, inmates, and local people. Central themes connected to the camps thus remain shrouded in popular misconceptions. This study breaks with historiographical orthodoxies and addresses common confusions through a new framework. Drawing on Ebensee and the Loiblpass, two forced labour outposts of the Mauthausen complex, it presents the first integrated account of the divergent factors that shaped the legacies of these sites and the fates of their subjects.

A focus on Ebensee shows how gravely the local bureaucracy, relief workers, and US Army impacted on the early postwar lives of former camp inmates. Victim groups were marginalised by local and Allied actors precisely because of a broad awareness and continued survivor presence. The Loiblpass figured less prominently in the postwar lives of its surrounding communities. At the core of postwar views lay pre-1945 experiences. Living in an epicentre of territorial struggles, Loibl Valley inhabitants did not externalise a strong political agenda and instead communicated a binary ‘selective association process’. The memory of the camp prompted a positive association in socioeconomic terms; political allusions provoked a relativizing of brutality and a claim to personal victimhood.

The local context and postwar dimension constitute a missing link in our understanding of these sites, their neighbouring communities, and the early postwar period more broadly. While the causal relationship between a social reintegration of Nazis and a re-marginalisation of genuine victims has thus far been viewed chiefly through the lens of federal politics, this development was already long under way—aided by all local actors—when amnesty laws encouraging the rehabilitation of former National Socialists came into effect; national and Allied policy decisions in the wake of the burgeoning Cold War only further catalysed this development from 1947 onwards.

- This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except where specifically indicated in the text.

- The dissertation is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution, except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma, or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution, except where specifically indicated in the text.

- The dissertation does not exceed the prescribed word limit of eighty thousand.

Rafael Kropiunigg

ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Allied Commission for Austria
ACC	Allied Control Commission
ADJAG	Assistant Director Judge Advocate General
AdPiF	Archiv der Polizeiinspektion Ferlach
AJJDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the 'Joint')
ARMS	United Nations Archives and Records Management Section
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
BDM	Bund Deutscher Mädel ('League of German Girls')
BMF	British Military Mission to France
BTA	British Troops in Austria
CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps
CMF	Central Mediterranean Force
CROWCASS	Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects
DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront ('German Labour Front')
DAG	Deputy Attorney General
DG	United Nations Director General
DJAG	Deputy Judge Advocate General
DPs	Displaced Persons
FSS	Field Security Section
HSSPF	Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer ('Higher SS and Police Leader')
IMT	International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg
IRO	International Refugee Organization
JAG	Judge Advocate General
KLA	Kärntner Landesarchiv
KZ	Konzentrationslager ('concentration camp')
MGK	Military Government Kärnten

MOPR	International Red Aid
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NKFD	National Committee for a Free Germany
NMT	US Nuremberg Military Tribunals
NN	Nacht-und-Nebel-Erlass ('Night and Fog decree')
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei ('German Workers' Party')
NYPL	New York Public Library Archives
OF	Osvobodilna fronta ('Liberation Front')
OÖLA	Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OT	Organisation Todt
POLAD	The Office of the US Political Advisor to Germany
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt ('Reich Security Head Office')
SHS	Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes
SIB	Special Investigation Branch
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SS	Schutzstaffel
TNA	The National Archives of the UK
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNWCC	United Nations War Crimes Commission
USFA	United States Forces in Austria
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
WCG NWE	War Crimes Group North West Europe
WCG SEE	War Crimes Group South East Europe
SHS	Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes
SS-WVHA	Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt ('Economics and Admin. Head Office')
STO	Service du Travail Obligatoire ('Compulsory Labour Service')
ZME	Archiv des Zeitgeschichte Museums Ebensee

MAPS AND IMAGES

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[1] 'Die wichtigsten Haupt- und Nebenlager des KZ-Lagersystems Mauthausen auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Österreich', produced by Ralf Lechner, Archiv der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen (AMM), reproduced in Dieter Bacher and Stefan Karner (eds.), *Zwangsarbeiter in Österreich 1939—1945 und ihr Nachkriegsschicksal: Ergebnisse des "Österreichischen Versöhnungsfonds"* (Innsbruck, 2013), p. 123.

[2] 'The Deportation of Anti-Nazi Carinthian Slovenes, April 1942', reproduced in Thomas M. Barker, *Social Revolutionaries and Secret Agents: The Carinthian Slovene Partisans and Britain's Special Operations Executive* (Boulder, 1990).

[3] 'Skizze des Lagers von Italo Tibaldi (ca. 1980)', reproduced in Florian Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee: Analyse und Dokumentation der im KZ Ebensee umgekommenen Häftlinge 1943—1945* (Vienna, 2010), p. 33.

[4] 'Rekonstruktion des "Arbeitslagers der Waffen-SS" (1934—1945) KZ Loibl-Nord', copy contained in '2.1.2.5 Sammlung, Mauthausen Süd, Kärnten', AMM.

[5] Images from top to bottom: Image 1, 'Abb. 84: Nebenlager des KL Mauthausen KZ-Loibl Süd im Jahre 1944, Richtung Karawanken, (Mauthausen-Archiv)'; Image 2, 'Abb. 81: Nebenlager des KL Mauthausen KZ-Loibl Süd im Juli 1943, Vogelperspektive, (Foto: Josef Doujak – Ferlach, zur Verfügung gestellt von Janko Tišler 1995)'; Image 3, 'Abb. 83: Nebenlager des KL Mauthausen KZ-Loibl Süd im Endausbau 1944, (Charlet 1966)'. Copies and originals are contained in two private source collections: Peter Gstettner, Klagenfurt (Loiblpass collection); Janko Tišler collection, National Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

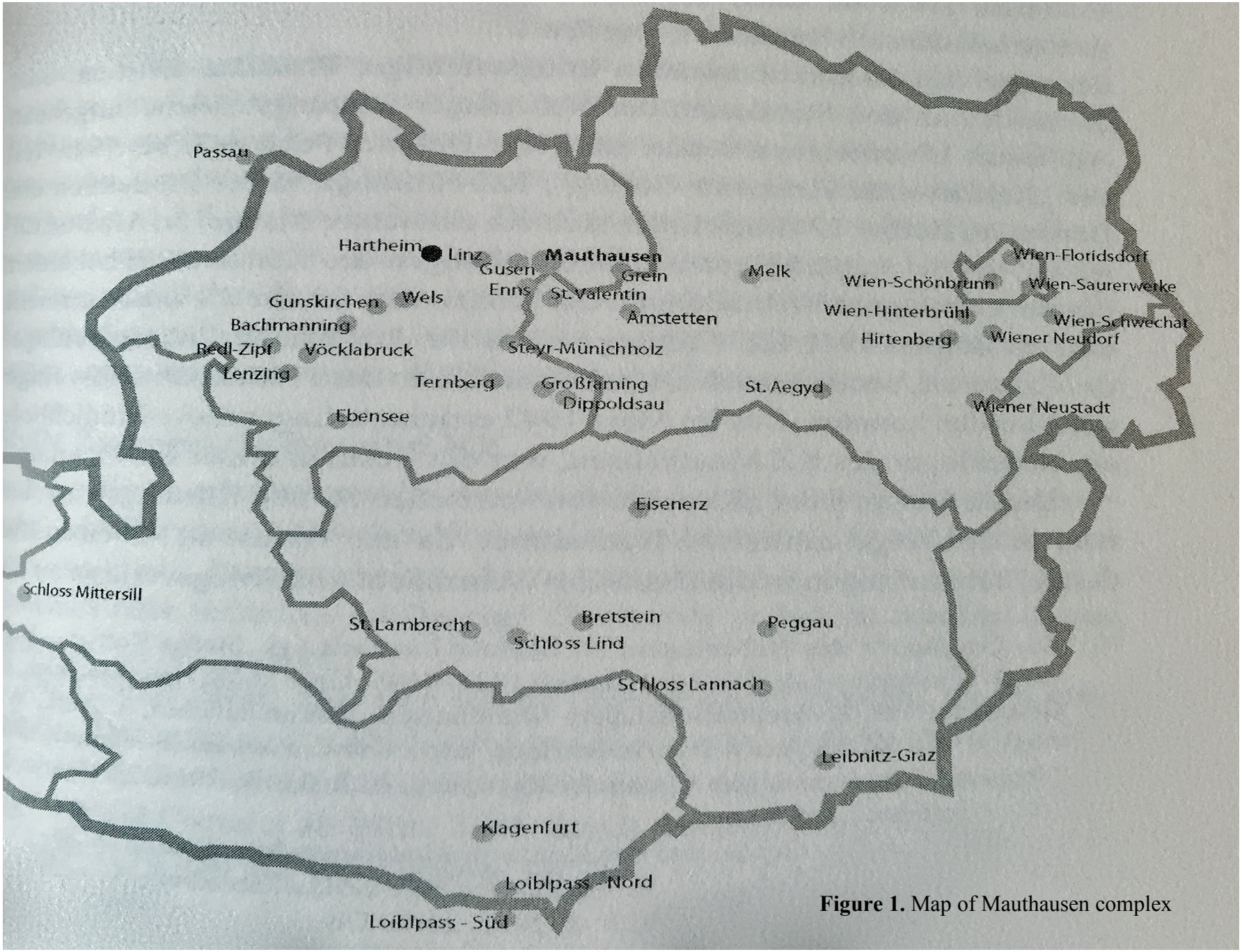

Figure 1. Map of Mauthausen complex

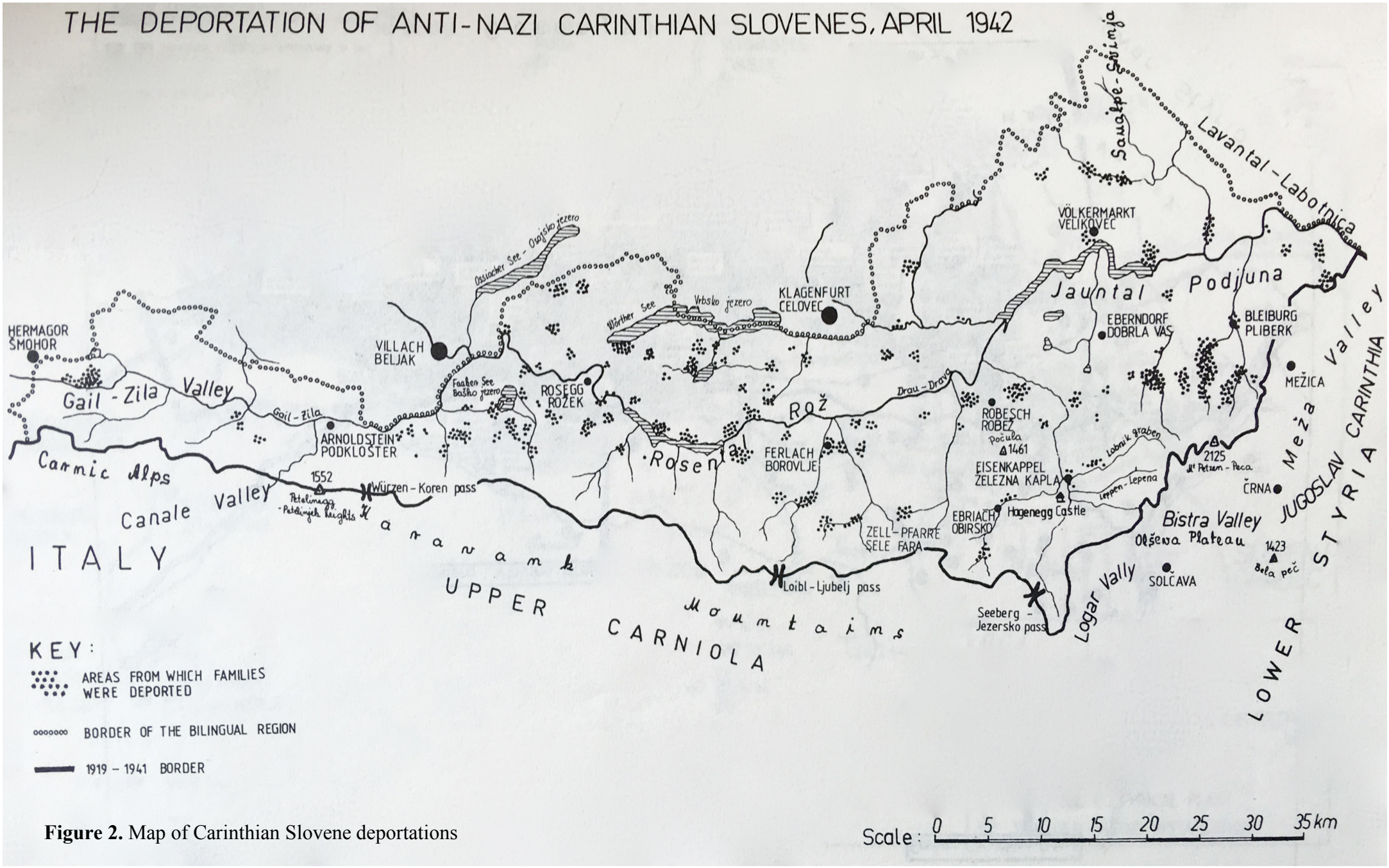

Figure 2. Map of Carinthian Slovene deportations

Figure 3. Sketch of KZ Ebensee

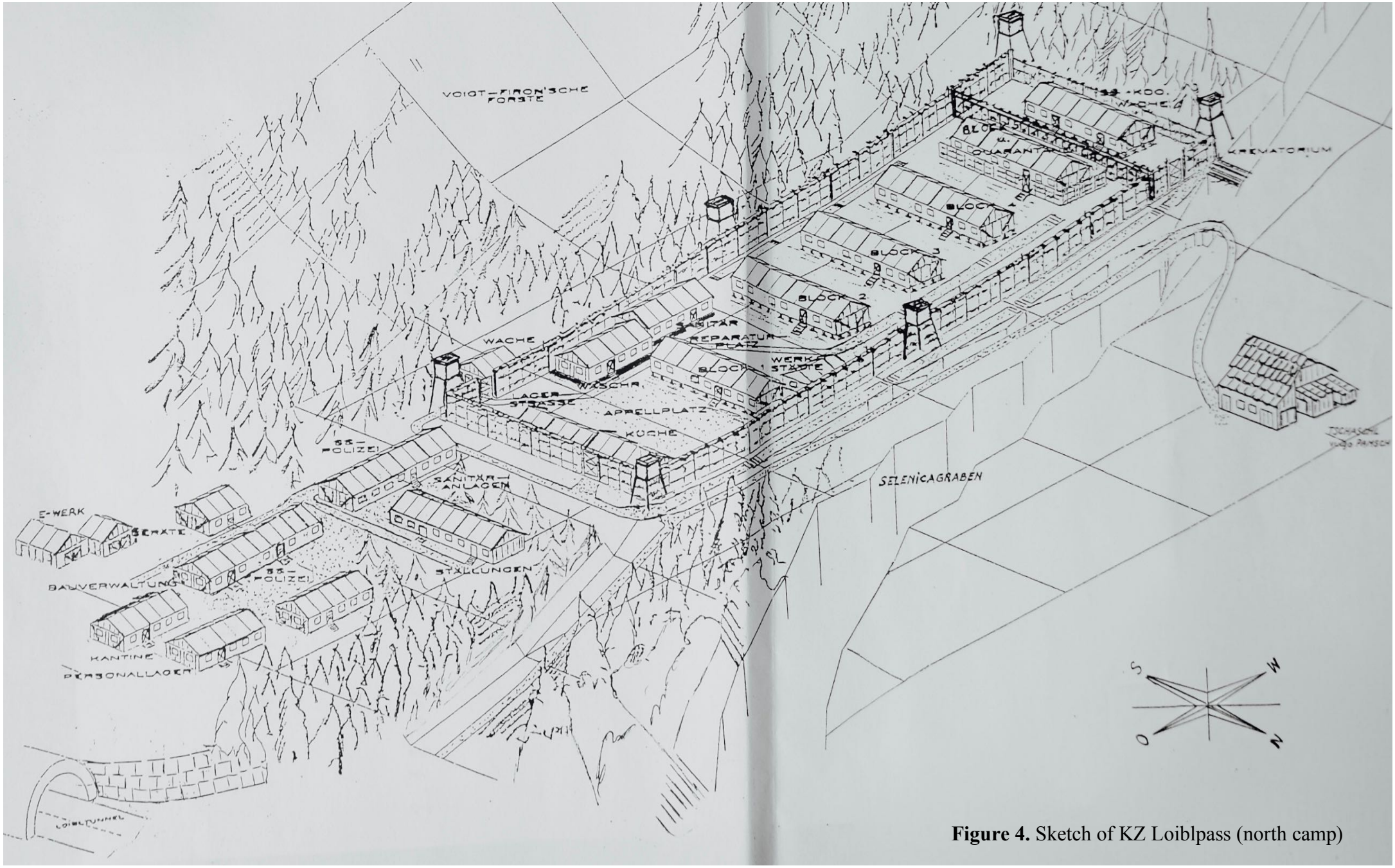

Figure 4. Sketch of KZ Loiblpass (north camp)

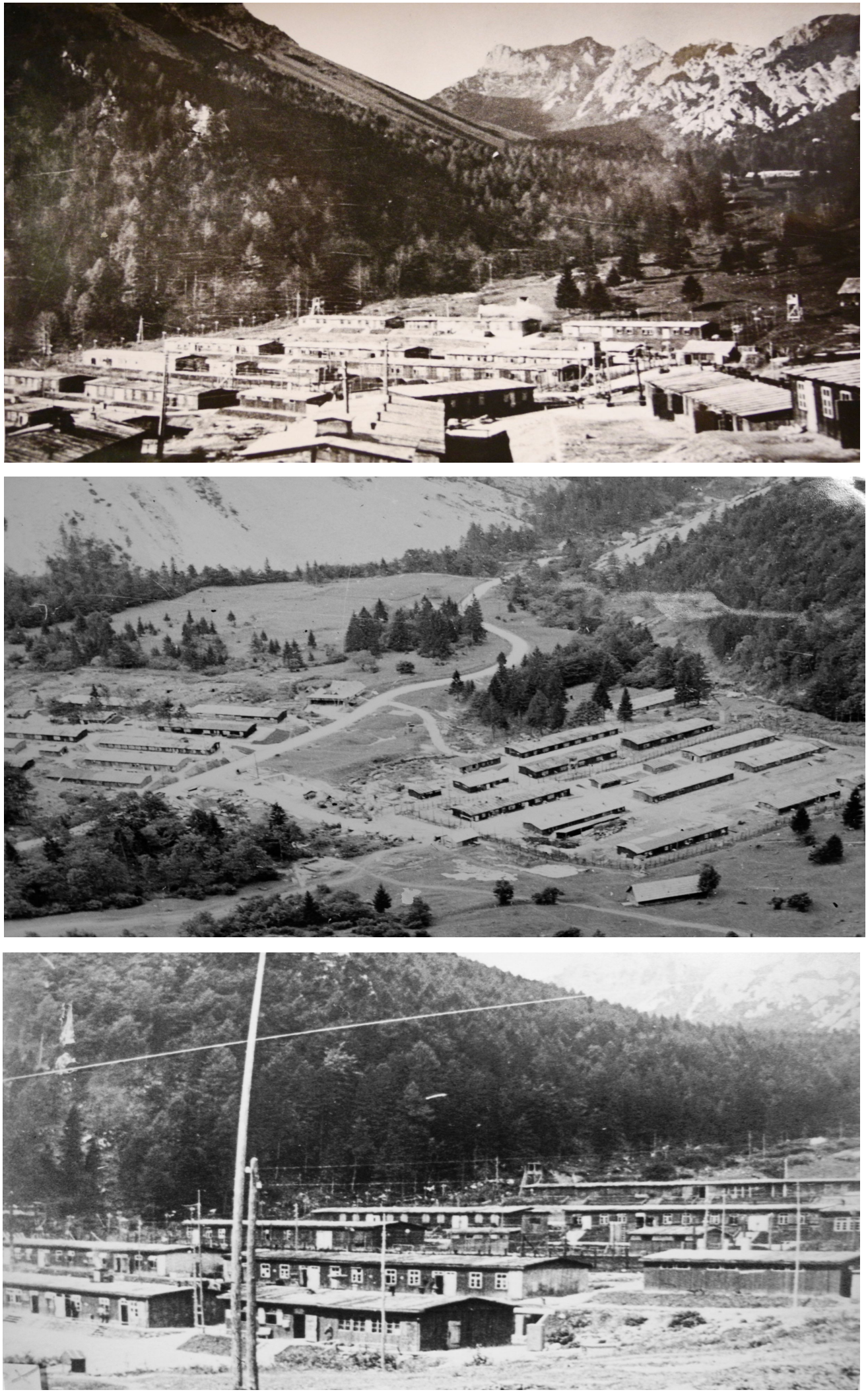

Figure 5. Images of KZ Loiblpass (south camp)

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INTRODUCTION

> Part of the Mauthausen extermination system built up by Kaltenbrunner when he had been the "Little Himmler" of Austria, it [Ebensee] seemed more horrible even than Dachau or Ohrdruf.[1] Bodies that one would never have believed could exist alive were walking around, covered with sores and lice. The filth was indescribable. Adjacent to the crematorium were rooms piled high with shrunken nude bodies, lye thrown over them to combat the stench and vermin. The excess bodies that couldn't be handled at the crematorium were hauled by the wagonload to another part of the enclosure, where they were dumped into open pits filled with a chemical solution. Worse still was the hospital …. the inmates lay on shelves covered with dirty rags, groups of two or three huddled together like mice to keep warm. As we entered they put out their hands and begged for food. When we told them we had none, but that the American medics and military government personnel would be along immediately, they broke down and sobbed, "We have waited for you four, five, six years. Now you come empty-handed."[2]

The chance discovery of Ebensee by a pair of American Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) officers on 6 May 1945 was far from a sensational moment in time. Two agents had been passing through the Upper Austrian Salzkammergut region in search of suspected Nazi war criminals when their local resistance contacts alerted them to the camp's existence. After reaching the site, they broke the lock on the camp gate, removed a chain, and unwittingly effected the liberation. Few survivors registered the

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[1] Ohrdruf was a subcamp of KZ Buchenwald. For an account of its accidental discovery by the Americans on 4 April 1945, see Robert H. Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York, 1985), pp. 21—30.

[2] Robert Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', Spring 1960, Articles from Studies in Intelligence, 1955—1992, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, 1894—2002, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 263, File Unit 2-11-6.

officers' presence, and those who did were clearly underwhelmed;[3] 'Liberation', Dan Stone notes, 'freed them from Nazi rule but not from its effects'.[4] Whereas liberators habitually labelled their respective camps as the most atrocious of all,[5] Mauthausen and its forced labour outposts 'had a reputation among prisoners, from Dachau in the West to Auschwitz in the East, as the camp to avoid at all costs'.[6] Most camps that were uncovered earlier on had been evacuated before their discovery. Sites like Ebensee and Mauthausen, on the other hand, were the final stop for inmates who had been on so-called death marches.[7] As places of mass dying, they were exceptionally shocking.[8]

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[3] Viktor Frankl, the founder of logotherapy, explained how the liberation was a disappointment to him and his fellow inmates, as most 'had literally lost the ability to feel pleased and had to relearn it slowly'. See Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, trans. Ilse Lasch (New York, 1984), pp. 108—115. Originally published in Austria in 1946.

[4] Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath* (New Haven, CT, 2015), p. 28.

[5] Jon Bridgman, *The End of the Holocaust: The Liberation of the Camps* (Portland, OR, 1990), p. 87.

[6] Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart*, p. 105. Indeed, as Frankl wrote, 'We all felt more dead than alive, since we thought that our transport was heading for the camp at Mauthausen and that we had only one or two weeks to live. …. We had all been afraid that our transport was heading for the Mauthausen camp. We became more and more tense as we approached a certain bridge over the Danube which the train would have to cross to reach Mauthausen, according to the statement of experienced traveling companions. Those who have never seen anything similar cannot possibly imagine the dance of joy performed in the carriage by the prisoners when they saw that our transport was not crossing the bridge and was instead heading "only" for Dachau'. See Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, pp. 53, 64—65.

[7] On death marches, see Daniel Blatman, *The Death Marches: The Final Phase of Nazi Genocide*, trans. Chaya Galai (Cambridge, MA, 2011). A more recent historiographical discussion and overview is contained in Marc Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, trans. Paul Cohen (Oxford, 2014), pp. 262—278. Buggeln's excellent account focuses on the Neuengamme satellite camps. For an edited volume dealing with the dissolution and death marches of the Neuengamme complex, see Detlef Garbe and Carmen Lange (eds.), *Häftlinge zwischen Vernichtung und Befreiung: Die Auflösung des KZ Neuengamme und seiner Außenlager durch die SS im Frühjahr 1945* (Bremen, 2005).

[8] For a first-hand summary of what the Third US Army witnessed at Ebensee, and for context on the Squadron's prior and subsequent experiences, see United States Army, 'The 3rd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz.) in World War II, 9 August 1944 to 9 May 1945', *World War Regimental Histories* Book 58 (1949).

The moment of freedom would eventually be reimagined in more heroic terms, as a unifying experience or joyous event.[9] In due time this could help gloss over a number of inconvenient truths, such as the fact that liberating the camps had never been a chief motivating factor in bringing the war to a close and that the Allies tended to be insufficiently prepared for immediate and effective relief operations.[10] The advent of the Cold War consolidated the clean image of liberation, buried its paradoxes, and emphasised the victors' triumphalism. It would thus take some six decades before historians began investigating the human costs and realities of liberation in full, asking, 'Why have they gone missing from the historical record of WWII and postwar European history?'[11]

For most survivors, 'liberation' was a process rather than a moment in time; it often took months or even a lifetime to obtain.[12] Hundreds of former inmates at Ebensee would succumb to their illnesses and wounds before they could even begin to embark on a new life of relative freedom. Many more would for months and years to follow be forced to begin to rebuild their lives within the confines of the camps from which they

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[9] For a collection of witness accounts describing the liberation of Ebensee, see Florian Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement: Das Konzentrationslager Ebensee und die Raketenrüstung* (Vienna, 1989), pp. 422—429.

[10] On the Allies' failure and unwillingness to translate knowledge into action, see Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's 'Final Solution'* (London, 1980); Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (London, 1981); David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941—1945* (New York, 1984). On the retrospective Anglo-American misappropriation of the liberation, see Bridgman, *The End of the Holocaust*, pp. 110—111.

[11] William I. Hitchcock, *Liberation: The Bitter Road to Freedom, Europe 1944—1945* (London, 2009), p. 368.

[12] For a similar argument, see Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, pp. 2—3; David Cesarani, *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews, 1933—49* (London, 2016), pp. 762—764.

had been supposedly freed.[13] 'I already said it earlier and also proved it by way of example, that we are free and yet not free',[14] Hellmut Draws-Tychsen, a former inmate, noted in July 1946.[15] Contrary to popular belief, 8 May 1945 did not mark the absolute end of the camps; in some regards the final chapter in the narrative of these sites had yet to be written.[16]

Thousands of non-repatriable individuals inhabited some of the liberated camps for many more years. Yet local people feigned ignorance.

> Down in the town [of Ebensee] the Americans confronted the townspeople, with me along as an interpreter, about permitting such an inhuman camp to operate in their midst. "Oh, we had no idea what was going on up there," they protested. "We were not consulted. We did not see it. How could we know?" "That's a lot [load] of shit," I blurted angrily in Germany. "Did we not march by the thousands through your town and up that road to the camp? How many of you showed sympathy or tried to help? Did we not work six days a week in that mountain factory side by side with you townspeople? How many of you shared your food with us? Did you not see and smell the stench and smoke that floated down from the camp every day? What did you think was happening?"[17]

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[13] Like Ebensee, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, and Gusen also became Displaced Persons (DP) camps. See Gerard D. Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford, 2012), p. 71.

[14] For an insightful case study that deals with this paradox in depth, see Andreas Lembeck, *Befreit, aber nicht in Freiheit: Displaced Persons im Emsland 1945—1950* (Bremen, 1997).

[15] Hellmut Draws-Tychsen, 'Völkerpsychologie, Gestapoterror und Völkerfrieden', *Der KZ-Häftling: Monatsschrift für ehemalige politische Häftlinge* 7 (July 1946): 5. Original quote: 'Ich sagte schon früher und bewies es auch beispielhaft, daß wir zwar frei und dennoch nicht frei sind'. All translations in this dissertation are the author's, unless otherwise stated. All quotes in their original language are included in the footnotes, save for those that are not available.

[16] This also applied to WWII more generally: 'Wars do not end when the fighting stops', but even so, 'Histories of the Second World War in Europe invariably end with the surrender of German armies'. See David Stafford, *Endgame 1945: Victory, Retribution, Liberation* (London, 2007), p. xi.

[17] Max. R. Garcia, *As Long as I Remain Alive* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1979), pp. 18—19. This camp survivor's autobiographical account includes fascinating details of the evacuation to and liberation at Ebensee.

Former inmates were least susceptible to obvious patterns of denial. Within this vein, the KZ Buchenwald survivor Eugen Kogon published *Der SS-Staat* (1946), a social history of his former camp that includes chapters on the wartime subcamps as well as the relationship between the German population and the concentration camps.[18] The Allies also did not find the claim to ignorance credible, but their assumptions occasionally betrayed a hint of naïveté. 'Germans in many cases seek atonement', a US Department of State official purported in November 1945. 'How many such Germans there are we do not know', he admitted, before proposing: 'But why not … find out in various communities near concentration camps, through discussion with local military government detachments?'[19]

From among the Allies, the Americans were undoubtedly the fiercest investigators of such matters. The sheer speed at which they worked as well as their genuine determination to get to the core of unanswered questions quickly made up for any initial ignorance. By January 1946, the US War Crimes Investigation Team 6836 could already confidently assert that local Austrian awareness of concentration camp life was genuinely widespread: 'Residents of the village of Mauthausen and the whole population of the Austrian villages and communities between Vienna and Steyr are named as witnesses of numerous murders, more than 700', the team asserted, and

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[18] See Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager* (Hamburg, 2009), pp. 405—420, 289—300. The study is based on Buchenwald.

[19] Tom Wenner to John Joseph Muccio, 'Proposal to erect large steel "crosses" over all concentration camps in the Reich', 23 November 1945, American Consulates' files, Office of the US Political Advisor to Germany (POLAD), 1945-1949, Classified General Correspondence, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

concluded that 'The claim of Austrians and Germans that they didn't know of the existence of the concentration camps and the maltreatment of inmates is a lie. These conclusions are based on credible, probative, and undisputed sworn evidence'.[20]

Yet for the past seventy years the cliché of civilian ignorance and non-complicity regarding camp crimes has repeatedly come to the fore. The political theorist Hannah Arendt sparked this misunderstanding in 1951 by arguing that the camps acted as secret laboratories, 'shielded by the totalitarian regimes from the eyes of their own people as well as from all others'.[21] Wolfgang Sofsky's sociological study *The Order of Terror* (1993) did much to uphold the notion that a camp's 'Boundary and Gate' created an almost impermeable layer, 'transforming it into a secret site of crime',[22] and in 1996 Falk Pingel still argued that these sites were entirely cut off from the outside world and their bordering communities.[23] Debunking the myths centring on communities' alleged ignorance of neighbouring labour camps remains an important

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[20] War Crimes Investigation Team 6836 to Headquarters United States Forces in Austria (HQ USFA), 'Subject: "DAWES" and MAUTHAUSEN cases', investigation report, Salzburg, 14 January 1946, Pretrial Investigative Records, Records of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR), NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 1, p. 2.

[21] Hannah Arendt, *Totalitarianism: Part Three of The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, 1968), p. 134.

[22] Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp*, trans. William Templer (Princeton, 1997), p. 55.

[23] See Falk Pingel, 'Individuelle und kollektive Überlebensstrategien im Konzentrationslager', in Robert Streibel and Hans Schafranek (eds.), *Strategie des Überlebens: Häftlingsgesellschaften in KZ und Gulag* (Vienna, 1996): 116.

task: at this transitional point in concentration camp history, with few witnesses remaining, revisionist efforts to fill a growing historical void need to be countered.[24]

As social histories touching upon inter-camp-community interactions have begun to emerge over the past two decades, the view of civilian non-complicity has increasingly lost traction.[25] This has been more the case with Germany in particular, but discussions on Austrian postwar camp communities still remain comparatively scarce.[26] Although the fabricated claim to ignorance gradually lost credibility, the notion initially gained traction at least in part due to a broad scholarly disregard of the early concentration camps. As the complexes that the Allies uncovered between 1944 and 1945 have continued to govern perceptions of the KZ system, a fascination with

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[24] Jacques Bariéty, Rudolf Ardelt, Enzo Collotti, et al., 'Proposals by the Advisory Commission on the Mauthausen Concentration Camp Memorial', in Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka (eds.), *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1997): 183—202.

[25] For accounts that have challenged myths of ignorance and non-complicity by dealing with local communities, see Gordon J. Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* (London, 1991); Sybille Steinbacher, *Dachau – Die Stadt und das Konzentrationslager in der NS-Zeit: Die Untersuchung einer Nachbarschaft* (Frankfurt, 1994); Jens Schley, 'Weimar und Buchenwald: Beziehungen zwischen der Stadt und dem Lager', *Dachauer Hefte* 12 (1996): 196—214; Schley, *Nachbar Buchenwald: Die Stadt Weimar und ihr Konzentrationslager 1937–1945* (Cologne, 1999); Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933—2001* (Cambridge, 2001); Tobias Bütow and Franka Bindernagel, *Ein KZ in der Nachbarschaft: Das Magdeburger Außenlager der Brabag und der "Freundeskreis Himmler"* (Cologne, 2004); Annette Leo, *"Das ist so'n zweischneidiges Schwert hier unser KZ ...": Das Frauen-KZ Ravensbrück im Gedächtnis der Fürstenberger Bürger* (Berlin, 2007); Helen Whatmore, 'Exploring KZ "bystanding" within a West-European framework: Natzweiler-Struthof, Neuengamme and Vught-Herzogenbusch 1939-1945', in Christiane Hess, Julia Hörath, Dominique Schröder, and Kim Wünschmann (eds.), *Kontinuitäten und Brüche: Neue Perspektiven auf die Geschichte der NS-Konzentrationslager* (Berlin, 2011): 64—79; Gesa A. Trojan, *Das Lager im Dorf lassen: Das KZ Neuengamme in der lokalen Erinnerung* (Munich, 2014).

[26] Most recently, the Mauthausen Memorial has published a catalogue that attempts to connect aspects of the Mauthausen complex to the broader history of NS terror and its postwar legacy. With the exception of some interesting sources and snippets, it is merely a catalogue that falls short of presenting what it claims to offer. See KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen (ed.), *Das Konzentrationslager Mauthausen 1938—1945: Katalog zur Ausstellung in der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen* (Vienna, 2013), especially the 'Mauthausen – Der Ort und das Lager' section (pp. 103—119).

their wartime histories has kept most of the preceding sites in the shadows of popular imagination.[27] Squarely a product of wartime considerations, the element of secrecy and seclusion did not develop for some time. The original camps had been promoted as institutions of 'open terror' in order to break the political opposition. Their 'demonstration effect' had the intended purpose of spreading a culture of fear among the German population.[28] As such, the pre-war sites, as Nikolaus Wachsmann contends, 'had lodged themselves early and deeply into the minds of the population—so much so that some ordinary Germans already started dreaming about them in 1933'.[29]

Some of the aforementioned scholarly misconceptions were generally not rooted in apologetic tendencies. Heinrich Himmler had gone to extraordinary lengths in an attempt to keep information regarding the wartime camps a secret from the approaching Allies; notions of ignorance could thus be sustained with greater ease.[30] As evidenced by a letter from Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk[31] to General Dwight D. Eisenhower in mid-May 1945, the former German leadership continued to claim

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[27] For an initial discussion on why the histories of the early camps have fallen short of making an impact on the historiography of Nazi Germany, see Christian Goeschel and Nikolaus Wachsmann, 'Before Auschwitz: The Formation of the Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933—9', *Journal of Contemporary History* 45/3 (2010): 515—534.

[28] Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933—1945* (Oxford, 1991), p. 43.

[29] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York, 2015), p. 63.

[30] Adamant to prevent inmates from being discovered by the Allies, Himmler had authorised SS and police leaders to kill prisoners as early as June 1944. Between February and March 1945 such killings were carried out at some of the main camps. See Karola Fings, *Krieg, Gesellschaft und KZ: Himmlers Baubrigaden* (Paderborn, 2005), pp. 270—271.

[31] Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk, German Minister of Finance between 1932 and 1945, briefly acted as *Reichskanzler* after Goebbels committed suicide. Following the unconditional surrender, he was the Chancellor of the Flensburg Government until it was dissolved on 23 May 1945.

unawareness after the war: 'Up to now the German people had no knowledge whatsoever about conditions prevailing in these camps. The concentration camps were hermetically closed against the outside world, and strictest secrecy was kept about everything inside. There was no possibility even for Germans in leading positions to learn the truth about the real conditions'.[32]

Scholars had for a long time played into the hands of such myths by accentuating the dimension of isolation and disregarding local developments. This 'island syndrome', as it might be characterised, has led scholars to look at the issue backwards. The historiographical mishap requires attention in order to fully circle back to the original assumptions, and to the time when the victims and liberators alike were asking the central questions. Rather than entertaining ideas of whether and what locals knew, the more fruitful approach might be to ask how locals perceived the camps and what shaped their perceptions of inmates during and after the war. After all, the general population living among subcamp functionaries and persecuted inmates in towns were not only confronted with the existence of concentration camps: some worked alongside

[32] The Prime Minister of the Acting Government of the Reich to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, correspondence, Flensburg-Mürwick, 15 May 1945, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41. This file also contains an interesting letter exchange between Krosigk and Karl Dönitz, including a reference to KZ inmates on ships.

prisoners as contract workers in forced labour projects,[33] and many more played an active role in the re-marginalisation of former inmates in the early postwar period.[34]

Viewing the wartime camps more as islands, and therefore as removed from their local context, has given rise to a third lingering problem. Adding to misconceptions regarding 'liberation' and 'awareness', a neglect of agency continues to skew our understanding of the camps. The local communities' perceptions of these sites and the inmates presents a unique prism into provincial postwar memory that global accounts have failed to capture. Both in the wartime and postwar periods, local circumstances and players impacted on these camps and their victims. The extent to which external versus indigenous developments played a role varied over time and space. Giving credence to such factors has commonly not been the preserve of concentration camp historians.

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[33] Although this dissertation focuses exclusively on forced labour within the KZ context, it is important to note that a high number of labourers working on different infrastructure projects were generally not linked to the Mauthausen complex—with the exception of some recruits, the death marches, and their liberation from the camps. On 'Ostmark' soil, some 757,000 foreign contract workers had been employed between 1939 and 1945. Over time, forced recruits became increasingly common, especially from the Soviet Union and Poland. Of the forced labourers, around 150,000 were POWs, 85,000 KZ inmates selected at Mauthausen, and almost 40,000 Hungarian Jewish women and men who had been deported in the wake of the Wehrmacht Occupation of Hungary in March 1944. See Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, *Ungarisch-Jüdische Zwangsarbeiter und Zwangsarbeiterinnen in Österreich 1944/45: Arbeitseinsatz – Todesmärsche – Folgen* (Vienna, 2010); Dieter Bacher and Stefan Karner (eds.), *Zwangsarbeiter in Österreich 1939—1945 und ihr Nachkriegsschicksal: Ergebnisse des "Österreichischen Versöhnungsfonds"* (Innsbruck, 2013); Oliver Rathkolb and Florian Freund (eds.), *NS-Zwangsarbeit in der Elektrizitätswirtschaft der "Ostmark" 1938—1945: Ennskraftwerke – Kaprun – Draukraftwerke – Ybbs-Persenbeug – Ernsthofen* (Vienna, 2014).

[34] Neil Gregor makes a particularly compelling case for a long-term focus on local actors: 'The local functioned as a key site of resistance to the implications of the more critical memory culture that was emerging in the 1960s because it was here that the key unpalatable truth – that ordinary, local people in ordinary, local communities had participated in the machinery of persecution and murder – was most challenging'. See Neil Gregor, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven, 2008), p. 378.

While the history of the Mauthausen complex is well established,[35] relatively sluggish progress regarding the local communities of the Mauthausen outposts is both intimately connected to the issue of agency and symptomatic of a greater Austro-historiographical malaise that is most prevalent in memory and identity discussions.[36] Debate over Austrian complicity in the Third Reich was a taboo until the mid-eighties, when the then UN Secretary General and later Austrian President Kurt Waldheim was confronted with his selective representation of his past.[37] Failing to mention in his memoirs that he had been in the SS, Waldheim set off a wave of historical enquiry that shattered the Second Republic's forty-year-long 'collective amnesia' over NS war crimes.[38] In the wake of the scandal, running parallel to the West German *Historikerstreit*,[39] a new generation of scholars began debunking myths of non-

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[35] This is a relatively recent development. Until the late 1990s, scholars working on the Mauthausen complex were primarily concerned with reconstructing the history of the sites within the 'island syndrome' tradition. Florian Freund made a similar argument to explain why the Mauthausen trials at Dachau had received sparse historical attention. See Florian Freund, 'Der Dachauer Mauthausenprozess', in Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (ed.), *Jahrbuch 2001* (Vienna, 2001): 35.

[36] Especially in regards to the unresolved question of nationhood feeling after the war. Between the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and the fall of the Third Reich a distinctly Austrian national identity failed to materialise. The defeat of 1945 finally prompted the political elite to detach itself from the 'German Catastrophe'. See Albert F. Reiterer, *Nation und Nationalbewusstsein in Österreich: Ergebnisse einer empirischen Untersuchung* (Vienna, 1988), p. 57. For an influential account on the role of elites in shaping the Austrian identity narrative, see Peter Thaler, *The Ambivalence of Identity: The Austrian Experience of Nation-Building in a Modern Society* (West Lafayette, 2001).

[37] While William T. Bluhm conceived the fall of the Third Reich in 1945 as Austria's 'Year Zero', Ernst Joseph Görlich and Felix Romanik claimed that WWII 'is not essentially part of Austrian history' since as a state Austria had no part in it. See William T. Bluhm, *Building an Austrian Nation: The Political Integration of a Western State* (New Haven, 1973), pp. 46—48; Ernst J. Görlich and Felix Romanik, *Geschichte Österreichs* (Innsbruck, 1970), p. 551.

[38] For an overview of the official enquiry into his past, see International Commission of Historians, *The Waldheim Report: Submitted February 8, 1988 to Federal Chancellor Dr. Franz Vranitzky* (Copenhagen, 1993). Also see Cornelius Lehnguth, *Waldheim und die Folgen: Der parteipolitische Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (Frankfurt, 2013).

[39] See Richard J. Evans, 'The New Nationalism and the Old History: Perspectives on the West German Historikerstreit', *The Journal of Modern History* 59/4 (December 1987): 761—797; Charles S. Maier,

complicity and pretences to a historical disassociation from the Third Reich.[40] The *Opferdoktrin* ('victim doctrine') was re-evaluated, and thus the postwar political elite's continual revamping of the 1943 Moscow Declaration—presenting Austria as the 'first victim' of Hitlerite aggression—began to lose its credibility.[41]

Notwithstanding the myth-busting nature of post-Waldheim scholarship, its predominantly national vantage point has failed to capture nuances and instances where policy followed in the footsteps of social developments.[42] An emphasis on national actors and political factors in the grand narratives of the Second Republic has created the assumption, to varying degrees, that Austria closed the book on National Socialism (commonly referred to as the *Schlussstrich*) with the first amnesty law in 1948. Between the war's end and throughout the first couple of postwar years, a course of

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The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity (Cambridge, MA, 1988); Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (London, 1989).

[40] Including, most notably, Oliver Rathkolb, Ernst Bruckmüller, Anton Pelinka, Matthias Pape, and Günter Bischof. See Matthias Pape, *Ungleiche Brüder: Österreich und Deutschland 1945—1965* (Cologne, 2000); Ernst Bruckmüller, *The Austrian Nation: Cultural Consciousness and Socio-Political Processes* (Riverside, CA, 2003); Oliver Rathkolb, *Die paradoxe Republik: Österreich 1945 bis 2005* (Vienna, 2005).

[41] The Moscow Declaration's clause regarding Austria was an Allied propaganda tool that sought to strengthen the morale of the Austrian resistance in 1943. See Günter Bischof, 'Founding Myths and Compartmentalized Past: New Literature on the Construction, Hibernation, and Deconstruction of World War II Memory in Postwar Austria', in Bischof and Pelinka (eds.), *Austrian Historical Memory and National Identity*: 304—307; Heidemarie Uhl, *Zwischen Versöhnung und Verstörung: Eine Kontroverse um Österreichs historische Identität fünfzig Jahre nach dem "Anschluß"* (Vienna, 1992); Uhl, 'Das "erste Opfer": Der österreichische Opfermythos und seine Transformationen in der Zweiten Republik', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 30/1 (2001): 19—34.

[42] This has also been true of non-Austrian scholars. Relying heavily on a Vienna-centric framework and national vantage point, David Art, for instance, has argued the common cliché that 'Austria, unlike Germany, assumed no responsibilities for the crimes of National Socialism'. See David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 111. On 'moral blindness' regarding denazification in Nuremberg, for instance, see Gregor, *Haunted City*, pp. 88—103.

denazification and re-education had indeed been pursued with considerable determination by national and Allied authorities in Austria. Signs of a burgeoning *Schlussstrich* mentality at the institutional level appeared soon after, and gained momentum when political parties began competing for the votes of rehabilitated Nazis.[43] A social history approach, however, reveals that it took not years but just months for this development to manifest itself in practice.[44] On a local level, a distinct disassociation with the Nazi past could already be observed in the immediate postwar months.

The narratives of some persecuted groups remained peripheral in the bulk of post-Waldheim accounts.[45] Genuine victim communities like the Southern Carinthian Slovene-speaking minority in particular, who had been marginalised and whose claim to persecution had been outcompeted by national postwar myths, continue to be excluded from some nationhood narratives.[46] Being the only sizeable group that offered

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[43] For a discussion on the politically-motivated reversal of denazification, including contemporary views by the Austrian historical elite (based on personal interviews), see Rafael Kropiunigg, *Eine österreichische Affäre: Der Fall Borodajkewycz* (Vienna, 2015), pp. 93—96. For a briefer overview in English, see Kropiunigg, 'The Rehabilitated Austrians and the Borodajkewycz Affair', *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 383—384.

[44] The reintegration and rehabilitation of most former Nazis in Germany was complete within two years. See Gregor, *Haunted City*, p. 91. Also see Gregor's 'Rehabilitation and Reintegration' chapter for specific developments in postwar Nuremburg (pp. 88—103).

[45] The gender perspective, namely the role of an estimated ten thousand female inmates in the Mauthausen complex towards the end of the war, was first dealt with in 1997. See Andreas Baumgartner, *Die vergessenen Frauen von Mauthausen: Die weiblichen Häftlinge des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen und ihre Geschichte* (Vienna, 1997).

[46] For a discussion on how the Slovene minority continues to be equated to partisans and perpetrators by provincial Carinthian historians, see Peter Gstettner, *Erinnern an das Vergessen: Gedenkstättenpädagogik und Bildungspolitik* (Klagenfurt, 2012), pp. 74—77. The legacies of the Third Reich in relation to the Slovene community of around sixty-thousand individuals in Southern Carinthia between 1945 and 1960 is the subject of Robert Knight's new book: Robert Knight, *Slavs in Post-Nazi Austria: Carinthian Slovenes and the Politics of Assimilation, 1945—1960* (London, forthcoming 2017).

armed resistance by joining the Yugoslav partisans,[47] the Slovene Carinthians did not present a narrative that sat well alongside the official provincial wisdom.[48] Yugoslav forced labour contingents in the Third Reich on the whole have received far less historical attention than other persecuted groups,[49] and the Slovene inmates at the Loiblpass camp have been omitted from the narratives of some Carinthian historians.[50] Slovene camp history has lagged behind that of most other groups, perhaps in part because a strong collective of Slovenes at Ebensee, Linz III, Gusen, and the Loiblpass only began to emerge in around 1944. While this group's commemorative culture is

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[47] See Klaus Amann, *Siegreiche Verlierer: Der bewaffnete Widerstand der Kärntner Slowenen gegen das nationalsozialistische Regime* (Klagenfurt, 2013). On how Austrian resistance historiography still fails to fully acknowledge the significance of Carinthian Slovene resistance, see Peter Pirker, 'British Subversive Politics towards Austria and Partisan Resistance in the Austrian-Slovene Borderland, 1938—45', *Journal of Contemporary History* [DOI: 10.1177/0022009416634448] (April 2016): 2—3.

[48] Referring to these omissions, Peter Gstettner notes: 'Wollte man eine Erklärung für die spezifischen "nationalen Ausblendungen" und Leerstellen in der Kärntner Landesgeschichtsschreibung suchen, so würde man dort fündig, wo das offizielle Kärnten seine "Identität" bezieht. Bis zum heutigen Tage dürfen Slowenen nur als "Jugoslawen" und die Jugoslawen nur als "Täter" bzw. als "Partisanen" ins öffentliche Bewusstsein dringen — frei nach dem Motto: Jugoslawen versuchten 1918–1920 Teile von Kärnten ihrem Staat anzugliedern. Und: Jugoslawen wollten nochmals 1945 als "Tito-kommunistische Partisanen" Kärnten dem Deutschtum entreißen'. See Peter Gstettner, 'Die Legende von der Selbstbefreiung Kärntens: Alte Töne und neue Varianten am Rande des "Gedenkjahres 2005"', in Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (ed.), *Jahrbuch 2006: Schwerpunkt Erinnerungskultur* (Vienna, 2006): 88. Also see Lisa Rettl, *PartisanInnendenkmäler: Antifaschistische Erinnerungskultur in Kärnten* (Innsbruck, 2006). Walter Manoschek, 'Politische Debatten und Entscheidungen zur Rehabilitierung der Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz in Österreich', in Helmut Kramer, Karin Liebhart, and Friedrich Stadler (eds.), *Österreichische Nation – Kultur – Exil und Widerstand: In memoriam Felix Kreissler* (Vienna, 2006): 340.

[49] For a comprehensive overview on the state of research in this field, see Anna M. Grünfelder, *Arbeitseinsatz für die Neuordnung Europas: Zivil- und ZwangsarbeiterInnen aus Jugoslawien in der "Ostmark" 1938/41—1945* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 10—19.

[50] See for instance August Walzl, *Zwangsarbeit in Kärnten im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Die Hintergründe eines politischen Phänomens im Alpen-Adria-Raum* (Klagenfurt, 2001), wherein the author lists various nationalities but mentions neither the Slovenes (the fourth highest inmate contingent) nor the Hungarian Jews. Similarly, Rainer Adamik's *Der Loibl von der Römerzeit bis heute* (Ferlach, 2005) merely notes that twelve per cent of the inmates were 'Yugoslavs' (p. 37). Walzl nevertheless provides a relatively coherent overview of the twin camp in August Walzl, *Kärnten 1945: Vom NS-Regime zur Besatzungsherrschaft im Alpen-Adria-Raum* (Klagenfurt, 1985), pp. 48—52, wherein he references the possible presence of Hungarian Jews ('auch eine Gruppe ungarischer Juden soll gesehen worden sein').

now particularly well established in Southern Carinthia, its hardship was neither officially nor socially recognised in a province of 'formerly deeply Nazified people'.[51]

As the Austro-historical elite continues to exercise a tight grip on Austrian historiography, the Mauthausen histories of marginalised groups were until fairly recently written almost exclusively by historical protagonists, and chiefly camp survivors.[52] Akin to many of their peers in Germany, Mauthausen survivors have indeed generated excellent accounts. These tend nevertheless to be highly subjective works that treat the camps as islands and disregard their afterlives.

Issues of scope and agency are not limited to Austrian scholarship. Although the history of main camps such as Dachau, Mauthausen, and Auschwitz is now well documented, the vast majority of monographs are devoted to the lives or afterlives of camp functionaries, victims, and, to a much lesser extent, locals in the vicinity.[53] The

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[51] France Filipič, *Slowenen in Mauthausen* (Vienna, 2004), p. 121. For a classic *Heimattreue* account, see Ingomar Pust, *Titostern über Kärnten, 1942—1945: Totgeschwiegene Tragödien* (Klagenfurt, 1984). The author also makes no attempt to disguise his ideological leanings towards Slovene Carinthians: 'In der slowenischen Volksgruppe Kärntens wird der Partisanenkult gepflegt .... Das Kärntner Grenzland wird systematisch mit einem Netz von Partisanendenkmälern überzogen .... Warum ist der Partisanenmythos in der slowenischen Minderheit zu einem Mittelpunkt der Zeitgeschichte geworden?' (p. 10).

[52] Most notably, France Filipič for Slovenes at Mauthausen, Janko Tišler for the Loiblpass, and Hans Maršálek for Mauthausen (still the most comprehensive works on Mauthausen and the Loiblpass). See Hans Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen: Dokumentation* (Vienna, 2006); Janko Tišler and Christian Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ: Die Geschichte des Mauthausen-Außenlagers am Loiblpass/Ljubelj*, trans. Hans Pfeiffer (Vienna, 2007), originally published in Slovenian in 1995.

[53] Mary Fulbrook notes that scholarship has tended to approach Jews as passive victims (overlooking agency) among a handful of resistance fighters on the one hand, and Nazi criminals and policy men on the other hand. And an overwhelming disregard of 'those who were caught up in the system, neither actively fighting for nor against', as she puts it, points to 'gaps in a cast list' of those involved. See Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town Near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (Oxford, 2012), p. 351.

key historical narratives of the Holocaust habitually end in May 1945.[54] Rarely do accounts span the entire biographies of these communities. While an augmenting literature on their postwar narratives has followed suit, this period demands further consideration.

Our understanding of subcamps in particular remains incomplete. Far less still is known about the fates of these forced labour sites after the fall of the Third Reich and before their commemorative reawakening.[55] Much more has been published on SS camps than on any other site of persecution, but subcamp publications are more descriptive and empirical than analytical and critical.[56] Where professional historians have conventionally focused on the main camps, the important groundwork on forced labour contingents was taken up almost exclusively by memorial staff (*Gedenkdiener*), whose efforts centred primarily on reconstructing the history of a single site. With the necessary scope and analytical emphasis left wanting, the importance of interactions among local actors is therefore also typically overlooked.

While the search for global interpretations of National Socialism and of postwar societies has preoccupied scholars for decades, KZ histories have tended to be viewed

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[54] David Cesarani's *Final Solution* (2016) is perhaps the most recent study that transcends the traditional scope.

[55] Marcuse, 'The afterlife of the camps', in Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann (eds.), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories* (New York, 2010): 186. For a comprehensive history of Mauthausen's memorial site, see Bertrand Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen: 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck, 2006).

[56] Caplan and Wachsmann (eds.), 'Introduction', in *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany*: 6.

in isolation.[57] The causal relationship between a gradual societal reintegration of Nazi war criminals and a growing marginalisation of formerly persecuted groups in the Austrian Second Republic has thus far been observed predominantly through the lens of national politics.[58] And where historians have traced the postwar fates of victim groups and war criminals, they have generally approached these actors in isolation rather than in relation to one another. Owing at least in part to these selective approaches, early postwar developments in local communities have received little attention, and their early postwar histories have not been well documented. Much of the responsibility for the gradual marginalisation of survivors has been put on higher-level actors or Allied decision-makers. Just how instrumental local players—the army personnel, relief workers, and local bureaucracies—were in ostracising formerly persecuted groups has been largely overlooked in the concentration camp literature.

The histories chronicling the early postwar fates of Displaced Persons (DPs) have long explored such causalities. At first, a focus on the American-led economic reconstruction efforts across Europe stalled academic enquiry into this darker postwar

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[57] Claus Kröger and Karsten Wilke, 'Konzentrationslager in der nationalsozialistischen Kriegsgesellschaft: Annäherungen an eine zweifache Ortsbestimmung', in Alexandra Klei, Katrin Stoll, and Annika Wienert (eds.), *Die Transformation der Lager: Annäherung an die Orte nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen* (Bielefeld, 2011): 26.

[58] For an exceptionally insightful account on the 're-marginalisation of the marginalised' in postwar Nuremberg, see Gregor, *Haunted City*, pp. 104—118.

chapter.[59] DP studies on Austria[60] began emerging in tandem with those centring on Germany[61] in the 1980s. With the bulk of Austrian literature focusing on Jewish DPs, however, the absence of broader approaches have permitted self-praising interpretations laying claim to Austria's exceptional role during this period to endure.[62] In an illuminating analysis linking Austrian DP policy to the postwar endeavour of creating a distinctly Austrian identity, Robert Knight points to a connected problem: DP literature has mostly 'not been related to Austrian involvement in national socialist

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[59] Cohen, *In War's Wake*, p. 7. For earlier accounts dealing with DPs, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1985); Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945—1951* (Ithaca, NY, 1998 [1989]). In the case of Austria, much of the focus initially rested on Austrian neutrality with the independence treaty of 1955, and then transitioned to looking more broadly at European integration. See Michael Gehler, *Vom Marschall-Plan bis zur EU: Österreich und die europäische Integration von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck, 2006).

[60] For Austria, see Thomas Albrich, *Exodus durch Österreich: Die jüdischen Flüchtlinge 1945—1948* (Innsbruck, 1987); Albrich, 'Asylland wider Willen: Die Problematik der "Displaced Persons" in Österreich 1945—1948', in Günter Bischof and Josef Leidenfrost (eds.), *Die bevormundete Nation: Österreich und die Alliierten 1945—1949* (Innsbruck, 1988): 217—244; Helga Embacher, *Neubeginn ohne Illusionen: Juden in Österreich nach 1945* (Vienna, 1995); Christine Oertel, *Juden auf der Flucht durch Austria: Jüdische Displaced Persons in der US-Besatzungszone Österreichs* (Vienna, 1999); Susanne Rolinek, *Jüdische Lebenswelten 1945—1955: Flüchtlinge in der amerikanischen Zone Österreichs* (Innsbruck, 2007); Sabine Aschauer-Smolik and Mario Steidl (eds.), *Tamid Kadima – Immer vorwärts: Der jüdische Exodus aus Europa 1945—1948 / Tamid Kadima – Heading Forward: Jewish Exodus out of Europe 1945—1948* (Innsbruck, 2010).

[61] A focus on DPs in Germany has produced a wealth of diverse studies. See Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust: The Evolution of a United States Displaced Persons Policy, 1945—1950* (New York, 1982); Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum heimatlosen Ausländer*: *Die Displaced Persons in Westdeutschland 1945—1951* (Göttingen, 1985); Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: Die jüdischen DPs (Displaced Persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland* (Frankfurt, 1994); Michael Pegel, *Fremdarbeiter, Displaced Persons, heimatlose Ausländer: Konstanten eines Randgruppenschicksals in Deutschland nach 1945* (Münster, 1997); Ruth Gay, *Safe Among the Germans: Liberated Jews After World War II* (New Haven, 2002); Nicola Schlichting, *Öffnet die Tore nach Erez Israel: Das jüdische DP-Camp Belsen 1945—1948* (Nuremberg, 2005); Tamar Lewinsky, *Displaced Poets: Jiddische Schriftsteller im Nachkriegsdeutschland, 1945—1951* (Göttingen, 2008); Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, 2009).

[62] An account by the former Minister of Interior, who was put in charge of refugee issues in 1946, exemplifies this logic. See Eduard Stanek, *Verfolgt, verjagt, vertrieben: Flüchtlinge in Österreich* (Vienna, 1985).

rule'.[63] Being broadly divorced from such considerations, historians in the field have yet to comprehensively chronicle the process by which notions of generosity towards DPs were mobilised to advance claims to victimhood.[64]

Regarding camp scholarship, Harold Marcuse's *Legacies of Dachau* (2001) offers a rare glimpse into how social groups uncovered the wider implications of postwar Dachau and West Germany at large. In documenting the process of memorialisation, for instance, he finds that a focus on social groups can reveal more about postwar German society than the histories that individuals assert by commemorative means. Marcuse's generational framework may have led him to imagine the '68ers as a parent-defying cohort, but his overarching objective—unveiling the widespread postwar legacies of Nazism chiefly through the lens of Dachau—presents an exemplary and rare pursuit. The second part of his book eloquently displays how myths of German victimhood, ignorance, and calculated resistance nurtured a series of inversions of historical fact that Marcuse refers to as 'three founding myths' in the establishment of the West German state.[65]

Exceptions notwithstanding, comprehensive works have continued to focus more on factors other than local agency. Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel's

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[63] Robert Knight, 'National Construction Work and Hierarchies of Empathy in Postwar Austria', *Journal of Contemporary History* 49/3 (2014): 494—495.

[64] Even where allusions to victimhood occur in such accounts, the relationship is often not even mentioned in passing. For an example, see Gabriela Stieber, 'Volksdeutsche und Displaced Persons', in Gernot Heiss and Oliver Rathkolb (eds.), *Asylland wider Willen: Flüchtlinge in Österreich im europäischen Kontext seit 1914* (Vienna, 1995): 151.

[65] The three inversions of historical fact: Nazis as 'good'; KZ survivors as still being 'bad'; and the narrative of Dachau and other sites as 'clean' camps. See Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, pp. 73—185.

impressive nine edited volumes of *Der Ort des Terrors* (2005—2009) on the main camps and subcamps merely touch upon their postwar narratives and sometimes include aspects relating to everyday life and politics around the camps.[66] Given their encyclopaedic nature, these volumes provide little more than a helpful, initial overview to scholars working on specific localities. While each site is viewed in isolation, it is surprising that the editors have not pursued individual camps in detail.

Benz has long argued that the subcamps provide greater insight into the role of civilian populations than any other National Socialist manifestations of power,[67] and over two decades ago Distel, in her capacity as Director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial, made a number of insightful Mauthausen research recommendations. Along with thirteen of her colleagues, who together formed the Advisory Commission on the Mauthausen Concentration Camp Memorial, she recommended that scholars should begin focusing on the intrinsic system and circumstances within which Austria's Mauthausen complex was entrenched.[68] The emphasis would rest on connections and relationships between the camp and 1) the surrounding city and its community, including contacts between inhabitants, SS guards, and inmates; 2) the forced labour sites and local business, relating among other things to armaments production,

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[66] Volumes 2—7 deal specifically with the main complexes and subcamps. An overview of the Mauthausen complex is contained in Volume 4. See Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band 4: Flossenbürg, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück* (Munich, 2006).

[67] Wolfgang Benz, 'Die Allgegenwart des Konzentrationslagers: Außenlager im nationalsozialistischen KZ-System', *Dachauer Hefte* 15 (1999): 16.

[68] Austria's Federal Ministry of Education and Art commissioned Vienna University's Institute for Contemporary History on 23 July 1993 to convene international scholars whose expertise permitted them to effectively reassess the Mauthausen memorial and its educational purposes.

quarrying, and tunnelling; 3) its infrastructure network, such as roads, water supply, foodstuff provisions, and construction materials; 4) the local, provincial, and higher-level administrative authorities.[69]

Although the Commission's suggestions date back to the 1990s, in the edited volume *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany* (2010) Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann expose a number of prevailing issues in current SS camp scholarship. Their assessments highlight the shortcomings that figure more strongly in accounts of subcamps than those of their now better-known counterparts (the main camps). An apparent fragmentation, stemming from an excess of detail, has made it increasingly hard to identify broader subjects, developments, and debates. Furthermore, with the concentration camp research boom being fixated on Germany and Austria, most works are published in German. That these are often not translated has serious implications for the non-German speaking readership.[70] This issue can at least in part account for why 'ignorance, myths and misunderstandings about the Nazi concentration camps continue to persist, even among some experts in the field'.[71]

In the relative absence of translating pertinent recommendations into action, the local context and postwar dimension continue to present a missing link in our

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[69] Bariéty, Ardelt, Collotti, et al., 'Proposals by the Advisory Commission on the Mauthausen Concentration Camp Memorial': 183—202.

[70] An excellent account on the wartime histories of the Mauthausen subcamps of Gusen and St. Georgen, which was published in English but not translated into German, presents an exception to the rule. See Rudolf A. Haunschmied, Jan-Ruth Mills, and Siegi Witzany-Durda, *St. Georgen – Gusen – Mauthausen: Concentration Camp Mauthausen Reconsidered* (Norderstedt, 2007).

[71] Caplan and Wachsmann (eds.), 'Introduction': 6.

understanding of Mauthausen's forced labour camps. Most works in the field, by failing to correct this gap, have allowed popular confusions to endure. The process of the liberation, the impact of local awareness, and the significance of agency have usually been dealt with in isolation rather than in conjunction with one another. These key themes run through this dissertation for a more complete approach that aims to counter revisionist efforts, correct prevailing confusions in popular imagination, and address historiographical shortcomings. This dissertation draws on Ebensee and the Loiblpass, two forced labour outposts of the Mauthausen complex, to offer the first integrated account of the divergent factors that shaped the legacies of these sites and the fates of their subjects—the inmates and survivors, camp functionaries and former functionaries, and village inhabitants in the surrounding areas.

There is a plethora of reasons why these sites deserve historical investigation. The Upper Austrian Ebensee and Southern Carinthian twin Loiblpass subcamps present two case studies whose near-simultaneous inception and dissolution as a part of the same complex make them ideal subjects for an investigation of the lives and afterlives of the subcamp communities. Both emerged in 1943 with the rapid expansion of the war effort and were two of the last camps standing, albeit for different reasons.[72] The Loiblpass twin camp, located in the Karawanks mountain range, was a strategically important tunnelling project along the Austro-Yugoslav border; its two branch camps

[72] While the prologue of this dissertation provides the broader background in which Mauthausen and these two subcamps emerged, their wartime histories are reconstructed in the last sections of the third chapter (for Ebensee) and fourth chapter (for the Loiblpass twin). Also see 'Ebensee: The last liberation' chapter in David W. Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust: Mauthausen, the horror on the Danube* (London, 2000), pp. 264—269.

were situated at the northern (Carinthian) and southern (Carniolan) extremes of the pass. The first batch of inmates arrived at the south camp on 3 June 1943. Ebensee, in the Salzkammergut region of Upper Austria, followed suit on 18 November 1943. The secret project, codenamed 'KZ Zement', was initially intended as one of the central hubs for the relocation of the rocket armament industry after the aerial attacks on Peenemünde. The further deterioration of military fortunes prompted the eventual abandonment of the relocation process in 1944. Thereafter, the tunnelling network was used for housing an underground oil refinery, and for the production of engine components and brake drums for tanks.[73]

With the liberation of the Mauthausen network, these camps took on entirely new and varied forms.[74] Some like the northern twin of the Loiblpass were abandoned, dismantled, and forgotten; others were adopted to serve the needs of postwar necessities. At the former site of Ebensee, for instance, the American occupiers set up a DP camp, which led to the continued presence of former inmates in the area. Despite a broad local awareness, Ebensee went from being extensively commemorated before 1949 to becoming a 'well preserved secret' thereafter,[75] remaining thus until the Waldheim

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[73] Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 99; Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 451.

[74] Marcuse identifies five postwar uses of the camps: 1) educational, punitive pedagogy; 2) nursing survivors; 3) imprisonment of Nazis under 'automatic arrest' category; 4) education, preservation; 5) abandonment with late commemoration/restoration. See Marcuse, 'The afterlife of the camps': 186—187.

[75] Wolfgang Quatember, 'Die Geschichte der KZ-Gedenkstätte Ebensee', in Wolfgang Quatember and Ulrike Felber (eds.), *Zeitgeschichte-Museum Ebensee: Republik, Ständestaat, Nationalsozialismus, Widerstand, Verfolgung* (Ebensee, 2005): 198—204.

Affair. The Loiblpass' northern branch-camp on the Austrian side of the border was not memorialised and experienced no serious commemorative attention until 1995.[76]

While these subcamps' afterlives underline the importance of viewing divergent postwar developments through a regional lens, their respective histories have thus far been viewed in isolation. Beyond their wartime narratives, our understanding of Ebensee and the Loiblpass is incomplete. Since broader themes and issues generally remain unaddressed, these sites have yet to fully overcome the 'island syndrome' in order to find their place in the historiography of Austria's postwar history.

Whereas there exists only one pamphlet on Ebensee in English,[77] Loiblpass research has not produced any. Monographs on Third Reich concentrations camps in general often still bear no mention of the Loiblpass or Ebensee at all. As such, the histories of such sites amount to a series of isolated subcamp narratives in their own right. Save for two works, the Loiblpass branch camps have received no serious scholarly attention. Janko Tišler's *Das Loibl-KZ*, published in Slovenian (1995) and German (2007), presents the most comprehensive study to date. Prior to joining the partisans on 1 July 1944, Tišler, a Slovene from Tržič, had worked as a contract worker

[76] For the most recent studies on the commemorative and material fate of the Loiblpass' northern twin, see Patrick Krall and Daniel Lausegger, 'KZ Gedenkstätte Loibl Nord' (unpublished thesis, Höhere technische Bundeslehranstalt und Bundesversuchsanstalt Villach, 2011); Josef Villa, 'Das KZ Loibl Nord in der Kärntner Erinnerungskultur' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Vienna, 2012).

[77] Freund, *Concentration Camp Ebensee: Subcamp of Mauthausen*, trans. Max R. Garcia (Vienna, 1990).

at the tunnel.[78] Josef Zausnig's *Der Loibl-Tunnel* (1995) amounts to a pamphlet-like narrative comprised almost entirely of long, albeit fascinating, testimony excerpts and bullet points.[79] The study nevertheless represents a vital first initiative by a Carinthian to resuscitate the memory of the Loiblpass tunnelling project without succumbing to the traditional pan-German perspective. Such accounts provide an important overview for historians and the wider public at large. Literature touching upon the Loiblpass has also explored Austrian postwar tensions in a biographical context. Lisa Rettl and Peter Pirker's exemplary biography of Sigbert Ramsauer analyses how this SS doctor's trajectory informs greater postwar continuities with the Third Reich.[80]

True to traditional Carinthian revisionist efforts, Rainer Adamik, the former head of Ferlach's cultural organisation (*Kulturring*), published a pamphlet in 2005, calling the suffering of inmates at KZ Loiblpass into question and periodically referred

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[78] As evidenced by a sizeable collection of postwar letter exchanges, Janko Tišler stayed in touch with Loiblpass survivors until his death in 2007. He devoted much of his life to amassing the most significant archival collection on wartime and postwar aspects of the camp. The private source collection has been preserved by the National Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, Slovenia. A digital copy of films and filmed interviews pertaining to the Loiblpass is held by Tržič Museum, Slovenia. I have digitalised both archives.

[79] The book—Josef Zausnig, *Der Loibl-Tunnel: Das vergessene KZ an der Südgrenze Österreichs* (Klagenfurt, 1995)—is based on his preceding academic thesis: Josef Zausnig, 'Der Loibltunnel und seine Entstehungsgeschichte' (unpublished thesis, Institut für Weiterbildung, University of Klagenfurt, 1994).

[80] See Lisa Rettl and Peter Pirker, *"Ich war mit Freuden dabei": Der KZ-Arzt Sigbert Ramsauer: Eine österreichische Geschichte* (Vienna, 2010).

to them as convicts ('Sträflinge').[81] Peter Gstettner, founder of the *Mauthausen Komitee Kärnten/Koroška* and *Verein Memorial Kärnten/Koroška*, has since the 1990s acted as the chief counterforce to such apologetic *Heimattreue* tendencies in Carinthia.[82] While his continued scholarly efforts helped rescue KZ Loiblpass from oblivion, the gradual memorialisation of the hitherto entirely neglected northern twin is also owed entirely to his initiatives.[83]

The sole serious archival-based work on Ebensee dates back to Florian Freund's meticulously detailed 677-page thesis from the year 1987, which appeared in print two years later.[84] The first two chapters offer impressive context on the development of the rocket armaments industry leading up to Ebensee as well as the role that the missiles

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[81] As Rainer Adamik purports, 'Die Umstände, wie diese Sträflinge eingesetzt wurden, wie man mit ihnen umgegangen ist, welche Misshandlungen sie erleiden mussten, scheint aber auch nach nur rund 60 Jahren nicht mehr richtig nachvollziehbar. Denn einerseits gibt es Dokumentation, die über Misshandlungen von Häftlingen berichten und die ihren Arbeitseinsatz als einen Einsatz, der mit dem Tod durch Erschöpfung enden muss, beschrieben. Andererseits gibt es auch Zeitzeugen, die erzählen, dass die Häftlinge bessere Essensversorgung, bessere Überlebungschancen als im Lager Mauthausen hatten'. The author continues in this vein, concluding: 'Dass die Sträflinge also sehr ausgenützt wurden und dass sie auch in ihrer Freizeit von Misshandlungen nicht verschont wurden, ist traurige Tatsache'. See Adamik, *Der Loibl von der Römerzeit bis heute*, pp. 30—33.

[82] Gstettner astutely summarises the patriotic malaise in the following terms: 'Die "nachfolgende Verdrängung" ist nirgendwo so spürbar wie in Kärnten. In keinem Bundesland ist die Geschichte der Opfer der NS-Zeit weniger aufgearbeitet als in Kärnten. …. Das Land Kärnten mit seiner Förderpolitik bevorzugte seit Jahrzehnten jene Vereine und Institutionen, die affirmative und "heimattreue" Geschichtsschreibung betrieben (Landesarchiv, Landesmuseum, Geschichtsverein, Kärntner Landsmannschaft, Abwehrkämpferbund, Heimatdienst usw.). So dominiert im Ringen um das Ausleuchten der NS-Geschichte bis zum heutigen Tag das Abwehrkampf-Paradigma von 1918/1920'. See Gstettner, 'Die Legende von der Selbstbefreiung Kärntens': 80—81. For an earlier study, see Peter Gstettner, 'Zum Umgang mit Faschismus und Widerstand in Österreich nach 1945 am Beispiel Kärntens', in Klaus Himmelstein and Wolfgang Keim (eds.), *Die Schärfung des Blicks: Pädagogik nach dem Holocaust* (Frankfurt, 1996): 237—257.

[83] See 'Immer noch Spuren IV: Die ehemalige "Baustelle des Todes" am Loiblpass' chapter in Gstettner, *Erinnern an das Vergessen*, pp. 235—248.

[84] The monograph *Arbeitslager Zement* (1989) is based on Florian Freund, 'Die Geschichte des KZ Ebensee: Raketenrüstung und Zwangsarbeit' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Vienna, 1987).

project played at the site. Not only do the remaining chapters view the camp in isolation, roughly half of the text is composed of extended first person testimony. For all of his impressive archival and oral history research, a close inspection of sources reveals that this study too is incomplete. At the US National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), for instance, Freund consulted merely one Record Group and a single Nazi war crimes trial case, although some material was declassified only after the completion of his thesis.

Freund has since published extensively on Ebensee, with his initial research acting as the basis of subsequent publications. Although his edited publication of Drahomír Bárta's Ebensee camp diary is a rare document chronicling conditions at the site,[85] it again suggests that Freund did not, after the publication of his original study, consult the wide range of comparable testimonials that are now available and easily obtainable. Freund's *Die Toten von Ebensee* (2010), which contains the most accurate Ebensee statistics to date, is a noteworthy contribution.[86] Whereas the most recent of his publications, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee* (2016),[87] takes advantage of the new statistics, this fairly brief account is primarily based on his initial dissertation and book from the late 1980s. Aside from their encyclopaedic nature, all of the comprehensive works deal almost exclusively with the wartime context of the camps. Nevertheless, it

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[85] Drahomír Bárta, *Tagebuch aus dem KZ Ebensee*, Florian Freund and Verena Pawlowsky (eds.), trans. Mojmír Stránský (Vienna, 2005).

[86] Florian Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee: Analyse und Dokumentation der im KZ Ebensee umgekommenen Häftlinge 1943—1945* (Vienna, 2010).

[87] Florian Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee: KZ-System Mauthausen – Raketenrüstung – Lagergeschehen* (Vienna, 2016).

should be stressed that this dissertation would not have been possible in this form without the important groundwork of those who successfully reconstructed the core histories of the Loiblpass and Ebensee subcamps.

Gordon J. Horwitz's *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* (1990), is a unique camp study devoting at least some attention to the way in which the inhabitants connected to the Mauthausen complex related to the camps beyond merely the wartime period.[88] The account is a testimony of the wider public awareness of the camps. Still absent are attempts to establish more complete Ebensee and Loiblpass accounts by embedding sources within the greater themes and the general context related to the early postwar histories of these sites.

This dissertation is divided into two parts. The first two chapters argue that a focus on the immediate surroundings of the camps is a prerequisite for any study if the intention is to retrace the main factors accounting for divergences in their local legacies. When viewed as a whole, this part answers some of the central questions that had been on the minds of many survivors in the early postwar period: how had the indigenous population come to accept the presence of a wartime concentration camp despite being aware of its general purpose, and why had the 'liberation' not encouraged any serious self-reflection on the part of the town?

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[88] A research project focusing on the wartime and early postwar role of local inhabitants in the vicinity of Mauthausen subcamps has since been completed. The researchers based their study on interview partners connected to five outposts: Gunskirchen, Gusen, Lenzing, Melk, St. Valentin. See Baumgartner, Andreas and Kropf, Rudolf, *"Man hat halt mit dem leben müssen": Nebenlager des KZ-Mauthausen in der Wahrnehmung der Lokalbevölkerung: Endbericht eines Forschungsprojektes des Mauthausen Komitee Österreich* (Vienna, 2002).

The opening chapter, 'The Process of the Liberation in Ebensee', studies the immediate postwar fates of camp survivors in Ebensee by tracing changing attitudes towards DPs during the first two years after the war. Despite removing any remaining hints of possible ignorance through the act of forcibly recruiting town inhabitants to clean up and view the camp, the Army's growing ambivalence towards former inmates increasingly came at the expense of genuine relief and rehabilitation efforts. Exploring how the local bureaucracy, relief workers, and Allies impacted on the lives of formerly persecuted individuals shows how victim groups were ostracised precisely because of a broad local awareness and strong presence of non-repatriable individuals. It shows that Jewish camp survivors suffered more than any other group when American neglect and repatriation efforts, ethnic tensions among DPs, and local victimhood narratives progressively took hold. The chapter reminds us that a social and political process of marginalisation in Ebensee was already long under way—aided by all local actors—when the federal amnesty laws encouraging the rehabilitation of former National Socialists came into effect; national and Allied policy decisions only further catalysed and aided this development from 1947 onwards.

The second chapter, 'Local Wartime Perspectives on the Loiblpass', turns to the case of the Loiblpass community to identify the main aspects shaping the local memory of the camp. It approaches the subject on the basis of personal interviews and through the lens of the region's ideological background and the cultural backdrop of the Loibl Valley, the village located directly below the north camp. This aims to capture how the community's warped understanding of the camp could remain unobstructed to this day.

The chapter finds that personal wartime experiences served as the fundamental frame of reference. Locals communicated a binary 'selective association process': the memory of the camp prompted a positive association in socioeconomic terms; political allusions provoked a relativizing of brutality and a claim to personal suffering during the wartime armed conflict between Nazi loyalists and the partisan resistance. It also briefly discusses how British occupation policy did not favour a serious revision of Southern Carinthia's ideological culture for the purpose of self-reflection and a critical examination of National Socialist manifestations like the camps. This part of the study reveals that the Loibl Valley had been entirely self-sufficient in constructing and sustaining its unique version of personal victimhood; national myths of non-complicity and their ultimate abandonment towards the turn of the century did not figure prominently.

The final part of this dissertation closely follows the process leading up to the point at which the Americans in Upper Austria and the British in Southern Carinthia had a clear understanding of the inner workings of the camps. These two chapters consider whether the war crimes investigations offer an explanation for the subcamps' failure to reach the very political dimension that might have advanced national or international awareness. Together they expose that the nature of investigations and the amount of time it took for investigators to gain a deeper understanding of their respective camps had a serious bearing on the extent to which former functionaries were investigated, how many suspects were traced and captured, whether the camp would indeed figure in future trials, and which legal approach the prosecution would adopt.

The last two sections of each chapter provide a seamless reconstruction of life in these subcamps. Doing so mainly on the basis of evidence provided by former inmates seeks to bring their past into the present. For they had not been inactive victims of the camps; nor had they become passive survivors or silent witnesses to the legacies.

The penultimate chapter, 'The American Road to Prosecution: KZ Ebensee', examines American efforts to show that those tasked with capturing suspects and collecting evidence had indeed capitalised upon three key advantages. First, the majority of Mauthausen's outposts were situated within the US operational sphere in the wake of the German defeat. A direct confrontation with and a strong desire to understand the concentration camps figured as a motivating factor in locating suspects before they could disappear. Second, Upper Austria hosted one of the highest concentrations of fleeing National Socialists. The speed at which ingenious CIC officers worked in the Salzkammergut region enabled them to capture some higher-level suspects who provided clues that aided the investigation of lesser-known sites and led to the incrimination of former subcamp functionaries lower down the chain of command. Finally, sworn statements could be easily secured from survivors who now lived in liberated camps as DPs. The two war crimes investigation reports that emerged within a few months of the liberation were sufficiently detailed to bring charges against a wide range of Ebensee suspects. Yet the conclusions and recommendations of their authors, which were embraced by the prosecutors at trial, not only guaranteed a problematic legal approach; they also failed to examine factual misrepresentations. The chapter sheds light on the fact that initial successes in piecing together a fairly complete

understanding of the Mauthausen complex were ultimately undermined by a dubious legal construct and the decision to try suspects at Dachau: the former set the course for a tarnished legacy of the trials; the latter skewed awareness by framing National Socialism as a German problem.

The final chapter, 'The British Road to Prosecution: KZ Loiblpass', exposes a multitude of British-made problems obstructing investigative efforts leading up to the start of the Loiblpass trials in September 1947. Going beyond an analysis of regional hindrances and resource-related challenges, it distinguishes four waves of enquiry in the course of three war crimes administrations. Following the long road to trial points to the irony that an official examination arose after the British began winding down investigations across their zones of occupation. Adding to this, a resolute decision not to hand the case over to the French or Americans for trial emerged a mere few months before the proceedings in Klagenfurt got underway. The chapter identifies a former inmate as the only source of stability throughout. To name a few contributions, this Frenchman sparked British awareness in May 1945, partook in the process of tracing and interrogating suspects, provided evidence in the form of documents and witnesses, and ensured that the War Office's policy of indecision and its lack of administrative continuity would not succeed in burying investigations entirely. While the prosecution drew on an existing legal approach that necessitated establishing individual guilt, the quality of the case was undermined by a number of issues. Investigations had come too late and were insufficient in providing incriminating evidence against all of the accused, which the British dealt with by doing away with sworn statements, and by securing

further statements from witnesses as well as interrogating suspects when the court case was already in progress. The chapter helps to explain why the largest Allied war crimes trial on Austrian soil inevitably assumed a provincial character with insufficient potential to garner the national and international attention that might have brought the subcamp out of oblivion.

This dissertation ultimately aims to establish the broader character of these subcamps through a new framework. It employs an integrated approach by uniting historical dimensions that have hitherto commonly been viewed in their own right. First advanced by Saul Friedländer, and motivated by a necessity to bring the voices of victims and the actions of NS functionaries into one narrative,[89] integrated histories have since been adopted by an increasing number of scholars.[90] Retaining a principally local character, however, this study is distinct in providing a horizontal understanding of these sites over space and time. The research emanates outwards from the camps, thus capturing the interplay between a broad range of local-level actors connected to one or both of these subcamps: the inmates, survivors, DPs, functionaries, suspected war criminals, partisans, village inhabitants, liberators, and relief workers. Focusing on

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[89] Particularly in regards to the 'Jewish dimension'. Saul Friedländer, *Den Holocaust beschreiben: Auf dem Weg zu einer integrierten Geschichte* (Göttingen, 2007); Saul Friedländer, 'An Integrated History of the Holocaust: Some Methodological Challenges', in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology* (New York, 2012): 181—189.

[90] 'In the case of the SS camps', as Wachsmann writes, 'this means a history which examines those inside and the wider populace outside; a history which combines a macro analysis of Nazi terror with micro studies of individual actions and responses; a history which shows the synchronicity of events and the intricacy of the SS system by contrasting developments between, and within, individual camps across Nazi-controlled Europe'. See Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 17.

the period between 1943 and 1948, this dissertation overcomes temporal limitations by opting for a fluid rather than chronological approach.

Transcending the traditional scope makes it feasible to explore questions with which strictly comparative methods focusing on either the period preceding or following the fall of the Third Reich tend to struggle. Most notably: when and how were the memories of these sites negotiated by local inhabitants a) in the light of the postwar presence of survivors in Ebensee, and b) given their absence in the Loibl Valley after the war? The first part of this dissertation deals with this issue to present the case for contextualised frameworks, employing a wartime lens for one camp (Loiblpass) and a postwar lens for another (Ebensee). A focus purely on the postwar fate of the Loiblpass, for instance, would fail to take into account how gravely the Loibl Valley community's memory of the subcamp had been conditioned by the partisan-SS conflict in the region. Going beyond the confines of the camps and overcoming temporal orthodoxies not only makes analysing across a number of actors and tracing a range of dynamics possible; it also captures a broader variety of factors shaping the lives and afterlives of the subcamp communities.

Since the local contexts and early postwar years of these two subcamps have been insufficiently studied, the body of this dissertation mainly draws on untapped primary sources; the notes contain detailed secondary source references for comparative examples and relevant background information. Instead of following a strict chronology of events, original sources within individual chapters tend to be organised in the order in which they materialised. Giving the sources a causal role

represents an attempt at providing answers to intricate questions that best capture the role of agency: at what point, in which manner, and by whom were the legacies of the subcamps crafted? While the first part of this dissertation therefore manages to analyse the immediate postwar period in Ebensee before transitioning to the wartime Loiblpass, the second part can closely retrace American and British war crimes investigations. This also explains why this dissertation ends where other narratives typically begin: with a seamless reconstruction of daily life in the wartime subcamps on the basis of two investigative reports for Ebensee and detailed trial proceedings for the Loiblpass. The following section outlines and discusses some of the study's most important primary manuscript sources.

Owing to the US Army's conversion of KZ Ebensee into a DP camp, the process of 'liberation' can be coherently examined through textual records held at American archives. The Mauthausen complex documents at NARA in College Park, Maryland, are primarily concerned with the early stages of relief and repatriation efforts, the various war crimes investigations, and the later US Mauthausen trials at Dachau (spanning sixty-one cases and comprising some three hundred defendants). Uncovering all of the relevant files for this study, which has consulted material from eight US government agencies, would have been impossible if archivists had not spent years cataloguing Mauthausen-related material; until this work was finished the location of the many files that had been declassified by the early 1990s remained unknown.[91] The

[91] For a comprehensive guide to the available Mauthausen-related records at NARA, see Amy Schmidt and Gudrun Loehrer, *The Mauthausen Concentration Camp Complex*: *World War II and Postwar Records* (Washington, DC, 2008).

personnel connected to the Army and its medical units were astute observers of local interactions and emerging conflicts; their reports in particular show how a growing disdain towards survivors was soon nurtured by the liberators and indigenous population alike. An augmented portrayal of these hostile attitudes was made possible on the basis of municipal council documents uncovered at *Archiv des Zeitgeschichte Museums Ebensee* (ZME) directly in Ebensee, and through collections relating to a number of survivors and liberators of the subcamp that were uncovered at the *US Holocaust Memorial Museum* (USHMM) in Washington, DC.

The records of the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (UNRRA), held at the *United Nations Archives and Records Management Section* (ARMS) in New York City, have made it possible to explore life in the Ebensee DP camp leading up to 1948. Under the governance of UNRRA's Team 313 from June 1945, the former camp expanded into 'the Settlement'; a series of installations within a thirty-five-kilometre radius of Ebensee that eventually included at least six centres. The Team's meticulously organised files include: monthly health, narrative, and statistical reports; administrative records; correspondence and Team reports; cemetery lists; and policies as well as efforts in the resettlement, determination of nationality, and repatriation of DPs.

The challenge of exploring the local legacy of a camp as geographically isolated as KZ Loiblpass had been from the outset compounded by the lack of an Allied liberation and a postwar application of the site that could have guaranteed a greater degree of historical documentation. As a point of departure, it was essential to pursue

the following question: how had inhabitants in the area perceived the camp during the war, and had their views changed since its dissolution? Discussions and personal interviews with individuals who had at the time lived in the vicinity of the Loibl Valley allowed for the probing of such thoughts. Initial conversations throughout the summer of 2012 exposed a common denominator: allusions to the camp triggered memories of the region's armed conflict between partisans and forces loyal to Nazi Germany. References to the concentration camp victims stimulated a victimhood narrative that some expressed through the maxim: 'SS by day, partisans by night'. Once it had become evident that both the origins and memories of the Loiblpass camp were a product of region-specific ideological circumstances, studying the wartime conflicts in the area appeared essential. To do so, this dissertation drew on municipal and provincial police records held at the *Archiv der Polizeiinspektion Ferlach* (AdPiF) in Ferlach and the *Kärntner Landesarchiv* (KLA) in Klagenfurt, respectively. Whereas the 'Egon Payr' collection at KLA was not released until July 2011, purportedly Ferlach's gendarmerie (municipal police) chronicles had not yet been consulted.

That few of the relevant provincial NS documents have survived in their original form requires some attention.[92] Like the municipal council archives, which disappeared without a trace, the records of the Windisch-Bleiberg[93] gendarmerie were seized by

[92] To quote an archivist at KLA, who alluded to the destruction of regional NS files in the following terms: 'Sie wissen ja, damals, am 8. Mai im Jahre 1945, haben alle Dachböden gebrannt, und alle Keller waren überschwemmt. Sie wissen ja, was ich damit meine'.

[93] The Windisch-Bleiberg municipality, which had its own mayor and police force at the time, included the Loibl Valley; all of the villages associated with it were absorbed into the municipality of Ferlach with the 'Gemeindestrukturreform' of 1973.

British troops in late May 1945. Tito groups destroyed the remainder of the files; they broke into the local gendarmerie building and occupied it for some days, and it was not until 27 May 1945 that the gendarmerie could return and resume their work in full. In the meantime, the local school and rectory records had likewise fallen victim to wartime and early postwar struggles.[94] Unlike municipal council records, however, new gendarmerie chronicles were hastily fashioned at the request of the police headquarters in Klagenfurt.[95] For all their subjective drawbacks, they were re-written on the basis of an extensive primary source base spanning hundreds of years.[96] The *Landesgendarmerie Chronik* (provincial police records), contained in the Egon Payr collection, has been preserved in full. In chronicling the partisan-SS conflict within a forty-kilometre radius of the Loiblpass between 1943 and 1945, it allows for unique insight into the changing attitudes of the civilian population and the forces loyal to Nazism. No other source bases embody a similarly detailed depiction of ideological breaks and continuities in the area.

This dissertation has also uncovered Foreign Office and War Office files at *The National Archives of the UK* (TNA) near London. Intelligence reports and correspondence handled by the Foreign Office indicate that the British occupiers in

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[94] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Bestand des Postens', in 'Postenchronik GP [Gendarmerieposten] Ferlach und GP Windisch-Bleiberg', municipal police records, Archiv der Polizeiinspektion Ferlach (AdPiF).

[95] Postenkommandant Hötzendorfer to 'Gendarmarieabteilungskommando Nr. 1', correspondence, Windisch-Bleiberg, 18 January 1946, in 'Postenchronik GP Ferlach und GP Windisch-Bleiberg', municipal police records, AdPiF.

[96] Including a fragmented Bleiberg death book from the seventeenth century.

Southern Carinthia likely made use of the local records which they had apparently seized. This might account for their astute awareness of local identity narratives, and, in turn, could explain how such a contextualised understanding prompted some encouragement of anti-democratic forms of legitimacy in order to safeguard political unity. The War Office documents, including inter-agency correspondence and Loiblpass-related reports, highlight the many deficits plaguing fact-finding missions and trial preparations. They illustrate that inexperienced investigators on the ground received insufficient support from their government; progress was hampered through bureaucratic inefficiencies, a policy of ambivalence, and a lack of cooperation. Finally, this dissertation consults the two handwritten Loiblpass trial volumes containing the testimony of witnesses for the prosecution; they demonstrate that a relatively comprehensive record of crimes committed at the Loiblpass emerged by October 1947.

PROLOGUE: THE COMING OF THE SUBCAMPS

On the night of 27 February 1933, Adolf Hitler and a group of his highest-ranking officials looked on as the Reichstag went up in flames. Sitting half-naked in front of them was Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch advocate of direct action with Communist roots who had supposedly committed the act of arson moments earlier. That same night four thousand Communists were arrested. The following morning an emergency decree for the 'protection of people and state' was conceived and eventually signed by Reich President Paul von Hindenburg. With the stroke of a pen, the civil liberties that had been a thorn in Hitler's side for so long were suspended. The Nazis no longer needed court orders to detain people in *Schutzhaft* ('protective custody'); they now had the legal cover to lock away their opponents indefinitely.[1] Although van der Lubbe had acted as a lone wolf, the pervasive fear of an unfolding Leftist conspiracy motivated Hitler to devote all resources to crushing his ideological opponents.[2] Accommodating the ever-increasing number of arrested Communists and Social Democrats rapidly became an issue, and soon state prisons and police cells were bursting at their seams. Yet a potential solution had long been envisaged: the construction of concentration

[1] See Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York, 2004), pp. 328—333.

[2] Hans Mommsen, 'The Reichstag Fire and its Political Consequences', in Hajo Holborn (ed.), *Republic to Reich: The Making of the Nazi Revolution* (New York, 1973): 137—141.

camps.[3]

Less than a month following Reichstag fire, Heinrich Himmler, the acting chief of Munich's police force and soon-to-be head of the Gestapo, announced Germany's first 'concentration camp for political prisoners' at Dachau. On 22 March, the inhabitants of Dachau watched as the first inmates arrived. The SS took control of the camp within the fortnight. A week later four Jewish inmates were taken outside the gates and shot.[4] By the time the Third Reich established itself, with a firm grip on the reins of power, the protective custody spree had paved the road to Dachau and beyond. Camps had sprung up all across Germany. Within a remarkably short period the regime's first camp evolved into a blueprint for the burgeoning KZ system. But Dachau was not the exception; the local SA at KZ Oranienburg (March 1933—July 1934) made a habit of detaining Jewish inmates under the pretext of being political opponents. Whereas only a hundred of the three thousand inmates at Oranienburg were Jewish, around half of them were not in fact genuine ideological adversaries. Like Dachau, Oranienburg became one of the first institutions at which acts of 'anti-Semitic revenge' took root. Jews were banished to the so-called *Judenkompanie*, a specially formed company wherein they had to labour whilst being subjected to violence, abuse, and

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[3] In 1933 alone, up to two hundred thousand people were temporarily imprisoned without trial. Up to this point, however, no coherent plan for a system of concentration camps had materialised ('the Nazi concentration camp still had to be invented'). See Wachsmann, 'The dynamics of destruction: The development of the concentration camps, 1933—1944', in Caplan and Wachsmann (eds.), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany*: 18—19.

[4] Hitler had already made his intention of incarcerating German Jews in 'concentration camps' clear in 1921. See Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp. 344—346. Also see Wachsmann, *KL*, pp. 54—56.

humiliation.[5] Where forced labour had initially been applied as a form of punishment and intimidation, from the mid-1930s onwards it began to take on an increasingly economic character.[6]

Without contextualising the development of concentration camps over time, the historian writing on the legacies of the wartime camps runs the risk of glossing over important breaks and continuities. Until recently, one might have been forgiven for bypassing the fact that protective custody localities of the early 1930s provided some of the psychological building blocks that contributed to institutionalising the subsequent systems of slave labour and extermination. Where the systematic annihilation of Europe's Jews in concentration camps had hitherto been viewed predominantly within the background of the wartime sites, for instance, over the past decade scholars have returned to the origins of KZ policy to show how central the first camps were in preparing the Final Solution. The initial wave of camps, as Kim Wünschmann has argued, 'helped to shape an enemy category still in the making'.[7]

Despite stark differences among the hundreds of camps that emerged in the spring of 1933, and although most were abandoned by 1934, rudimentary

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[5] Julia Pietsch, 'Stigmatisierung von Juden in frühen Konzentrationslagern: Die "Judenkompanie" des Konzentrationslagers Oranienburg 1933/44', in Marco Brenneisen, Christine Eckel, Laura Haendel, and Julia Pietsch (eds.), *Stigmatisierung – Marginalisierung – Verfolgung: Beiträge des 19. Workshops zur Geschichte und Gedächtnisgeschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager* (Berlin, 2015): 99—120.

[6] Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 159.

[7] Harald Welzer has referred to the creation of an artificial rift between Jews and other Germans as the *Entsolidarisierungsprozess* ('the process of de-solidarization'). See Kim Wünschmann, 'Cementing the Enemy Category: Arrest and Imprisonment of German Jews in Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933-8/9', *Journal of Contemporary History* 45/3 (July 2010): 599.

characteristics of the later networks shone through. Wachsmann cautions that Dachau in 1945 was not an inevitable consequence of Dachau in 1933, noting that in the mid-1930s it appeared as though such sites of mass incarceration might vanish for good.[8] As history had it, however, their resurgence did not take long. The early camps played a crucial role in 'normalising' terror among the public and in advancing the incipient radicalisation of the forthcoming KZ careerists. As Richard J. Evans has noted of Dachau in 1933, 'Corruption, extortion and embezzlement were rife among the guards, and the prisoners were exposed to arbitrary acts of cruelty and sadism in a world without regulations or rules'.[9]

To be sure, KZ policy had gone through a series of changes by the time Hitler officially absorbed Kurt von Schuschnigg's Austro-Fascist state into the Third Reich on 13 March 1938. Comprehensive concentration camp histories have successfully traced the system's transformations over time, giving rise to a chronological periodization into three or more phases.[10] A number of logistical problems are connected to these frameworks. Placing the sites of extermination and forced labour within the context of the Third Reich's greater purpose for them has been managed

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[8] Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 626.

[9] Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, p. 345.

[10] The division of the KZ system into three phases, emerging chiefly from research in the 1980s, remained the dominant framework for some time: 1933—1936; 1936/7—1942; 1943—1945. For a brief discussion on a variety of new frameworks, see Karin Orth, *Das System der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Eine politische Organisationsgeschichte* (Hamburg, 1999), p. 21. For a more comprehensive overview, see Wachsmann, 'The dynamics of destruction': 17—43.

more over time and less over space.[11] That policy directives were implemented to varying degrees at different sites adds another layer of complexity to the problem. The classification craze furthermore runs the risk of glossing over continuities by overstating breaks: developments were inherently accumulative; new KZ functions, policies, and models materialised without an absolute abandonment of what had come before.[12] If we set aside the final year of the Third Reich's demise, consensus appears to be that the final phase of camp policy emerged somewhere between 1941 and 1943, with extermination and economic viability becoming the cornerstone of the wartime camps. A focus on the origins of later camps has quite naturally followed this line of reasoning. As a product of economic considerations, Austria's first concentration camp mirrors this logic well; it would eventually herald in the new phase.[13]

In March 1938, Mauthausen was still five months away from construction. The *Obergruppenführer* duo Oswald Pohl and Theodor Eicke—along with an experienced group of SS men—went on a fact-finding mission that spring to decide on sites for new camp projects. Between the Upper Palatinate region of Bavaria and Upper Austria's Mühlviertel, they identified two quarries that would become the focus of forced labour

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[11] Faced with the impossible task of including all of the known sites, researchers focus more on some camps than others. Given this unavoidable bias, consensus on phases has not been, and arguably cannot, be achieved. As context has it, slight variations and overlaps in policy were heavily dependent on geopolitical circumstance. Any attempt at a framework in phases ought to at least account for a degree of regional variations.

[12] Falk Pingel, 'Konzeption und Praxis der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager 1933 bis 1938', in Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann (eds.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur: Band I* (Frankfurt, 2002): 162.

[13] For an overview on the changing nature of forced labour between 1933 and 1939, see Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, pp. 12—14; Wachsmann, *KL*, pp. 158—160.

shortly after concluding their expedition: Flossenbürg and Mauthausen.[14] These were also the product of the new expansionist phase, which acted as a formative period for the key architects of later subcamps. Work on Flossenbürg began almost immediately.[15] On 8 August 1938, Mauthausen followed suit. Founded twenty kilometres east of the Upper Austrian capital of Linz, Mauthausen's granite quarries in the surrounding areas, such as the notorious Wiener Graben, acted as the basis of its forced labour programme.[16] Despite the sheer speed at which vision became construction, minor disagreements among the leadership—which in itself was subject to power struggles—meant that policy within any given phase could seesaw considerably. Camps were not immune to transformations, and Mauthausen itself went through four decisive changes in the course of its existence.[17]

In early 1942, Pohl signalled to *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler that concentration camp policy needed to catch up with changing fortunes and wartime realities. Despite his slavish devotion to the *Reichsführer*, as head of the SS *Wirtschafts-*

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[14] Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 163.

[15] Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 29.

[16] Schmidt and Loehrer, *The Mauthausen Concentration Camp Complex*, pp. 1—4.

[17] Hans Maršálek identified the following four phases: 1) The construction period, influenced by Hitler, Himmler, Speer, and Eicke (8 August 1938—late summer of 1939); 2) beginning with the classification of Mauthausen as a Category III camp, marked by a relentless increase in production at the stone quarries as well as the determined extermination of a significant portion of inmates, and influenced by Himmler, Heydrich and Pohl (January 1941—June 1943); 3) conditioned by an expansion of war-related industries and a relocating of armaments production into underground facilities, marked by a remorseless, large-scale application of forced labour in the private and public production of 'siegentscheidende Waffen' (weapons to alter the course of the war), and influenced by Speer and *Gauleiter* August Eigruber; 4) essentially a continuation of the third phase, additionally marked by increasing chaos and mass deaths, for which the camp SS and *Gauleiter* were responsible. See Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 26.

Verwaltungshauptamt ('Economics and Administration Head Office', WVHA) Pohl called for the camps' gradual evolution from 'their former uniquely political form to an organization that can meet the economic challenges'.[18] Pohl's letter also included orders to the commandants. Illustrative of his 'utilitarian' quest, one instruction was to adjust working hours to demand. Responding a month later, Himmler was quick to point out that there would be no changes to reviewing prison terms or in the re-education of those who could be re-educated: 'Otherwise one might get the idea that we arrest people … to recruit workers'.[19]

As things went, however, Pohl's vision had rapidly warped into reality at Mauthausen. As the only designated Category III camp, commanded by Franz Ziereis from early 1939 onwards, Mauthausen's personnel oversaw and pursued a course of systematic extermination of inmates through a combination of physical exertion, brutality, and murder. The classification guaranteed the most severe conditions and thus designed to exterminate enemies of the Reich; the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Head Office), commanded by Reinhard Heydrich, intended this mainly for the incarceration of individuals whom they deemed to be the most serious offenders without potential for reform.[20] 'Mauthausen and its numerous secondary camps such as

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[18] Oswald Pohl to Heinrich Himmler, correspondence, 30 April 1942, in StAN, R-129, cited in Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, p. 18.

[19] Heinrich Himmler to Oswald Pohl, correspondence, 29 May 1942, in StAN, NO-719, cited in ibid., p. 18.

[20] The SS order is quoted in Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 35: '[Lagerstufe III ist] für schwerbelastete, unverbesserliche und auch gleichzeitig kriminell vorbestrafte und asoziale, das heißt, kaum noch erziehbare Schutzhäftlinge [und bestimmt für] Mauthausen'.

Gusen, Steyr, Wiener Neustadt, Lungitz [Gusen III], Ebensee, Loibl Pass, etc., were the only concentration camps falling under "Category 3"', a former French inmate explained upon the liberation. In his words, this signified that 'the interior organization was in the hands of bandits of the German common law [inmate functionaries],[21] professional murderers, having as their chief mission the extermination of the prisoners of other nations with the least possible delay'.[22] Having this comparatively unique dual purpose of annihilation through physical work, the main camp became so notorious that relatives of inmates sending letters frequently addressed these to 'Mordhausen' ('Murder Village').[23] Liquidating the prisoner population and receiving a constant flow of new replacements was soon considered to be a part of the SS 'assembly line' efficiency.[24]

Pohl readily ordered his commandants not to shy away from taking drastic measures. At one point, he allegedly issued an order to reduce inmate rations from a

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[21] The Mauthausen complex functioned on a self-administrative basis of institutionalised discipline through prisoner hierarchies. Most functionaries tended to be Germans or Austrians with criminal records, whose offences ranged from petty theft to outright murder. A readiness to use violence against other inmates often led to promotions within the system. While camp elders held the highest inmate rank and were responsible for overall discipline, block elders oversaw the inmates in their respective barracks. At forced labour camps, most Kapos acted as the superiors among the prisoners in work squads. Sharing an interest in cruel and unusual punishments, Kapos and SS work detail leaders banded together to spread a culture of fear. Beyond ensuring that inmates met their work quotas, they collaborated in everything ranging from ill-treatment to premeditated murder.

[22] Lucien Vanherle, sworn statement, Mauthausen, 9 May 1945, trans. Benjamin B. Ferencz (JA Sec, Third US Army), Cohen Report, pp. 91—94, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 27, p. 1. Also see Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 54—57.

[23] See Edmund R. Stantke, Mordhausen: Bericht eines Augenzeugen über Mauthausen, das berüchtigte Konzentrationslager (Munich, 1946).

[24] WCI Team 6836 to Judge Advocate HQ USFA, 'Subject: "DAWES" and MAUTHAUSEN cases', investigation report, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 1, p. 2.

daily 750 to a weekly 350 grams. Ziereis claimed that Pohl had tasked him with chasing sick prisoners—who were already denied food—into the surrounding forests, leaving them to fend for themselves. Recalling another incident occurring in December 1943, Ziereis purported that Pohl had ordered a convoy of six thousand women and children to Mauthausen. The children were immediately separated and sent on to KZ Bergen-Belsen. As Ziereis concluded, 'I suppose they all died a dreadful death. I had a nervous break-down in consequence'.[25] Oswald Pohl apparently also knew how to fill his own pockets: his entrepreneurial touch may have made him the sole beneficiary of the Mauthausen brothel,[26] where 'every man had to pay 2 RM, the woman got 50 Pfgs, and the HQ of the Concentration Camps in Oranienburg, Berlin got 1.50 RM … [and Ziereis believed that] Pohl got the money'.[27] Far from merely espousing the sentiments of an economic determinist, Pohl proved time and time again that he still nurtured the principles of National Socialism to boot. Mauthausen was arguably the first camp that embodied his two ideals like none other, but it merely marked the beginning of this type

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[25] Franz Ziereis, dying confession, 24 May 1945, in United Nations War Crimes Commission (Research Office), Documents Series No. 21, February 1946, War Crimes Case Files (*Cases Tried*), NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 3.

[26] The Mauthausen brothel was the first and longest lasting one in the KZ empire. Four months after Kaltenbrunner and Pohl's visit to Mauthausen and Gusen on 31 March 1941, Himmler ordered that a brothel be constructed in Barrack 1 at Mauthausen (possibly within the background of discussions regarding insufficient work productivity). In June 1942 the SS at KZ Ravensbrück selected ten women. Privileged inmates required a special brothel card to be granted access; the SS was strictly prohibited from visiting the brothel, which was dissolved in early 1945. Gusen also had a brothel. See Robert Sommer, *Das KZ-Bordell: Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Paderborn, 2009), pp. 111—118. Also see Christa Paul, *Zwangsprostitution: Staatlich errichtete Bordelle im Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1994); Baris Alakus, Katharina Kniefacz, and Robert Vorberg (eds.), *Sex-Zwangsarbeit in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Vienna, 2006); Nicole Bogue, 'The concentration camp brothels in memory', *Holocaust Studies* 22/2—3 (2016): 208—227.

[27] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5.

of camp. In 1941, honing the commandants' methods in the act of killing still very much remained a priority. As Ziereis recalled after the war:

> In the year 1941 all the commanders of all the German concentration camps were ordered to Sachsenhausen, Berlin, where we were shown how the Politrucks and Russian Commissars were liquidated by the most rapid methods. The Russians were collected in one part of the ward and conducted through a dark gangway to an execution cell, while a radio was played loudly. On the other side of the cell there was a hole in the wall with a mobile rest for a gun. By the time that all the politrucks or commissars had been shot, all the SS-Führers of Glueck's staff were drunk …. The bodies of the dead Russians were thrown outside by the SS-Oberscharführer with amazing brutality.[28]

The eventual shift from a Blitzkrieg focus to waging a long-term war catalysed significant changes in Third Reich concentration camp approaches and administration. Within this background, a system of forced labour subcamps emerged to support the war effort. The expansion of the concentration camp network marked a key turning point. Taking on a central administrative role, Mauthausen gave rise to a network of subcamps that materialised mostly after 1941.[29] The decentralisation of forced labour intensified when sheltering the war economy's key industries from aerial attacks became a growing necessity, prompting a widespread 'withdrawal to the tunnels'. To avoid Allied bombing raids, labour began to mobilise around the construction of large underground facilities and sites in remote, countryside locations from the summer of

[28] Ibid., p. 7.

[29] For an overview of the various Mauthausen subcamps (including dates of inception and closure), see Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 75—85.

1943 onwards.[30] By the end of the Second World War, Mauthausen had ballooned into a network of close to fifty subcamps. In its final stages, this complex was among the German Reich's largest camp systems on the continent.[31]

This was also the context in which KZ Ebensee arose, where inmates began excavating tunnels for housing underground armaments facilities at the end of 1943.[32] Between November 1943 and 6 May 1945 some two-dozen nations were represented at Ebensee. In employing an estimated 27,766 forced labourers, Ebensee was one of the biggest camps in the complex.[33] Within the background of an average life expectancy of 6.7 months after the arrival of an inmate from Mauthausen, up to 8200 prisoners died on site.[34] Yet many more of the inmates whom the SS deemed too weak to work were

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[30] The aerial attacks on Peenemünde between 17 and 18 August 1943 cemented the decision to decentralise production. The first inmates arrived at Dora-Mittelbau less than a fortnight after the bombings. Ebensee emerged three months later as the second significant underground facility. See Florian Freund and Bertrand Perz, *Konzentrationslager in Oberösterreich 1938 bis 1945* (Linz, 2007), pp. 151—159.

[31] Michael J. Neufeld, *The Rocket and the Reich: Peenemünde and the Coming of the Ballistic Missile Era* (New York, 1995); Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (London, 2008), p. 368; Volkhard Bode and Gerhard Kaiser, *Building Hitler's Missiles*: *Traces of History in Peenemünde* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 65—79; Bertrand Perz, *Projekt Quarz: Steyr-Daimler-Puch und das Konzentrationslager Melk* (Vienna, 1991), pp. 135—146.

[32] Redl-Zipf and Wiener Neustadt also emerged as Mauthausen outposts for the production of rockets. See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 23—51; Florian Freund and Bertrand Perz, *Das KZ in der "Serbenhalle": Zur Kriegsindustrie in Wiener Neustadt* (Vienna, 1988); Florian Freund, 'Redl Zipf ("Schlier")', in Benz and Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors: Band 4*: 416—420; Florian Freund, 'Die Entscheidung zum Einsatz von KZ-Häftlingen in der Raketenrüstung', in Hermann Kaienburg (ed.), *Konzentrationslager und deutsche Wirtschaft 1939—1945* (Opladen, 1996): 61—74.

[33] Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, p. 337. Some 3809 of them were transferred to other camps; around 1813 to the 'sanitary camp' at Mauthausen.

[34] Jews had the lowest life expectancy (4.1 months) and political inmates the highest (8.1 months). Ibid., p. 357. Of the 911 Soviet POWs who were subjected to forced labour at Ebensee 319 died (pp. 387—388). Soviet civil workers were the largest group of foreign workers subjected to slave labour in the Third Reich. At Ebensee, 775 of the 3024 civil workers died (p. 392).

transported back to Mauthausen, where most of them were exterminated.[35] At least 651 died from malnutrition, typhus, and other conditions shortly after the camp's liberation by the American troops, with 81 more dying by early 1946.[36]

If we follow the existing literature on the Loiblpass, one has the impression that it also fits squarely into the economically motivated subcamp model or the established scholarly periodisation framework. While Ebensee was indeed an externally motivated development closer to Pohl's economic considerations than Himmler's political outlook, the origins of the Loiblpass bear the mark of another type. The location's historical background holds the key to understanding the origins of the Loiblpass subcamp. While academic work on the Loiblpass has not recognised the project's symbolic nature, upon delving into the local context it becomes clear that this camp appeared to be a product of region-specific considerations at the hand of an ambitious, native ideologue:

> You are here as the chosen representatives of the entire Upper Carniolan population, whom I speak to as the *Führer's* appointed *Gauleiter* and *Reichsstatthalter*, whose assignment is to ensure that this land finds its way back home into the *Großdeutsche Reich*, to which it belonged throughout thousands of years …. Carinthia always had blooming trade relations with

[35] Ralph Gabriel, Elissa M. Koslov, Monika Neuhofer, and Else Rieger (eds.), 'Einleitung', in *Lagersystem und Repräsentation: Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Geschichte der Konzentrationslager* (Tübingen, 2004): 7. The authors cite a slightly higher figure of 8800.

[36] For these estimations, see Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, pp. 71—72. Initially, Freund estimated that 7112 had died. See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 329. In his more recent work, Freund managed to identify 7626 deceased inmates by name (pp. 75—335).

> Upper Carniola.[37] The Loibl acted as the most important trade route; three times the building of the road tunnel has already been attempted, this time around it will be realised, because the *Führer* has granted my request for the construction of the Loibl road tunnel.[38]

Speaking at a mass rally in Ljubljana on 27 September 1942, Friedrich Rainer proved his exceptional ability for ideological manoeuvrability. Selected by the *Führer* to act as Carinthia's highest-ranking National Socialist,[39] Rainer was proclaiming a key turning point in his policy towards Slovene-speaking communities on both sides of the Karawanks mountain range.[40] A series of unsuccessful strategies prompted him to

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[37] Oberkrain in German; the Slovenian region of Gorenjska. Carniola, originally a medieval duchy, was the territory of today's northern Slovenia. For a detailed glossary, see Maurice Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich: Friedrich Rainer and the Paradox of Austrian National Socialism* (Klagenfurt, 2005), pp. 298—299. On the occupation of Slovene territories, including Germanisation goals and tactics, see Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941—1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford, 2001), pp. 83—129.

[38] Friedrich Rainer, speech at a mass rally ('Großkundgebung'), 'Rede und Proklamation des Gauleiters und Reichsstatthalters Dr. Friedrich Rainer', Ljubljana, 27 September 1942, Document originally made available by Janko Tišler in 1995, contained in Peter Gstettner Private Archive Collection, File No. 1. Original quote: 'Ihr seid hier als die berufenen Vertreter der ganzen oberkrainerischen Bevölkerung, zu denen ich spreche als der vom Führer berufene Gauleiter und Reichsstatthalter, der in seinem Auftrage dafür zu sorgen hat, daß dieses Land wieder heimfindet in das Großdeutsche Reich, zu dem es durch tausend Jahre gehört hat …. Mit Kärnten stand Oberkrain immer in blühenden Handelsbeziehungen. Der Loibl war die wichtigste Handelsstraße; dreimal sollte der Straßentunnel schon gebaut werden, diesmal wird es dazu kommen, denn der Führer hat über meine Bitte eine Erbauung des Loibler Straßentunnels bewilligt'.

[39] For brief biographical accounts of Carinthia's twenty most influential National Socialists, see Alfred Elste, *Kärntens braune Elite* (Klagenfurt, 1997), and most notably Friedrich Rainer (pp. 125—139) and Odilo Globocnik (pp. 179—199). Globocnik, whose family was originally from Tržič, grew up in Klagenfurt and fought as a *Abwehrkämpfer* between 1918 and 1920. He headed *Aktion Reinhard* and oversaw the extermination of around two million people, predominantly Polish Jews, at the death camps of Bełżec, Sobibór, and Treblinka. See Michael T. Allen, *The Business of Genocide: The SS, Slave Labor, and the Concentration Camps* (Chapel Hill, 2002), pp. 133—140; Johannes Sachslehner, *Zwei Millionen ham'ma erledigt: Odilo Globocnik – Hitlers Manager des Todes* (Vienna, 2014).

[40] Rainer was a Carinthian Nazi from the beginning: he joined the NSDAP in 1930, temporarily became its Austrian head in 1936 (during the period of illegality), acted as Salzburg's *Gauleiter* from May 1938, and became Salzburg's *Reichsstatthalter* two years later. In November 1941, Rainer became *Gauleiter* and *Reichsstatthalter* of Carinthia and Carniola, and Supreme Commissioner of the Adriatic Coastland in September 1943, remaining thus until his resignation on 7 May 1945. For a detailed chronology, see Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich*, pp. 296—297.

espouse a more universal form of nationalism from the autumn of 1942 onwards.[41] Past efforts to Germanise the region through forceful expulsions, for instance, had proven counterproductive. [42] They had contributed significantly to bolstering partisan resistance.[43]

Rainer now sought to enthuse ambivalent, politically apathetic Upper Carniolans and Slovene-speaking Carinthians (especially those who referred to themselves as 'Windisch')[44] by means of inclusive tactics. In opting for a less brutal course, historical legitimisation became his weapon of choice. As a man of considerable

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[41] On the historical significance of Rainer's speech, see Maurice Williams, *Gau, Volk und Reich: Friedrich Rainer und der österreichische Nationalsozialismus: Eine politische Biographie nach Selbstzeugnissen* (Klagenfurt, 2005), p. 153.

[42] Based on comprehensive lists that had been fashioned with the help of local leaders (mayors, *Ortsbauernführer*, *Ortsgruppenleiter*), forceful expulsions were initiated in the early hours of 14 April 1942. The plan, codenamed 'K-Aktion', had been carefully planned by the NS authorities. Within merely two days 220 families and a total of 1075 people were deported, half of them children and teenagers. According to the most recent calculation, some 564 Carinthian Slovenes were murdered by the Nazis. See Brigitte Entner, *Wer war Klara aus Šentlipš/St. Philippen?: Kärntner Slowenen und Sloweninnen als Opfer der NS-Verfolgung: Ein Gedenkbuch* (Klagenfurt, 2014), pp. 23, 27. The book provides biographical details of several hundred victims.

[43] From November 1941 Rainer commanded Upper Carniola, which had been annexed after its forceful invasion by the Axis powers in April of that year. Armed Slovene resistance began mobilising within a matter of weeks. On 21 June 1943 Heinrich Himmler designated Oberkrain as a 'Bandenkampfgebiet'. See Peter Pirker, *Subversion deutscher Herrschaft: Der britische Geheimdienst SOE und Österreich* (Vienna, 2012), pp. 273—275.

[44] The 'Windische' conception, as Maurice Williams writes, became a useful tool in Rainer's Germanisation push: 'The Germans of this region had concocted a theory that Carinthia, Carniola, and Styria were settled by three groups, not two: Germans, Slovenes, and the *Windisch*. The Germans and Slovenes were nationalistic, but the *Windisch*, although using the Slovene language, were linked historically to the Germans in culture, tradition, and sentiment. They might not speak German, but they could show their willingness to assimilate by calling themselves *Windisch*. By Rainer's time the theory had developed a further use for many in the region. *Windisch* had also come to mean good-willing, patriotic, and loyal to Carinthia, whereas Slovene corresponded with dissident, treacherous, hostile, and striving for political union with Yugoslavia. For Rainer and others this tool proved invaluable. They rationalized that those who claimed a *Windisch* heritage needed only encouragement to show their true German (and Carinthian) allegiance'. See Maurice Williams, 'Another Final Solution: Friedrich Rainer, Carinthian Slovenes, and the Carinthian Question', *Slovene Studies Journal* 19/1 (2002): 44—45.

intellect, Rainer knew that regional tensions in identity had long been a bone of contention for the Austrian ruling elite. During and beyond the Habsburg era, the elites' attempts to homogenise the area had not yielded the desired results, despite having more readily embraced cultural assimilation than the National Socialists from 1938 onwards.[45] Rainer nevertheless saw that a comprehensive Germanisation of a heterogeneous region could be better achieved through a selective mobilisation of memory geared towards integration.[46] The logic behind constructing a tunnel at the Loibl appeared to stem from this very consideration. Through his appeal to the loyalties of the local communities in the region, therefore, Rainer was seeking to stem the rising tide of Slovene-speaking Carinthians joining the partisan resistance.[47]

As the site's physically hostile terrain and exceptionally remote location rendered it an expensive development, the subcamp's raison d'être was less directly linked to economic considerations than many of its counterparts emerging at the time. Divorced from its pre-NS history, the Loiblpass tunnel's ideological value is easily overlooked, particularly if one merely considers the obvious cost to benefit deficit that its completion entailed. The region-specific historical context within which it was conceived and publicised appears to reveal the chief rationale behind its eventual

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[45] Knowing from his studies that Upper Carniola had always been detached from a German identity, Rainer had in April 1941 been surprised to receive Hitler's order 'to make Upper Carniola German again'. See Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich*, p. 256.

[46] On Rainer's realisation that the forceful expulsions throughout April 1942 had been a tactical error, see Williams, *Gau, Volk und Reich*, p. 151.

[47] See 'Local Wartime Perspectives on the Loiblpass' chapter for the impact that partisan activities had on the Loibl Valley in particular.

materialisation. Rainer's idea for Southern Carinthia made the tunnel a symbolically important mission, not least because it had been envisaged and abandoned on a number of occasions since the seventeenth century. Yet it had never been entirely discarded; rather the Loibl had come in and out of isolation for centuries.

As early as 145 AD the Loiblpass was considered strategically important. In Roman days it had already been used as a mule trail connecting the city of Emona with Virunum.[48] When Trieste was absorbed into the Habsburg domains in 1382 and became a free port, traffic over the mountain pass increased considerably.[49] In the early sixteenth century, the management of the road became the preserve of the Estates (*Landstände*), composed of high clergy and nobility, as well as representatives of the cities. During their Carinthian *Landtag* meetings, the Estates crafted plans to expand and improve the mule trail over the pass and on to Ljubljana, ambitions that were never fully realised. In 1560, with twenty thousand guilders at their disposal—nine thousand from the provinces of Carniola and Carinthia each, and two thousand from the

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[48] Emona was located in today's Ljubljana, and Virunum in today's Zollfeld, a few kilometres north of Klagenfurt. Virunum became the capital of Carinthia under Roman rule. The province had once been a thriving centre of Celto-Roman civilisation. For a brief overview of Carinthia between prehistoric times and the Middle Ages, see Thomas M. Barker, *The Slovenes of Carinthia: A National Minority Problem* (New York, 1960), pp. 10—39. Barker's study, based on his PhD at the University of Minnesota, presented the first attempt at a non-polemic account on Carinthian Slovene history. As the author contended in late 1959, 'The subject has not been handled before in a genuinely impartial historical sense. Practically every writer has propagated a certain cause: Carinthian "unity" or provincialism, Pan-Germanism, South Slavism, Clerical Fascism, Austro-Marxism, National Socialism, Soviet Communism, "Titoism" and Austrianism in both the imperial and republican senses' (p. ix).

[49] Earlier plans by Duke Bernhard of Carinthia to make the road over the Loiblpass the main trade route between Klagenfurt and Trieste during the thirteenth century had nevertheless failed. This fate befell the Loiblpass time and time again: 'Die spätere Landeshauptstadt hatte im 14. Jahrhundert versucht, den Weg über den Loiblpaß zu beleben, war aber am landesfürstlichen Veto gescheitert. Man wollte die Straße über den Seeberg nach Krain mit der landesfürstlichen Maut nicht konkurrenzieren'. See Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens: Band 1: Das Mittelalter* (Klagenfurt, 1984), pp. 253, 323, 666.

Carinthian Duke—six residents from Klagenfurt laboured for twenty years, using locally mined iron rods as drilling tools and crowbars.[50] The road nevertheless remained too narrow for the safe passage of carriages.[51] In 1728, a second series of improvements were made, with completion coming just in time for Kaiser Karl VI's arrival on 25 August of that year. The Kaiser wished to see the road for himself. As the ascent took over a day, he stayed the night with the only German-speaking family in the Loibl Valley. Henceforth this farmhouse was known as Deutscher Peter ('German Peter').

Yet the modern marvels of railway expansion rendered the Loibl Valley route increasingly obsolete and desolate. And the Kaiser's visit did little to alleviate poverty in the area. The combined effects of the local lead mines being shut down in 1898 and dwindling economic fortunes—such as heavily indebted farms—gradually drove whole families out of the Loibl Valley. In 1811, there were forty-six houses and a total of 495 residents; by 1935, only 193 inhabitants remained. A year after Germany's annexation of Austria, mining activities in Windisch-Bleiberg were taken up again for the first time since 1898. Running out of iron ore soon after, however, they again lay dormant by 1943.[52] Education remained equally limited. Regardless of age, all pupils had since 1924 been taught by a single teacher in St. Leonhardt in the Loibl Valley. The languages of instruction were German and Slovene.

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[50] The road over the Loibl might have been completed in 1575, and thus five years earlier. See Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens: Band 2*, p. 860.

[51] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Bestand des Postens', AdPiF, p. 12.

[52] Ibid. p. 13.

In the sixteenth century, a small tunnel had also been dug at the level of the Loibl, a mere 150 'strides' in length. The border between Carniola and Carinthia was drawn in the middle of the tunnel. While this project bore no resemblance to the later Loiblpass tunnel created by contract workers and concentration camp inmates between 1943 and 1945, a plan for a far more ambitious tunnelling project that would in all likelihood have rendered the National Socialist endeavour superfluous was in the works by 1678. The natural historian Johann Weichard von Valvasor from the Duchy of Carniola (later Ljubljana) envisioned a tunnel between the base of the Loibl near the church of St. Leonhardt and all the way to the church of St. Anna in Carniola, located slightly above the initial Loibl South *Waffen-SS* and civilian labour camp from early 1943. With the arrival of the plague in 1680, however, the costly and monumental undertaking was abandoned.[53] With traffic plummeting once again, the only means of preserving the Loibl road was by installing a road toll at the Sapotnitza. These funds were used to make both the road broader in 1728 and replace the Loibl tunnel with the Devil's Bridge (Teufelsbrücke) in advance of the Kaiser's visit.[54] Beyond merely hindering the construction of a substantial tunnel, poverty and conflict had a lasting effect on the local community's psyche.

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[53] On various plans to build a tunnel prior to the twentieth century, also see Adamik, *Der Loibl von der Römerzeit bis heute*, p. 27.

[54] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Bestand des Postens', AdPiF, pp. 12—13; Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens: Band 2*, wherein the author writes, 'Die Verbindungen über den Loibl- und den Wurzenpaß erlebten erst durch ihren Ausbau zu Hauptkommerzialstraßen im 18. Jahrhundert eine Aufwertung' (pp. 682—683).

The twin forced labour camp's ideological value would remain incomprehensible without a further consideration of the Loibl Valley's misfortunes and its inhabitants' prevailing ambivalence in identity.[55] For centuries, contagion, disease, conflict, murder, and economic downturn featured prominently in the lives of those living in the Loibl Valley and Rosental, located in the northern basin of the Karawanks. When postwar gendarmerie (Austrian federal police) records[56] made a note of the plague that had swept over the Loibl communities in 1680, they did so in an attempt to explain (away) those corpses that were being discovered periodically after WWII: 'People died of the plague in Bleiberg and Wrodeh (Loibl Valley). They were buried in different places without a tombstone, and for this reason their names cannot be noted. I take it that this is of importance to the gendarmerie records, since skeletons are often found, for which there is no explanation'.[57] Whereas steep and unforgiving treks in the Karawanks mountain range that many hikers fell victim to would probably have accounted for far more findings of unidentified skeletons, the Loiblpass area had been a site of fierce territorial clashes as far back as the Roman times.

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[55] Not to be confused with the broader concept of Austrian nationhood ambivalence. See Friedrich Heer, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität* (Vienna, 1981).

[56] The Windisch-Bleiberg gendarmerie station was established on 4 November 1920. Upon completion of its permanent headquarters, it was thenceforth located at the Sapotnitca on the Little Loiblpass. The station was tasked with seeing to the security of the entire municipality of Windisch-Bleiberg, spanning an area of 4816 hectares and embracing the communities of Windisch-Bleiberg, the Boden Valley (west of Loibl Valley), and the Loibl Valley (including the Karawanks border region at the Loiblpass).

[57] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Konzept', AdPiF. Original quote: 'In Bleiberg et Wrodeh in peste mortui et in diversis locis sepulti s x [sic] sine sepultura quare scripti non sunt. Übersetzung: In Bleiberg und Wrodeh (Loibltal) sind die Leute an Pest verstorben, sie wurden an verschiedenen Stellen, ohne Grabstein bestattet und aus diesem Grunde können sie nicht namentlich angeführt werden. Ich nehme an, daß dies für die Gend.-Chronik von Wichtigkeit ist. Es werden oft durch einen reinen Zufall Skelette gefunden – für die man keine Erklärung finden kann'.

Ideological bias notwithstanding, municipal police records provide rare insights. In regards to the Loibl Valley community, no source base seems to better capture the deep identity fault lines along the Karawanks. When the record states that the majority of its residents are essentially Slovene—which in itself is difficult to assert, as its people refer to themselves as 'Windisch' Carinthians—the word choice of 'Slowener' reveals an overtly derogatory stance. The chronicler also refers to the Carinthian inhabitants as 'Germans'.[58] With Yugoslav territorial claims to Southern Carinthia in mind, the finished Windisch-Bleiberg gendarmerie script of the Loibl Valley's long history came riddled with telling representations. In a concept draft, for instance, the chronicler indicated that particular importance should be placed on the Karawanks' long history as a natural border:

> It is interesting to know that to this day the Karawanks—and ever since there has been mention of historical life in our area—inherently stood as a natural and human boundary. The geographer of antiquity Claudius Ptolemäus mentioned the Karawanks in 150 A.D. as an already long established border between the Roman provinces Noricum to the north and

[58] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Bestand des Postens', AdPiF. Original quote: 'Der Ueberwachungsrayon ist mit Slowenern bewohnt, woran nur einige wenige eine Ausnahme bilden. Seit Erteilung des deutschen Unterrichtes in den Volksschulen haben sich die Verhàltnisse insoweit gebessert, dass sich ein Deutscher in seiner Sprache mit der hiesigen Bevòlkerung verstàndigen kann, wozu das frùher bestandene Heer mehr als die Schule beitrug, was daraus ersichtlich ist, dass die weibliche Bevòlkerung trotz des gleichen Schulunterrichtes mit Ausnahme weniger der deutschen Sprache màchtig ist'.

> Pannonia south of them—to which in those days the Ljubljana Basin belonged.[59]

Throughout its history, the Karawanks had consistently represented a physical and artificial border to the communities living north of the wall, repeatedly making it a first point of entry for foreign invaders from the south. The first prominent attacks came from the Turks. At the Sapotnitza, around four kilometres below the Loibl Valley, the imperial caretaker of the Hollenburg built a fortification with the help of local farmers to fend off a Turkish attack in 1476.[60] On 1 August 1578, a renewed Turkish attack prompted the governor of Carinthia Baron Georg von Khevenhüller to lead three hundred riders over the Loibl to protect the border. The French too tried their hand at taking the valley by force, to little avail. In April 1797 around forty French riders made their way over the Loiblpass. They first went about breaking into the tabernacle in St. Leonhard, spilled the Holy Hosts, and stole the ciborium and the silver vessels intended for the holy oils. Additionally, the curator Andreas Wulrich was forced to hand over thirteen guilders and his silver pocket watch. A more serious French invasion attempt came in 1831. Commander Eugène Rose de Beauharnais ordered General Belott to take

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[59] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Konzept', concept draft note on an entry from the Windisch-Bleiberg parish registry from January 1681, in 'Postenchronik GP Ferlach und GP Windisch-Bleiberg', municipal police records, AdPiF. Original quote: 'Wenn möglich, diesen Absatz gleich zu Beginn der Chronik – worin es heißt, daß zu Römerzeiten bereits ein Saumweg über den Loibl führte – einflechten. Es ist interessant zu wissen, daß die Karawanken, seit in unserem Gebiet vom geschichtlichen Leben überhaupt die Rede ist, bis zur Gegenwart die Bedeutung einer wichtigen Grenze natürlicher und menschlicher Begebenheiten, innehatten. Der Geograph des Altertums Ptolemäus Claudius erwähnte die Karawanken 150 n.Chr. als längst schon festgelegte Grenze zwischen den römischen Provinzen Norikum nördlich und Pannonien südlich davon, zu dem damals das Laibacher Becken gehörte'.

[60] On various Turkish invasion attempts in Carinthia during the mid-fifteenth century, see Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens: Band 1*, pp. 594—602.

the Loibl by force with 1500 men. A mere ninety-two men under the command of Captain Moll are said to have repelled the invasion on 27 August 1831.[61]

The *Kärntner Abwehrkampf* ('Carinthian freedom struggle') of 1918/1920 manifested itself as a cornerstone of Carinthian patriotic memory.[62] The territorial war saw pan-German, Social Democrat, and Christian Socialist adherents unite in opposition to the South Slavs of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (SHS) between 1918 and 1920.[63] On 18 June 1918 the Slovene Captain Lavrinc from Japlas marched over the Sapotnitza and on to Ferlach with fifty men. Under the command of First Lieutenant Hans Huß, a company of the emerging *Volkswehr* were ordered to the Loibl Valley, but they were soon ordered to retreat before they could engage.[64]

In November 1918, Yugoslav troops again marched over the Loiblpass in an alleged bid to protect the Slovene-speaking minority. Most of the soldiers and officers

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[61] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Geschichtliches vom Loibltal, Windisch Bleiberg und Loiblstrasse', in 'Postenchronik GP Ferlach und GP Windisch-Bleiberg', municipal police records, AdPiF.

[62] As the policy records portray the memory of the occupation: 'Während der Besetzung der Jugoslawen hat die deutschgesinnte Bevölkerung sehr gelitten. Diese wurde mit allen Mitteln bedroht und drangsaliert. Viele von den Heimattreuen wurden nach Laibach auf den Scholssberg gebracht und dort monatelang interniert gehalten. Während dieser Befreiungskämpfe fanden in diesem Gebiete, insbesonders im Loibltal bis zum Loiblpass, schwere Kämpfe statt, Manch braver und heimattreuer Kärntner musste dabei sein Leben lassen. Am 4. November 1920 erfolgte der Einmarsch der österreichischen Gendarmerie in Ferlach, nachdem die Jugoslawen durch den Volksentscheid die Abstimmungszone räumen mussten'. See Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Jugoslawische Besetzung', in 'Postenchronik GP Ferlach und GP Windisch-Bleiberg', municipal police records, AdPiF, p. 16.

[63] For a general overview of the Yugoslav occupation and *Abwehrkampf*, see Barker, *The Slovenes of Carinthia*, pp. 98—119.

[64] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Geschichtliches vom Loibltal, Windisch Bleiberg und Loiblstrasse', AdPiF.

made their way to Ferlach and on to Klagenfurt to occupy Southern Carinthia. On 7 January 1919, the Carinthian *Volkswehr* from the left embankment of the river Drau initiated an attack on their enemy lines, ultimately leading to a successful recapture of Ferlach. Negotiations between the two sides followed, with a preliminary demarcation line being agreed on. It was envisaged that the border would run along the Karawanks, St. Margarethen im Rosental, Freibach, and continue along down the river Drau. By this measure, a significant part of land would have gone to Yugoslavia.

The conflict raged on, and the agreement did not come to fruition. On the night of the 29 April 1919 a second major attack could be fended off with a counter-offensive, after which the Yugoslav troops retreated from Carinthia, only to return by 21 May and occupy Ferlach for a second time. As the chronicler put it, for a second time the 'Slowener' 'broke into' Ferlach and occupied it.[65] The fiercest clashes in the Rosental area occurred on 28 May 1919. Yugoslavian troops of the Fourth *Angriffsgruppe* ('attack group')—also referred to as the Loibl Valley Group—sought to break the lines of defence at the Sapotnitza to advance into Ferlach and towards Zollfeld. At the Sapotnitza, they clashed with the Sturmkompagnie from Ferlach, veterans of the Great War who had four machine guns at their disposal. Ferlach's status as a renowned

[65] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Jugoslawische Besetzung', AdPiF, p. 15.

hunting rifle manufacturing town meant that each MG could be manned with an expert shooter.[66] Vastly outnumbered, however, they could not hold their defences for long.[67]

After a period of occupation of Southern Carinthian territories, and following Austria's partially successful military campaign to drive the Slovenes out by force, the triumphant Americans helped negotiate a settlement by plebiscite on 10 October 1920.[68] Sherman Miles had been ordered to travel to Carinthia and decide upon a demarcation line.[69] After providing President Wilson with the Miles-Commission findings, it was reported that territories with high numbers of Carinthian Slovenes generally rejected the idea of being subjected to Slavic rule, and that the Alps acted as the 'natural' line of demarcation.[70] On 13 October 1920, British Colonel Capel Peck

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[66] On the origins of the hunting rifle production boom in Ferlach within the background of attempted invasions between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld, *Geschichte Kärntens: Band 2: Die Ständische Epoche* (Klagenfurt, 1994), pp. 421—423.

[67] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Geschichtliches vom Loibltal, Windisch Bleiberg und Loiblstrasse', AdPiF.

[68] In Carinthia, the *Abwehrkampf* and plebiscite continue to be enthusiastically celebrated every year on 10 October. The Carinthian consensus school of historiography has long acted as a united front, providing an ardent defence of the event's centrality and advocating its relevance to the modern Carinthian identity. The following excerpt is a part of a classic portrayal by the head of the Kärntner Landesarchiv (KLA): 'Der 10. Oktober ist in Kärnten kein bloßer Gegenstand akademischen Disputs, sondern ein konstitutives Element der "Kärntner Identität" und ein fixer Bestandteil der öffentlichen Festkultur'. See Wilhelm Wadl, 'Die Deutsch-Kärntner Historiographie', in Hellwig Valentin, Susanne Haiden, and Barbara Maier (eds.), *Die Kärntner Volksabstimmung 1920 und die Geschichtsforschung: Leistungen, Defizite, Perspektiven* (Klagenfurt, 2002): 172. This edited volume also contains a preface by the late Carinthian governor Jörg Haider, who describes the event as a 'Sternstunde' and 'bleibende Verpflichtung' (p. 15).

[69] See Claudia Kromer, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika und die Frage Kärnten 1918—1920* (Klagenfurt, 1996).

[70] In having advocated the ideological significance of the Loiblpass project during WWII, however, ironically Rainer contributed to destabilizing the longstanding notion of the Karawanks as a natural border. As Williams has argued, 'The German advance over the Karawanken and the building of the Loibl Tunnel had upset the Carinthian thesis that the mountains were the natural border'. See Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich*, p. 197.

announced that the plebiscite had resulted in favour of Austria,[71] with 59.14 per cent voting for 'Deutschösterreich' and 40.86 per cent for Yugoslavia. The outcome in the Loibl area was distinctively different, where seventy-one voted for Austria (20.5 per cent) and 276 (79.5 per cent) cast their vote in favour of joining Yugoslavia.[72] The memory of a continuous 'occupation' between May 1919 and October 1920 had left its mark.

The tunnelling project did not arise out of thin air, with its local historical context prior to 1943 being able to at least in part explain why it proved to be of interest to Rainer on an ideological and perhaps strategic level. While there was no mention of forced labour, the public announcement of this infrastructure project was rather uncharacteristic of a Nazi official. In contrast to the Ebensee subcamp that the SS shrouded in secrecy from the outset, however, the Loiblpass undertaking could never be of any great consequence to the war effort. Concealing the tunnelling project would have been unnecessary in the light of its geographic isolation and relative insignificance to military fortunes, two factors that also made it less prone to becoming a target of Allied aerial bombings.

Above all, it appeared that Rainer was hoping to garner local support. For all his mastery in manipulating and mobilising memory selectively, however, he could not so easily iron out the deeply engrained borderland mentality of the Loibl community,

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[71] Hellwig Valentin, *Der Sonderfall: Kärntner Zeitgeschichte 1918-2004/08* (Klagenfurt, 2009), pp. 22—34.

[72] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Geschichtliches vom Loibltal, Windisch Bleiberg und Loiblstrasse', AdPiF.

which differed significantly from that of the inhabitants actually living on the frontier. The Loibl Valley inhabitants were driven by existential fear of an economic and pragmatic nature. Remaining apolitical was in itself a mode of survival. Industry came and went, as did the partisans and the SS. Choosing sides, however reluctantly, was dictated more by pragmatism and economic gain.[73] Living historically could quickly turn perilous, while Carinthians living further afield could afford doing so without drawing in the wrath of the revanchists. This essential difference between those living on the frontier and those existing further away has been largely overlooked. In symbolically analogical terms, what Alsace-Lorraine was to French nationalists such as Maurice Barrès and Charles de Gaulle, the Karawanks were to Austrian pan-Germans such Khevenhüller and Jörg Haider.[74] Rainer's speech suggests that he was painfully aware of these differences, and between projection and reality. Opting for the former approach, he presumably hoped to achieve the latter. As this section has sought

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[73] In the spirit of full disclosure, an allusion to these grey zones on my part should not be confused with ideological bias. Hermann Hagspiel's brief portrayal of the partisan resistance in Carinthia makes a sound (and similar) argument: 'Zum Teil wurde sie [Freedom Front (OF)] in den gemischtsprachigen Gebieten Kärntens von der Bevölkerung versorgt. Den restlichen Bedarf waren die Kämpfer gezwungen, gewaltsam zu beschaffen, was es der Polizei leicht machte, sie zu Verbrechern zu stempeln. Mit Anlaufen der Säuberungsaktionen der SS und Wehrmacht im Karawankenbereich mußte die Bevölkerung noch vorsichtiger werden. Allein das Auftauchen von Partisanen im Dorf konnte selbst proslowenisch eingestellte Kärntner in eine schier ausweglose Situation bringen. Denn meldeten sie das Erscheinen der Gendarmerie, drohte ihnen Vergeltung durch die Partisanen, unterließen sie eine Meldung, wurden sie von der Gestapo als Komplizen der Partisanen verfolgt. Dabei galt das Prinzip der Sippenhaftung [clan liability]. Noch in den letzten Kriegstagen rotteten SS-Polizisten eine elfköpfige Familie aus, weil die für Sympathisanten der Partisanen gehalten wurde'. Hermann Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark: Österreich im Großdeutschen Reich 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna, 1995), pp. 307—308. Yet as I will argue at a later stage in the dissertation, locals generally did not report partisan visits and tended not to fear them any more or less than they did the SS.

[74] The late Carinthian governor Jörg Haider readily embraced the 1918/1920 myth of 'self-liberation', and had in 2005 even applied the concept to the territorial issue of May 1945 (thus effectively emulating Rainer's intentions of engineering a parallel connection). See Gstettner, 'Die Legende von der Selbstbefreiung Kärntens': 89.

to establish, one must follow the logic that is demanded. The origins of Ebensee would be incomprehensible without global policy considerations. The origins of the Loiblpass, on the other hand, have remained more obscure precisely because the policy approach alone has not and cannot shed light on its beginnings; the economic rationale was but a smokescreen on the surface of things.

I. THE PROCESS OF THE LIBERATION IN EBENSEE

A PARADOXICAL LIBERATION

When the Third US Army arrived at Ebensee in the early afternoon of 6 May, the extent of the horrific camp conditions gradually came to light. Troops came across an estimated thirteen to sixteen thousand famished inmates, around 2500 of whom were deemed hospital cases.[1] Whereas many of the prisoners had survived on daily rations averaging five hundred calories throughout their incarceration, the entire camp population had gone without food for three days prior to the Army's arrival.[2] According to two Greek inmates, the use of systematic starvation during SS rule had driven some into cannibalism at one point in late April 1945; prisoners had cut off pieces of flesh

[1] Commanding Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Macdonald to the Surgeon General, Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, 'Subject: Period Reports, Medical Department Activities', 7 June 1945, WWII Administrative Records, 1940—1949, NARA, RG 112, Box 409, Decimal 319.1.2, p. 3. Figures contained in reports vary considerably. The following report suggests that there were sixteen thousand inmates in total and 1834 sick patients, with 10,610 remaining on 6 June 1945. See 'Reports on Concentration Camps', 29 June 1945, General Records of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), NARA, RG 331, Box 50, File SHAEF/G-5/2711/7, p. 2.

[2] Ambassador Robert Murphy to The Secretary of State in Washington, 'Reports on Concentration Camps at Mauthausen, Ebensee, and Gusen in Austria', Frankfurt, 7 July 1945, in 'Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) Displaced Persons Report No. 34, Appendices A–C', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41, Appendix B, p. 1.

from two dead inmates.[3] In the same barrack the dying and dead were often 'disposed of' through the use of dogs,[4] which the SS had kept hungry for this purpose.[5]

The situation had become so dire in the final weeks of the Third Reich that prisoner physicians recorded daily deaths of up to 350, and it 'was related that one building had a quota of eighty deaths per night. When necessary, strangulation was used to fill the quota'. As the crematorium had reportedly no longer kept up with the 'back-log', approximately 1200 dead bodies were discovered on the premises.[6] The death toll would have been far higher if the SS had succeeded in carrying out the order to blow up Ebensee's inmates in the tunnels. As a former inmate recalled, 'Later on we learned that tons of TNT had been stored in the Tunnels and we also found a letter from Himmler in which he ordered his SS Camp Commander that not a single living prisoner was to fall into the hands of the Allies'.[7]

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[3] Whereas starving inmates at concentration camps rarely resorted to cannibalism, isolated cases were observed across a number of sites in the final weeks of the war. Nevertheless, instances of cannibalism among Soviet prisoners of war were relatively frequent in the building of Auschwitz-Birkenau from October 1941 onwards. See Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, pp. 295—296.

[4] For the role of dogs at camps, see Bertrand Perz, '" ... müssen zu reißenden Bestien erzogen werden": Der Einsatz von Hunden zur Bewachung in Konzentrationslagern', *Dachauer Hefte* 12 (1996): 139–158.

[5] Petsirilos Nissim and Lewis Jakob, joint sworn statement, Ebensee, 9 June 1945, in 'Report of Investigation of Alleged War Crime', 17 June 1945, War Crimes Case Files (*Cases Tried*), 1945-1959, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 188, p. 239.

[6] Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, NARA, RG 112, Box 409, pp. 3—4.

[7] Professor Erwin T. Jacob, in discussion with Burit Harel, [location and date unknown; interview published in the Israeli daily newspaper Maariv on 22 June 1990], trans. Ephraim Margolin, 'Interview of Professor Doctor Erwin T. Jacob', in Edward V. Migdalski Collections, USHMM, AN 1997.A.0212, p. 4.

Conversely, the death toll could have been far lower if the Allies had paid sufficient attention to the camps before their liberation.[8] Even when the opportunity to alleviate conditions presented itself towards the end of the war, the Allied blockade policy proved to be a serious obstacle. For fear of strengthening the German war effort, the Americans had ignored the pleas of relief organisations to increase food parcel rations that were sent to inmates in concentration camps across the Reich.[9] While hundreds of prisoners in Ebensee lived only long enough to witness the arrival of the Americans, many more died in the following weeks and months. Some of those who were fortunate enough to survive later recounted the torturous days leading up to the liberation and the long period of recovery that followed:

> By May of 1945, I got too weak to climb the path to the work place and decided to take a very dangerous gamble. During Appell [roll call] at five in the morning, I collapsed and feigned death while the others were marching out to the job site. As I looked up, I saw the sad faces of my friends who were gingerly stepping over me. A good friend of mine solemnly announced "Tibor ist kaput!" When the Appell Platz [roll call square] emptied, a special detail picked up all the bodies including mine. They threw me on a stack of corpses. Later, when I tried to get up, a special prisoner trustee (Blockschreiber) beat me up and almost killed me. I spent several days with half dead prisoners with very little food. We noticed that the SS disappeared and Austrian civilians [*Volkssturm*; German militia set up in final months of WWII] were manning the guard towers. The next day, when the American Army came to liberate us, we were overwhelmed. In spite of it all, I had survived until the Americans arrived. The battle-hardened soldiers broke down and many wept openly at the sight of us. Unfortunately, many of us were too weak and died in the following days and weeks. Sadly, the army was busy burying the victims in a giant pit using bulldozers. When I was examined by the army doctor and nurse, I found out

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[8] Historians have long argued that the Allies could have done more. To Ben Shephard's mind, however, the emphasis in the case of Bergen-Belsen should rest on relief preparations rather than rescue plans. See Ben Shephard, *After Daybreak: The Liberation of Belsen, 1945* (London, 2005), p. 28.

[9] Ronald W. Zweig, 'Feeding the Camps: Allied Blockade Policy and the Relief of Concentration Camps in Germany, 1944—1945', *The Historical Journal* 41/3 (1998): 825—851.

> that I weighed half of my regular body weight. I had gangrene, scabies, body lice, TB and pleurisy. I had constant fever and was floating in and out of consciousness. I found myself in strange places without being able to explain how I got there. I watched two of my schoolmates die. It took me several weeks of recuperation before I was judged strong enough and was allowed to join a transport to take me home.[10]

When the Third Hospitalization Unit of the Thirtieth Field Hospital arrived in Ebensee on 8 May, it observed a hospital area consisting of five barracks that quartered 1300 patients. As some barracks had surpassed sevenfold maximum capacity, the dead and dying often occupied the same bed, with an average of two and a half patients to a single bed.[11] Human excreta covered the floors and water supply lines had been sabotaged. The camp population was still living off captured foodstuffs, including black bread that contained ten per cent sawdust. Sometimes patients were mistakenly presumed dead, only to show feeble signs of life upon closer examination.[12] On the first day, the main camp infirmary recorded fifty-three deaths, a figure that does not take the similarly catastrophic Russian and Polish camps into account.[13] A field hospital platoon attached

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[10] Tibor Eliahu Beerman, 'My Experiences and Survival in Nazi Death Camps', written testimony, [undated; Beerman sent the memoir to the Registry of Holocaust Survivors in 1996], United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Accession Number (AN) 1997.A.0303, pp. 7—8. After being arrested in Czechoslovakia, Beerman was incarcerated as a slave labourer in various concentration camps. In January 1945 he was put on a death march from Auschwitz to Mauthausen and transferred to Ebensee, where he was forced to excavate tunnels. All of his relatives had been imprisoned in camps, and most of them did not survive. Beerman later found out that his brother and uncle had died at Buchenwald a few days after its liberation. He returned to his plundered house and had to sleep on the floor, but the Soviet government soon expropriated the house again ('We were warned not to touch any of the fruits ripening in our orchard as this was against the law'). His mother spent two years recovering in hospitals. Beerman and his parents finally emigrated in 1947 and settled in the US.

[11] Commanding Captain David D. Dunn to Commanding Officer, Report on the 30th Field Hospital, 'Period Reports, Medical Department Activities', 25 June 1945, WWII Administrative Records, 1940—1949, NARA, RG 112, Box 412, Decimal 319.1.2, p. 2.

[12] Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, NARA, RG 112, Box 409, pp. 3—4.

[13] Subsequent daily recorded hospital deaths in Ebensee for May 1945: 48 on 9 May; 28 on 10 May; 24 on 11 May; 19 on 12 May; 15 on 13 May; 18 on 14 May; 19 on 15 May; 19 on 16 May; 13 on 17 May;

to the Eightieth Infantry Division suggested the first recorded death toll for all Ebensee sites amounted to 350.[14] In the light of these conditions, a survey was conducted to identify the main relief priorities. Aside from increasing the quantity and quality of nutrition—for instance by cutting out sawdust and providing patients too sick to digest food with human blood plasma—more space was desperately needed. Soon a detachment from an engineer unit was procured. It swiftly went about bulldozing trees and rocks to make room for new tentage.[15]

Before three Army doctors began attending to the sick, the only care that patients received was provided by thirty voluntary, former inmates with medical training. Soon these were joined by more medical units and conscripted Ebensee 'civilians of Nazi sympathies', who together helped run the hospital. Their combined efforts swiftly brought daily deaths down to thirty.[16] And these rates could be more than halved within a month of treating diseases such as tuberculosis, typhus, and infections of the bone and tissue. The Thirtieth Field Hospital noted that Austrian medical staff

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20 on 18 May; 11 on 19 May; 15 on 29 May; 5 on 21 May; 8 on 22 May; 10 on 23 May; 5 on 24 May; 4 on 25 May; 4 on 26 May; 6 on 27 May; 4 on 28 May; 6 on 29 May; 3 on 30 May; 2 on 31 May. For these statistics, see Lists relating to daily hospital deaths at Camp Ebensee, copies obtained from 139th Evacuation Hospital and 30th Field Hospital, May—June 1945, Records of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), 1943—1949, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS), Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0007. All ARMS sources cited in this dissertation are UNRRA records.

[14] Lieutenant Colonel Harold J. Halleck (Division Surgeon), 'Report of Medical Department Activities in the 80th Infantry Division', 1 January—30 June 1945, WWII Operations Reports, 1940—1948, NARA, RG 407, Box 10225, Decimal 380.26, p. 8.

[15] Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, NARA, RG 112, Box 409, p. 4.

[16] Report on the 30th Field Hospital, NARA, RG 112, Box 412, p. 2.

from the neighbouring town of Bad Ischl volunteered to take on seven hundred sick patients, thus alleviating resource pressures considerably.

The Army and medical units on the scene were vigilant in detailing local involvement of this kind, but they were equally sensitive to recording local interactions of a less harmonious nature. As a report based on an interview with the Commanding Officer of the Ebensee Concentration Camp, Captain T. C. Sheehan, revealed, 'The conditions at the camp were a shattering experience to the German civilians, for not only was the place littered with dead, but the inmates were most disorderly and virtually naked. A number of German women were made hysterical and ill in the process'.[17]

Evidently any remaining hints of supposed local ignorance regarding camp conditions and the culture of violence under NS rule were instantly crushed in the days following the war's end. Captain Timothy C. Brennan had immediately ordered the inhabitants of Ebensee to 'go to "their" Concentration Camp, and see with their own eyes what they had lived near all this time'.[18] The military authorities then tasked Ebensee's mayor with employing town inhabitants to 'clean up' the site.[19] Hundreds of civilians, including fifty women among these, spent a week burying the dead and seeing

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[17] 'Reports on Concentration Camps at Mauthausen, Ebensee, and Gusen in Austria', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Appendix B, p. 4. In 1952, 172 former NSDAP men and women brought an unsuccessful class action suit against Ebensee's municipal council for having been forced to partake in clean-up operations. See Wolfgang Quatember, Ulrike Felber, and Susanne Rolinek, *Das Salzkammergut: Seine politische Kultur in der Ersten und Zweiten Republik* (Grünbach, 2000), pp. 194—197.

[18] Jacob, 'Interview of Professor Doctor Erwin T. Jacob', USHMM, AN 1997.A.0212, p. 3.

[19] It became common practice for the Western Allies to force locals to clean up and tour concentration camps. For Dachau, including mention of other sites, see Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, pp. 55—59. A resistance group in Steyr also took it upon itself to capture former Nazis and force them to work at Mauthausen, mainly in the construction of the graveyard. See Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 34—35.

to the campgrounds. With the support of the local community, a graveyard was constructed to accommodate the deceased.[20] According to the Ebensee concentration camp cemetery list, most of those buried could not be identified. The cemetery was divided into four rows with a total of 704 graves. Of the 588 occupied graves, not a single detail was known about 225 individuals. Many more graves merely had the identity number of the dead as a point of reference. Representative of the 'pragmatic' postwar approach by the relief organisations and units, a couple of unidentified SS guard were buried among the former inmates.[21] Yet the local community's postwar experience also transcended camp boundaries, going beyond a direct confrontation with camp conditions. Symptomatic of the Army's waning compassion towards survivors, Brennan related the explosive situation in a letter to his wife:

> Insofar as the inmates were concerned, most of them were animals. They had been treated like animals for so long that they became animals. They would fight like dogs over a piece of bread and would readily kill for a few potato peelings. …. [The] few SS who were a little late leaving were torn to pieces by the prisoners …. I found the prisoners marching on the town armed with rifles and pistols taken from the SS arsenal. If they had been allowed to go to the town, I am sure there would have been rape, pillage and the town would have been, undoubtedly, burned to the ground. We had to use the tanks to prevent this and move them back to camp. The Germans

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[20] The US Army at Mauthausen constructed a graveyard on the former SS sports field, where over 1900 corpses were buried. At Gusen, over 1300 bodies were buried in a similarly-constructed graveyard. The military-like design of these graveyards intended to accentuate the notion of martyrdom, i.e. the inmate's sacrificial death ('Opfertod') for their respective nation. See Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 33—34.

[21] 'Ebensee Goisern - Team 313 - Ebensee Concentration Camp Cemetery - Layout and Lists 1944—1949', June 1945, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0007. These records mainly include lists of deceased inmates (grave number, date of burial, identity number, name, nationality, date of birth, remarks). In many cases, however, certain details remained unknown. And in some cases, nothing but an identity number could be recorded.

> had not fed them for the past three days … so we closed all the stores and bakeries in town to the civilians and started baking for the camp.[22]

Such expressions were merely the beginning of a growing ambivalence towards and a heightened conflict with survivors. With psychology not having been an Army forte, many would inevitably begin equating the actions of some inmates to widespread ingratitude.[23] Throughout the first few days, and before the Army could gain full control of their movements, a significant number of former prisoners reportedly 'roamed the countryside looting and otherwise engaging in disorderly conduct'.[24] Some pursued a murderous course of *Lynchjustiz* ('lynch law') not limited to Kapos and members of the SS alone; the director of Ebensee's weaving mill, for example, was allegedly drowned in a large basin of water.[25] Another, unidentified individual was supposedly placed in the crematory alive. While the initial period following the arrival of the Third US Army was poorly chronicled,[26] anecdotal information regarding such

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[22] Captain Timothy C. Brennan to Vera Brennan, personal correspondence, Ebensee, 16 May 1945, in Edward V. Migdalski Collection, USHMM, AN 1997.A.0212.

[23] An investigation of the British at Bergen-Belsen—where former inmates were also described as 'animals'—exposes this same phenomenon. See Johannes-Dieter Steinert, 'British Relief Teams in Belsen Concentration Camp: Emergency Relief and the Perception of Survivors', in Suzanne Bardgett and David Cesarani (eds.), *Belsen 1945: New Historical Perspectives* (London, 2006): 62—78. More comprehensively: Steinert, *Nach Holocaust und Zwangsarbeit: Britische humanitäre Hilfe in Deutschland: Die Helfer, die Befreiten und die Deutschen* (Osnabrück, 2007). Most recently: Mark Celinscak, *Distance from the Belsen Heap: Allied Forces and the Liberation of a Nazi Concentration Camp* (Toronto, 2015), p. 64.

[24] 'Reports on Concentration Camps at Mauthausen, Ebensee, and Gusen in Austria', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Appendix B, p. 1.

[25] Jean Laffite estimated that approximately fifty-two prisoner functionaries were killed at Ebensee by way of lynch justice, mostly between the 5 and 6 May. See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 420; Quatember, Felber, and Rolinek, *Das Salzkammergut*, p. 160; Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, pp. 266—267, who provides some graphic examples, including eyes being torn out and a skull being cracked by a boulder 'like a nut'.

[26] Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, NARA, RG 112, Box 409, p. 2.

reprisals was widespread. Moreover, traces of revenge killings could be observed at a number of the other camps that were liberated.[27] By the time Ebensee had been discovered, therefore, the remains of desecrated Nazi functionaries no longer raised many eyebrows. Ray Buch, an engineer in the Eleventh Armoured Division of the Third US Army, had already seen SS men hanging from the electric barbed wire fences at Mauthausen.[28] Since other towns and camps required additional troops to maintain order, he soon found himself guarding SS prisoners at Ebensee.

Buch and his fellow guardsmen found little reason to sympathise with their subjects. Having inspected conditions at Mauthausen after the liberation, Buch decided to forsake a tour of KZ Ebensee and focus his energies on the prisoners instead ('we were too busy taunting the SS men'). Adding to his anger, 'Hitler's supermen', as he called them, continued acting as though they were 'still lords of the universe'. The Americans thus decided to make 'these haughty bastards' eat worms for a while: 'And we now had them crawling because we didn't feed them. They were digging up worms and eating worms. …. And they were waiting, praying for rain'. Only once the ground's

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[27] For examples of revenge killings at various liberated camps, including Ebensee, see Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, pp. 98—103.

[28] When the SS abandoned the camp a few days before the liberation, the men of the Vienna Fire Department allegedly drove directly to Mauthausen to take care of the inmates. Mauthausen was uncovered 'under conditions of combat' on the afternoon of 5 May and occupied by the Americans on the eve of 6 May. The SS weapons arsenal had been looted, and so the inmates had first to be disarmed. Operations officially began on the morning of 7 May. The Eleventh Armoured Division came across eighteen thousand inmates, with two thousand women among them. See SHAEF G-5 Displaced Persons Camp Report No. 34, 'Concentration Camp at Mauthausen, Austria', 18 June 1945, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41, Appendix A, p. 1. According to Maršálek, however, Viennese firefighters had been ordered to replace the SS at Mauthausen (and Gusens I and II) on 3 May 1945, thus guarding the inmates until the liberation. See Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 397—398.

worm reserves had been depleted, the American guardsmen 'started giving them crackers and things'.[29]

Although most of the SS men had managed to escape or were now under guard, isolated acts of *Lynchjustiz* still occurred after the war. As a member of the 139th Evacuation Hospital wrote in May 1945, 'The SS troops of the camp fled to the hills and forests and many are still at large. From time to time one or two of them are found by the ex-prisoners and almost literally torn to bits'.[30] A number of SS guards had been spotted posing as locals in civilian work details; 'those who were not brutally murdered before this could be prevented by the Army were turned over to the CIC'.[31] Eventually the killings ceased.

Looting on the part of some former inmates did not last long either, but neither did their newfound freedom. Within a couple of days, the US authorities had 'rounded up' the inmates and placed them behind the all too familiar (albeit no longer electrified) barbered wire fences.[32] A few weeks down the line violence had completely subsided.[33]

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[29] Ray Buch (Eleventh Armoured Division, Third US Army), in discussion with Linda Kuzmack, Washington, DC, 28 December 1989, in 'Oral History Collection', USHMM, AN 1989.H.0363, RG-50.030*0045.

[30] Whitney J. Gardner (139th Evacuation Hospital), postwar report on Ebensee, Ebensee, May 1945, in '1981 International Liberators Conference collection', USHMM, AN 1992.A.0033, RG-09.005*10.

[31] 'Reports on Concentration Camps at Mauthausen, Ebensee, and Gusen in Austria', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Appendix B, p. 4.

[32] Similarly, by July 1945 curfews were imposed in many of the German DP camps in the British zone, and the camps were manned with sentries and sealed off with barbed wire once again. See Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, p. 488.

[33] For a more general discussion on revenge and looting, as well as on the increasingly authoritarian stance towards DPs, see Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London, 2013), pp. 97—106.

For some time thereafter, a limited number of individuals were provided with passes 'for short walks in the neighborhood',[34] but Captain Sheehan saw that—for the sake of order—inmates should remain confined to the camp to await their repatriation.[35] Throughout this early period, and with around seventy thousand Displaced Persons (DPs) living in the Linz area alone,[36] chaos was unsurprisingly widespread.[37] This was a relatively high concentration for such a sparsely populated area, even within the background of the roughly six million foreign slave labourers and 750,000 KZ inmates who found themselves on German territory at the end of the war.[38]

Some subordinate officers of Gmunden's Eleventh Armoured Division took it upon themselves to install an informal system of repatriation through an 'open field exchange'.[39] The Americans would regularly truck several hundred Russians to a field

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[34] 'Reports on Concentration Camps at Mauthausen, Ebensee, and Gusen in Austria', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Appendix B, pp. 4–5.

[35] Hospital patients were considered fit for evacuation if they could walk one mile.

[36] 'In the Linz region', as Wachsmann notes for the wartime period, 'the sprawl of the Mauthausen complex meant that there would eventually be one prisoner for every five inhabitants'. See Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 485.

[37] On the situation in Upper Austria, especially regarding Jewish DPs, see Michael John, 'Upper Austria, Intermediate Stop: Reception Camps and Housing Schemes for Jewish DPs and Refugees in Transit', *Journal of Israeli History* 19 (October 1998): 21—47.

[38] Marcuse, 'The afterlife of the camps': 189. Also includes a brief overview of DP camps in Germany.

[39] Though not verifiable, this might be seen within the broader context of Anglo-American forcible repatriations to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which became a particularly bloody affair. Per the Yalta agreement, 'Soviet citizens were subject to repatriation without regard to their personal wishes'. Quoted in Wyman, *DPs*, pp. 63. For further background, see Nicholas Bethell, *The Last Secret: Forcible Repatriation to Russia, 1944—7* (London, 1974); Nikolai Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta* (London, 1977); Mark R. Elliot, *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in their Repatriation* (Urbana, 1981). For a collection of terribly biased accounts on the Britons' transfer of Cossack Nazi collaborators to the Soviets in Carinthia and East Tyrol, see Nicholas V. Feodoroff (ed.), *Forced Repatriation: The Tragedy of the 'Civilized World'* (Commack, NY, 1997).

just within the Soviet Zone: 'On their return, the field was always empty'.[40] Improvisation began subsiding as relief units continued trickling in, but Ebensee itself was being used as a transit camp for DPs collected by the Army in the area. Rapid repatriation was therefore an immediate necessity. Despite Ebensee's isolated geographic position, the Army managed to repatriate around half of the original camp population within less than four weeks. Among those now returning home were 3000 Russians, 1500 French, 200 Belgians, and an equal number of Dutch.[41]

By the time the 139th Evacuation Hospital arrived at Ebensee on 14 May to temporarily relieve the three units of the Thirtieth Field Hospital, repatriation efforts were running fairly smoothly and order had somewhat been restored. To this effect, a report by a member of the Evacuation Hospital paints a picture that strongly contrasts the documents detailing the period prior to the new unit's arrival: 'The number of "incidents" between the townspeople and the ex-prisoners have been surprisingly few and minor in view of what the latter have told me of their treatment by the former, that there were many who threw stones at them'.[42]

By early July, at the very latest, the situation had improved considerably. Captain Sheehan gave a speech to the effect that the former inmates had at first been particularly 'addicted to cheating and other forms of deception which they had learned

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[40] Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm J. Proudfoot to the Executive of the G-5 Displaced Persons Branch, 'Memorandum no. 5: The Repatriation of Displaced Persons from the Linz, Austria Area', 13 June 1945, NARA, RG 331, Box 52, File SHAEF/G-5/2748/6.

[41] Proudfoot to G-5 DP Branch, 'Memorandum no. 3: Concentration Camp at Ebensee, Austria', 12 June 1945, NARA, RG 331, Box 52, File SHAEF/G-5/2748/6.

[42] Gardner, postwar report on Ebensee, USHMM, AN 1992.A.0033, RG-09.005*10.

in order to stay alive', but now showed discipline and no longer caused any trouble.[43] This improvement was spurred on by an increased presence of organisations and US Army units in Ebensee. The KZ only became officially known as 'DP Camp C212' when Team 313 of the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (UNRRA)[44] arrived at the beginning of June.[45] Despite the onset of a relatively stable period shortly thereafter, inhabitants' initial contact with former inmates almost certainly instilled in them a degree of fear and hostility.

Yet ensuing clashes became increasingly less related to the local population. When on 7 June the 139th Evacuation Hospital was alerted for direct redeployment to the Pacific Theatre of Operations, it predicted that some difficulties would prevail. On the one hand, the unit had managed to bring some relief to the camp: having taken on a

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[43] 'Reports on Concentration Camps at Mauthausen, Ebensee, and Gusen in Austria', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Appendix B, pp. 4–5.

[44] UNRRA (November 1943—September 1948) was established with a view to providing victims of war with relief and the necessary support to begin rebuilding their lives. On 9 November 1943, forty-four 'United Nations and associated governments' pledged to 'plan, coordinate, administer or arrange for the administration of measures for the relief of victims of war in any area under the control of any of the United Nations through the provision of food, fuel, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities, medical and other essential services'. See UNRRA Agreement, Article I, Section 2, in Marilla B. Guptil, 'Records of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration 1943—1948', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 5/1 (1992): 29.

[45] Over the past decade, scholarly interest in UNRRA has produced a wide array of publications. See Paul Weindling, '"Belsenitis': Liberating Belsen, Its Hospitals, UNRRA, and Selection for Re-emigration, 1945–1948', *Science in Context* 19/3 (2006): 401—418; Gerard D. Cohen, 'Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945—1946', *Journal of Contemporary History* 43/3 (2008): 437—449; Jessica Reinisch, '"We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation": UNRRA, Internationalism and National Reconstruction in Poland', *Journal of Contemporary History* 43/3 (2008): 451—476; Reinisch, 'Internationalism in relief: The birth (and death) of UNRRA', *Past and Present* 210/S6 (2011): 258—289; Silvia Salvatici, '"Help the people to help themselves": UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25/3 (2012): 428—451; Reinisch, '"Auntie UNRRA" at the Crossroads', *Past and Present* 218/S8 (2013): 70—97; David Mayers, 'Destruction Repaired and Destruction Anticipated: United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the Atomic Bomb, and US Policy 1944–6', *The International History Review* (2016): 1—23.

total of 2496 patients since 14 May, the figure dropped by almost one thousand by the time of its departure. On the other hand, the aggregate number of diseases across all patients—with some patients suffering from various illnesses simultaneously—only dropped from 1884 to 1686. Cases of tuberculosis (TB), common respiratory illnesses, typhus, and skin infection were among those on the rise.[46]

Apart from medical issues, the unit's greatest remaining concern was that the DP population had not yet been fully stabilised. Some nationalities even had to be segregated due to racial conflict, quickly causing the Camp to mushroom into five centres.[47] Four thousand residents were sent to the Polish and two thousand to the Russian camps. At the main hospital, a lack of fences to separate the infirmary from the camp prompted people to continue swarming all over the place, making the task of distinguishing patients from non-patients impossible. The hospital was also in dire need of a larger guard unit. Since the Geneva Convention prohibited medical troops from arming themselves, guarding personnel and supplies remained challenging. Adding to these issues, DPs neither knew much about nor respected the Red Cross. Line troops, bearing captured weapons, occasionally offered protection to the personnel and supply

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[46] The following disease-specific statistics represent the number of cases admitted on 14 May 1945 versus ('v') the number remaining with this particular disease on 6 June 1945: malnutrition, 942 v 626; diarrhoea, 356 v 341; pneumonia, 111 v 89; TB, 187 v 231; common respiratory, 53 v 96; cardio, 31 v 19; typhoid, 14 v 5; typhus, 22 v 46; skin infection, 15 v 75; malaria, 3 v 3; NP, 32 v 24; surgical and injuries, 102 v 55; and others, 25 v 76. See Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, NARA, RG 112, Box 409.

[47] At the Yalta Conference in February 1945 it was agreed that American and Soviet nationals 'will without delay after their liberation, be separated from enemy prisoners of war and will be maintained separately from them in camps or points of concentration until they have been handed over to the Soviet or United States authorities'. Yet there appears not to have been any directives of national segregation between Allied nationals. Quoted in Wyman, *DPs*, pp. 62.

installations. Large quantities of food stocks, resources, and personal property were nevertheless stolen, and on one occasion a nurse was assaulted.

In summary, 'controlling thousands of individuals of a dozen or more tongues, and of completely foreign customs and backgrounds, and drunk with freedom and filled with hate, complicated every situation'. The unit itself lacked the necessary experience to bring order to the chaos.[48] After having operated the camp hospital for three and a half weeks, it concluded that the period had served as excellent training for an 'incompletely-trained' unit.[49] Although conditions were steadily improving, the imminent redeployment of relief personnel and experienced soldiers would soon prove to have a dampening effect on the rate of relative progress.

As the weeks progressed, some sense of 'normality' began returning to the town of Ebensee, thus gradually replacing the absolute chaos and uncertainty that had marked the early period of US occupation. The repatriation process persevered, local bureaucrats went on accepting Allied directives unwaveringly, and any animosity towards the continued presence of DPs was kept under a tight lid. As the municipality cooperated with the occupying authorities in equal measures, the bureaucratic mills began grinding into action. Among the first order of things was renaming Ebensee's streets. Adolf-Hitler-Straße became Hauptstraße. And after some brief debate whether

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[48] Yet the UNRRA personnel who eventually took charge of DP installations across Germany and Austria tended to be even more poorly trained. The Americans handed over control to UNNRA by mid-November 1945, and the British in March 1946. See Angelika Königseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany*, trans. John A. Broadwin (Evanston, IL, 2001), pp. 28—30.

[49] Report on the 139th Evacuation Hospital Semimobile, NARA, RG 112, Box 409, pp. 3, 4, 6.

Sudetenstraße should become Dollfußstraße, the issue was quickly resolved when it was decided that there would be no street names with political connotations.[50] The advent of 'normality', however, would eventually start working against the well-being of former inmates.

As the early period following Ebensee's discovery proved, immediate resource shortages, a lack of fieldwork experience on the part of relief workers, and disorderly behaviour jeopardised the physical recovery of many former inmates. Yet conditions during the final period of the camp's being had ensured that hundreds of victims were indeed beyond saving. The initial phase following the liberation of Ebensee also proved strikingly similar to that at Mauthausen.[51] For one, a genuinely widespread local awareness of wartime conditions was never doubted.[52] After all, 'a certain number of the SS guards and their families lived in the immediate neighborhood. Further, there was a standing order to the local population that they were to kill on sight any escaped residents from the Camp'.[53] Like at Ebensee, the mayor of Mauthausen was ordered to furnish hundreds of civilian 'volunteers' to clean up the site and dig graves for the deceased, which they did until *Wehrmacht* prisoners took over. Former SS guards were

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[50] Gemeindeausschußprotokoll der Marktgemeinde Ebensee, municipal council records, Ebensee, 25 July 1945, Archiv des Zeitgeschichte Museums Ebensee (ZME).

[51] For a source collection on Mauthausen, see Willi Mernyi and Florian Wenninger (eds.), *Die Befreiung des KZ Mauthausen: Berichte und Dokumente* (Vienna, 2006), which also highlights the re-marginalisation of former inmates after the war and includes previously untapped police records.

[52] On local awareness of the Final Solution and wartime camps, see Peter Longerich, 'Davon haben wir nichts gewusst': *Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933—1945* (Munich, 2007); Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939—1945* (London, 2008), pp. 295—296.

[53] 'Concentration Camp at Mauthausen', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41, Appendix A, p. 3.

periodically discovered among the workers, and on some occasions they were 'brutally murdered' by DPs before the Americans could intervene and hand them over to the CIC.

Compared to the subcamp, however, developments at the main site appeared to have been even more extreme.[54] Disorderly conduct seemed even more prevalent. Former prisoners had to be disarmed to prevent further looting. While the Americans eventually observed an 'increased capacity for social responsibility', compassion was beginning to run low: 'The surviving residents had become pastmasters in deception, thievery, cheating, and all manner of kindred activities in order to obtain certain privileges …. Those who were found useful to the SS guards in various capacities managed to survive for years'.[55] In painting a picture of the former inmates as disorderly individuals and 'molesters' of the local population, the liberators grossly trivialised the suffering that camp inmates had endured. The Army's summary reports on conditions at Mauthausen and Ebensee thus served as an early indication of fading sympathies towards the genuine victims of the Third Reich.

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[54] Yet Mauthausen did not witness a prolonged presence of former inmates. When Austria was officially divided into four zones on 9 July 1945, Mauthausen fell into the Soviet sphere. The Americans therefore began pulling out of the Mühlviertel on 24 July. Until early 1946, the Soviets used the former camp grounds at Mauthausen (and Gusen) to house their soldiers. Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 47—48.

[55] 'Concentration Camp at Mauthausen', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41, Appendix A, p. 3. On how Jewish survivors were viewed in this manner, see Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, p. 142.

THE RISE AND FALL OF ANTIFASCIST SOLIDARITY

Within the background of relative compliance and local restraint, Ebensee's *International Committee of Former Political Prisoners* could establish itself with relative ease, doing so despite the fact that wartime camp conditions had inhibited the same degree of solidarity that took root at sites like Auschwitz.[56] The group's considerable successes in the first postwar year suggest that for some time it appeared as though their gradual marginalisation would not be an obvious outcome. Unlike the presence of many resistance groupings at other sites, its strong Communist leanings also did not initially raise any red flags for the Americans.

At Buchenwald, the first camp to be overrun by the US Army on 11 April 1945, the 'Communist hot bed' greatly alarmed the Department of State.[57] The Americans were particularly concerned about the *National Committee for a Free Germany* (NKFD),[58] which controlled the camp gate and plastered the site with propaganda. Addressing the issue, a US political advisor argued: 'I believe that when German visitors from Weimar are forced to go through this camp in its present condition, they will inevitably react with the feeling that perhaps Goebbels was right and the Americans

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[56] On KZ Ebensee and factors preventing solidarity and resistance, see Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 359—394. Also provides a shrewd analysis of the issue in general.

[57] For an historical account by two Austrian Buchenwald survivors, arguing widespread antifascist solidarity leading up to the liberation, see Erich Fein and Karl Flanner, *Rot-Weiß-Rot in Buchenwald: Die österreichischen politischen Häftlinge im Konzentrationslager am Ettersberg bei Weimar 1938—1945* (Vienna, 1987).

[58] On postwar policy context, including discussion of Buchenwald group, see Rebecca L. Boehling, *A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reforms and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany: Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart Under U.S. Occupation, 1945—1949* (New York, 1998), pp. 216, 210—267.

are indeed turning Germany over to the Communists', and cautioned that they 'should not be surprised if some of the Allied journalists now going through the camp may not later place the American Government in an embarrassing position by describing its apparent toleration of Communist political activity under Military Government supervision'. By the end of April 1945, however, the Department of State already had a 'secret but definite' policy that prohibited the Free Germany Movement from receiving support or aid.[59]

By contrast, the Ebensee Committee received the necessary American backing to persevere and showed great promise for growth. It became particularly organised and connected, and its members enjoyed ties with cities such as Paris and Prague, boasted a vast network of teachers, painters, and journalists, and stayed clear of adopting a political party line.[60] The Committee even developed a business plan embracing six spheres: organising the adoption of and cooperation with other committees, providing for concentration camp victims, taking care of the deceased inmates' grave sites, launching a monthly periodical, aiding with work placements and welfare issues, and acting as an intermediary between the public, occupying powers, and local authorities.[61]

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[59] Brewster Morris to Ambassador Robert Murphy, 'Subject: Present Situation at Buchenwald Concentration Camp and Weimar', memorandum, 29 April 1945, The Office of the US Political Advisor to Germany (POLAD) correspondence, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41, pp. 2—3.

[60] K.J. Beck and Hainebach, summary of conversation, 10 September 1945, Information Service Branch, Operation Section General Records, Records of the US Allied Commission for Austria (USACA) Section of Headquarters US Forces in Austria (HQ USFA), 1945—1950, NARA, RG 260, Boxes 27—29, in 'U.S.-Besatzungsakten, Registrierungsakten, Film Nr. 186', microfilm, reel 186, Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv (OÖLA).

[61] Ebensee's International Committee of Former Political Prisoners, business plan, 1 September 1945, NARA, RG 260, Boxes 27—29, in 'U.S.-Besatzungsakten', microfilm, reel 186, OÖLA.

While aiding victims and promoting democracy constituted two of its central aims, the Committee was equally adamant on seeking compensation from supporters of the NS regime. Under the heading *Vergeltung* ('retribution'), it soon called on all former registered party members to pay their party fee to the head of the Committee through a closed list, retroactively from May 1945. And far from throwing a cloak of silence over the recent past, its members identified and openly addressed revisionist tendencies:

> Today those whine the loudest who yesterday expressed no sympathy for the persecuted, tortured and abused, who were delighted to see the demise of political opponents in the "KZ"! …. Do not deny and contest who you were, but prove through deeds that you are willing to think and act differently. Even if you did not wish for that horror, you allowed it to happen all the same. Do not say today, we did not know of the conditions in the KZ. And nevertheless you feared the KZ. Was not your second utterance: "Be quiet, otherwise you will be in the KZ!"[62]

The clearest manifestations of the Committee's grievances and aims appeared in their periodical *Nazi Opfer* (later renamed *Der KZ-Häftling*).[63] The first issue was published in December 1945, some time after Brigadier General A. J. McChrystal, chief of information for thirteen sections, including *Austrian Publications Control*, issued the

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[62] Ebensee's International Committee of Former Prisoners, 'Aufruf! "KZ" – Kameraden!', pamphlet, 1 September 1945, NARA, RG 260, Boxes 27—29, in 'U.S.-Besatzungsakten', microfilm, reel 186, OÖLA. Original quote: 'Heute jammern die am lautesten, welche gestern für Verfolgte, Gequälte und Misshandelte keinerlei Mitgefühl aufbrachten, welche sich freuten, wenn sie politische Gegner im 'KZ' verkommen sahen! …. Nicht ableugnen und bestreiten, wer man war, sondern durch Taten beweisen, dass man anders zu denken und handeln bereit ist. Wenn ihr das Grauenhafte nicht gewollt habt, so habt ihr es jedenfalls zugelassen. Sagt heute nicht, wir wussten die Verhältnisse in den KZ nicht. Und doch habt ihr vor den KZ Angst gehabt. War nicht euer zweites Wort: "Sei ruhig, sonst kommst du ins KZ!"'

[63] For an analysis of this publication, see Sandra Knopp, 'Erinnern, Berichten, Bewahren: Displaced Persons schildern ihre Situation in Österreich und Deutschland 1945—1947: Eine Inhaltsanalyse der DP-Zeitungen "Landsberger Lager-Cajtung", "Nazi-Opfer/Der KZ-Häftling" und "D.P. Express"' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Vienna, 2013).

necessary permit.[64] Former camp inmates like the publication's founder and chief editor Vilko Herman helped run the periodical from its headquarters in Ebensee. Herman's biography lent itself well to a chief editorial position at the *Nazi Opfer*, as did his personal connections; he enjoyed close relations with influential individuals such as Heinz (Heinrich) Dürmayer, the head of Vienna's political police.[65] Initially, one thousand copies per issue were printed. While acting as a platform to disseminate information on public events ('Unterhaltungsabende'), the periodical intended primarily to educate or 'teach' former political prisoners.[66]

The occupation authorities initially supported the grievances and aims of persecuted groups with little reservation and granted new antifascist groupings a degree of autonomy to support the postwar 'justice' effort. Yet efforts of former inmates were not an isolated phenomenon. The emergence of strong antifascist networks in the immediate postwar period originally included and attracted individuals from a wide range of social groups, such as Julius Schwaiger, a lifelong salt miner. Schwaiger represented merely one of many Ebensee civilians who sought from the outset to

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[64] For an overview of these thirteen sections, see Reinhold Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, trans. Diana M. Wolf (Chapel Hill, 1994), p. 69.

[65] Vilko Herman, a Roman Catholic and practising dentist, was a member of the Social Democratic Party between 1928 and 1933, joined the Communist Party in Yugoslavia thereafter (which he disclosed to the occupiers only as 'the Antifascist Movement of Yugoslavia'), and left for Spain in December 1936 to fight for the Republican Army against Franco until March 1939. After his return to Yugoslavia he was imprisoned for joining a foreign army while on the officer's reserve, and he remained in prison until his deportation to Dachau by the Germans in 1941. On 17 January 1943, Herman was transferred to Auschwitz, but due to the Soviet advance he was soon transported to Mauthausen, then Melk, and finally Ebensee.

[66] Vilko Herman to USFA Information Services Branch, 'Gesuch um eine Genehmigung der Nachrichtenkontrolle', permit application, 10 September 1945, NARA, RG 260, Boxes 27—29, in 'U.S.-Besatzungsakten', microfilm, reel 186, OÖLA.

partake in the democratisation of Austrian society. The former *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* (DAF) member alleged in his *Fragebogen* ('Questionnaire') that he had been targeted by the NS regime since 1938, was barred from working on a number of occasions, received death threats from the *NSDAP-Ortsgruppenleiter* ('Local Group Leader of the Nazi Party'), and lost a close friend in Mauthausen.[67]

The Allies had designed the *Fragebogen* for the purpose of assessing an individual's degree of NS complicity.[68] Composed of 131 questions across six pages, it intended to facilitate the postwar denazification process.[69] Based on the questionnaires, individuals were put in one of five categories, ranging from 'Major Offenders' to 'Exonerated Persons'. The Americans were by far the most ardent followers of this method (and not without controversy) in their zones of occupation. They had also designed a so-called 'Fragebogen for Inmates of Concentration Camps' for German and Austrian nationals. At Mauthausen, the Army identified 106 criminal and 302 political Austrians as well as 355 criminal and 373 political Germans. Based on these questionnaires, the Americans concluded that 95 per cent of the 'criminals' had served their sentence in full in the KZ, and observed that some had been

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[67] Julius Schwaiger, 'Fragebogen/Personal Questionnaire', Ebensee, 15 September 1945, in 'Nachkriegsdokumente (Salzkammergut) u.a. Kriegsgefangenschaftsheimkehrer aus Ebensee', ZME.

[68] On its broader significance within postwar German denazification context, see Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (London, 2012), pp. 260—269.

[69] For an apologetic, autobiographical account by a controversial figure who used the *Fragebogen* as a backdrop, see Ernst von Salomon, *Der Fragebogen* (Hamburg, 1951).

incarcerated based on previous records. 'This was done beginning in 1938 and is often styled "Himmler Action" on the Fragebogen', as a US official took note in May 1945.[70]

As an overstretched *Fragebogen* bureaucracy made verifying politically insignificant individuals' version of events difficult, the genuine nature of Schwaiger's wartime record was anyone's guess. He therefore swiftly secured his antifascist stance and became a member of the *Austrian Union of Antifascist Freedom Fighters*. Being summoned by the *Austrian Freedom Committee* on 22 May 1945, Schwaiger was granted special powers on 20 July authorising him to register former Nazis in Ebensee.[71]

Cooperation was by no means unique to Ebensee, and international antifascist solidarity in particular proved at first remarkably widespread.[72] All across the country organised political groups comprising former inmates sprang up. At Mauthausen, the various national committees staged a joint demonstration of solidarity on 16 May to mark the occasion of the first repatriation transport.[73] Before a Russian major marched his 2500 countrymen out of Mauthausen's gates, the ceremony prompted twelve thousand individuals to participate in an expression of 'brotherhood' among nations.

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[70] See Colonel John B. Marsh to Legal Division (US Group, CC, APO 742), 'Subject: Activity Report of Lt Fearnside 17 May 1945—24 May 1945', KZ Mauthausen, [undated], NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41, p. 1.

[71] Schwaiger, 'Fragebogen / Personal Questionnaire', ZME.

[72] Solidarity among the KZ survivors' association in the Salzkammergut region nevertheless began disintegrating after a few months, chiefly due to political differences. See Quatember, Felber, and Rolinek, *Das Salzkammergut*, p. 102.

[73] On the broader implications of this particular demonstration for the trajectory of the Mauthausen memorial site, see Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 42—43.

The Red Army major, the American camp commander, and former inmates representing their respective country of origin hailed Allied efforts and encouraged the liberated inmates to both pave a road of international cooperation and build democratic societies in their homeland.[74] As per a joint statement signed by fifteen national committee heads, many former inmates intended to construct a 'world of free men': 'We shall march a common road, the road of indivisible liberty, the road of mutual respect, the road of cooperation on the great work of reconstructing a new free world, just to everybody'.[75]

While organisations were plentiful, the long-term task of assisting in the democratisation of Austria rested with those who would stay. The *Austrian National Committee of Former Prisoners at KZ Mauthausen*,[76] establishing itself shortly after the arrival of American forces, was perhaps the most notable of these. Its first order of business was to facilitate the repatriation of the 898 surviving Austrians identified among the estimated 17,290 liberated inmates, but the longer-term mission entailed soaring political ambitions. Even while the Committee leaders came from distinctly different walks of life, they were all 'bound together by their fight in the underground

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[74] 'Internationale Solidaritätskundgebung im ehemaligen KZ Mauthausen', [undated], USAREUR War Crimes Case Files, 1945—1959, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, Case 000-50-5, Appendix A.

[75] Joint statement by fifteen national Mauthausen committees representing former inmates, [undated], NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, Case 000-50-5, Appendix B. For a reprint and discussion of the Mauthausen oath ('Mauthausen-Schwur' or '-Gelöbnis'), see Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 42—44, who argues that this oath amounted to a 'political utopia' that would come to have a grave impact on the memory culture of the memorial site, particularly in excluding female inmates and those who had not been categorised as fighters.

[76] Österreichischer Nationalausschuss der ehemaligen Häftlinge im KZ Mauthausen.

against Nazism and their common misery in the concentration camp'.[77] Quite like Ebensee's organisation, it aimed to leave behind past political quarrels.

True to its word, the constellation of the Mauthausen committee could hardly have been more diverse. Three men with doctorates acted as its founding fathers: Hans (von) Becker, a Christian Social, had first pursued a life in business at New York's International Products Corporation and subsequently became a director of propaganda for the Fatherland Front;[78] Alfred Migsch, a Social Democrat, had acted as Secretary of Education for Vienna's schools until 1934; and Ludwig Soswinski, a Communist and staunch resistance fighter, was imprisoned first under Engelbert Dollfuß in 1934 and again under Hitler four years later.[79] As early as 8 May 1945, Soswinski began encouraging former inmates to approach the war crimes investigators who were arriving on the scene, urging that it was every inmate's duty and indeed right to support the work of recording the crimes that had been committed.[80]

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[77] 'The Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen Concentration Camp', 19 May 1945, Confidential Field Memorandum 445, Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Research and Analysis Branch, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, Case 000-50-5, pp. 1—9.

[78] In German: Propaganda-Leiter der Vaterländischen Front. The Fatherland Front, established by Engelbert Dollfuß in May 1933, sought to foster a distinctly Austrian identity and erode the party political dominance of the state ('Parteienstaat'). See Irmgard Bärnthaler, *Die Vaterländische Front: Geschichte und Organisation* (Vienna, 1971); Hubert Stock, *"... nach Vorschlägen der Vaterländischen Front": Die Umsetzung des christlichen Ständestaates auf Landesebene, am Beispiel Salzburg* (Vienna, 2010); Emmerich Tálos, *Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem: Österreich 1933—1938* (Vienna, 2013); Wenninger (ed.), *Das Dollfuß-Schuschnigg-Regime 1933—1938: Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes* (Vienna, 2013).

[79] 'Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen', Memorandum 445, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, pp. 1—9. Soswinski was among the first batch of Austrian anti-Nazis to be arrested. He was imprisoned in Flossenbürg, Lublin, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Mauthausen.

[80] Freund, 'Der Dachauer Mauthausenprozess': 42—43.

The organisation's expansion drew in an even more unlikely mixture of individuals with impressive political backgrounds: Heinrich Dürmayer, a Communist (and the close associate of Vilko Herman's in Ebensee), fought as a major in Spain with the International Brigade and was incarcerated in Austro-fascist detention camps;[81] Hans (von) Hammerstein-Equord, an aristocrat who had served as Education Minister before the *Anschluss* and now headed the Austrian Red Cross; Hans Maršálek, a Socialist and later Communist from Vienna's Czech minority, had joined the *International Red Aid* (MOPR) to counter the cleric-fascist Austrian regime; and Bruno Schmitz, the son of Vienna's former Mayor, had acted from within the *Wehrmacht* to organise Austrian resistance, mainly by providing military papers for underground work. Years of underground work brought these men together, giving them ample time to reflect and carefully craft a unified vision of Austrian political life after the Reich.[82]

The research and analysis branch of the US *Office of Strategic Services* (OSS) in Salzburg took great interest in these men, recognising that they would likely play a significant role in the country's postwar reconstruction. The Committee was closely linked to individuals with impressive backgrounds, such as Heinrich Kodré, who had eventually been sent to Mauthausen for facilitating Operation Valkyrie on 20 July

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[81] When Dürmayer arrived at Mauthausen from Auschwitz on 25 January 1945, he founded the International Committee at Mauthausen (IK) and remained its head thenceforth. See Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 382—383. According to Tomaz Jardim, however, the international variant, with Dürmayer at the helm, did not come to fruition until a 'clandestine meeting' on 29 April 1945. On its pivotal role in maintaining a degree of order prior to and following the liberation, and in securing evidence from hundreds of former inmates, see Tomaz Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial: American Military Justice in Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), pp. 61—65.

[82] 'Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen', Memorandum 445, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, pp. 1—9.

1944.[83] Becker and Dürmayer in particular came to the Americans' attention. Arrested for dissenting in 1939, Dürmayer was sent to Dachau, Auschwitz, and Mauthausen. He remained a Marxist, viewing National Socialism as the last attempt by capitalism to assert itself after having failed to capture the middle class for this purpose. Dürmayer's ideological leanings did not unsettle the OSS, who described him as a born leader and organiser. They noted that he owed his life to the SS men's awareness that he may be able to protect them upon the defeat. Dürmayer had therefore held key positions in the inmate administration, allowing him to pursue an active role in Auschwitz's underground committee with greater ease. He had maintained close ties to partisans and the Polish underground's Cracow Central, and his group's 'clandestine listening' to Moscow and the BBC had also kept them well informed.[84] These circumstances allowed them to better plan for political life after the KZ. For example, Soswinski and Dürmayer had at Auschwitz devised a scheme that would require every member of the prospective Austrian government to include two associates from other parties. This cross-party constellation would to their mind guarantee that separate ministries no

[83] The involvement of Colonel Kodré (bearer of the Knight's Cross and Chief of Staff to Wehrkreis XVII) in Vienna has recently been called into question. See Peter Broucek, *Militärischer Widerstand: Studien zur österreichischen Staatsgesinnung und NS-Abwehr* (Vienna, 2008), pp. 410—413.

[84] The inmates' illegal news consumption via radio ('Schwarzhören') was a dangerous undertaking. At Mittelbau-Dora and Sachsenhausen dozens of prisoner were hanged for doing so. For general context at various camps, see Kogon, *Der SS-Staat*, pp. 335—336.

longer acted in a party political fashion[85] (commonly referred to as the 'Proporzsystem').[86]

Becker, a staunch conservative, was among the first to be arrested after the *Anschluss*. He spent three years at Dachau and Mauthausen between 1938 and 1941, recommencing his underground work thereafter to address the problematic organisation of resistance movements along party lines.[87] As one of the architects of what was to become the infamous Austrian resistance movement 'O5', he focused his energies on unifying the divided and unorganised activist groupings until his final arrest in February 1945.[88] Far from becoming a Leftist, the OSS noted how Becker's nostalgia for Austria's imperial past still aroused his contempt for the Versailles and Saint Germain treaties, and how he believed that the best democrats now came from the Austrian

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[85] 'Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen', Memorandum 445, NARA, RG 549, Box 336.

[86] The *Proporz* can be understood as the system of 'dividing the spoils proportionately between the parties', particularly in regards to positions, housing, and government contracts. For a definition, and on the subject more generally, see Fritz Plasser, Peter A. Ulram, and Alfred Grausgruber, 'The Decline of '*Lager* Mentality' and the New Model of Electoral Competition in Austria', in Kurt R. Luther and Wolfgang C. Müller, *Politics in Austria: Still a Case of Consociationalism?* (London, 1992): 18. Unlike the authors, however, I would contend that it has remained a problematic phenomenon. On its establishment by Karl Renner and Hans Kelsen in 1920, see Margarete Mommsen-Reindl, *Die österreichische Proporzdemokratie und der Fall Habsburg* (Vienna, 1976), pp. 31—36.

[87] Not only would the system of *Proporz* cause disintegration and fragmentation among these groupings, it would also greatly aid the process of former National Socialists' social rehabilitation and political reintegration from 1949 onwards. See Kropiunigg, *Eine österreichische Affäre*, pp. 12, 33—34, 92—93, 98.

[88] For an autobiographical account, see Hans Becker, *Österreichs Freiheitskampf: Die Widerstandsbewegung in ihrer historischen Bedeutung* (Vienna, 1946). On the history of 'O5', see Radomir Luža, *The Resistance in Austria 1938—1945* (Minneapolis, 1984); Christhard Schneider, 'Die Rolle der O5 während des Krieges und danach' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Vienna, 2012), which also covers its postwar significance and chronicles Becker's involvement throughout.

Heimwehr. As ideological compromise was on the top of his agenda, Becker readily worked 'with those who put me in a concentration camp'.[89]

The Mauthausen Committee's priority rested squarely on analysing historical missteps to safeguard a unified and distinctly Austrian future.[90] Being politically astute, they congratulated Karl Renner's provisional government via telegram.[91] While an abundance of Communists were represented in the new government, some within the Committee expressed concern about their future role. The Leftist members, however, were quick to assert that stringent party discipline would keep them in check, and that they would steer clear of Soviet influences. The leadership admitted that between 1918 and 1938 they had all sported a degree of nationhood ambivalence; a union with a greater Germany had never been completely out of the question.[92] Now, however, they were 'done with Austrian querulousness and petty yearnings for greatness'. Instead, the special status of the country as a mediator between East and West was to be firmly established, which in itself would eventually evolve into a legitimising myth.

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[89] 'Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen', Memorandum 445, NARA, RG 549, Box 336.

[90] Its members equated the fight against Fascism to the struggle on the part of all Austrians during the NS era, thus supporting the myth of Austria as the first victim of Hitlerite aggression. See Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 43—44.

[91] Austrian National Mauthausen Committee to Dr Karl Renner's provisional government, telegram, [undated], NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, Case 000-50-5, Appendix A.

[92] A union had indeed been attempted. The psychological effects of losing the Habsburg empire catalysed the Anschluss movement and notions of 'home into the Reich' became increasingly popular. As early as November 1918, the Austrian National Assembly announced that the Republic of German-Austria would henceforth be a constituent part of a German Republic ('Deutschösterreich'). Despite an overarching Austro-political compliance with this merger, the victorious Allies (fearing the potential repercussions of a greater Germany) rejected the declaration and insisted on Austria's political sovereignty (Treaty of Saint Germain). See Thaler, *The Ambivalence of Identity*, p. 58.

Beyond a mere anti-NS stance, the Committee also sought not to promote a new government along pre-war lines. It thus clearly distanced itself from the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era for having alienated the masses. Viewing the new political players' frame of reference as being dictated by an aversion to National Socialism alone would be to disregard longer-term deficiencies in Austrian political culture.[93] As the Mauthausen Committee highlighted: economic, social, and political lessons to be learned required the consideration of Habsburg and interwar mishaps in equal measures. In economic terms, Keynesian considerations ultimately appeared closest to its heart. A competitive private sector, they believed, could not positively rejuvenate the war-torn economy; capital was lacking and Austria needed to abandon post-WWI state trade policies for the sake of 'self-preservation' and a reimplementation of the pre-1918 economic Danube basin cooperation.[94] Austria, as they believed, would be wise to capitalise on its timber, water, and luxury industry instead of entering into needless competition.[95]

For all its democratic intentions, the Committee was weak in respect of international solidarity and cross-party cooperation. Its members believed for instance that progress would be hampered by demographic considerations. While the return of around one million exiled Austrians needed to be accelerated for the sake of a solid

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[93] For argument that the architects of democratisation after 1945 focused heavily on avoiding the violence and conflict that had marked the First Republic, see Rathkolb, *Die paradoxe Republik*, p. 63.

[94] For a comprehensive account highlighting the successes of Habsburg economic policy, see David F. Good, *The Economic Rise of the Habsburg Empire, 1750—1914* (Berkeley, 1984).

[95] 'Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen', Memorandum 445, NARA, RG 549, Box 336.

political basis, the roughly one million 'foreign workers' and an equally high number of *Reichsdeutsche* were to be repatriated as swiftly as possible.[96] The group blamed the remaining foreigners for 'moving east and west across the country and plundering as they go'.[97] Anti-foreign sentiments notwithstanding, one ought to remember that for all the liberal faith and solidarity espoused by these new political players, this would in due time be revealed as a common international language of rhetoric.[98] After all, the liberation could not so easily dissipate the deeply-engrained divisions that had developed in the wartime camps.[99] One development would nevertheless stick, namely the resolute abandonment of the pan-German dream and a unanimous decision to rally behind the Austrian flag.

Despite being an uncompromisingly Austro-national Committee, its members were among the most progressive visionaries of a new political culture. Above all, the

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[96] In the summer of 1945, around 1.6 million refugees and DPs lived on Austrian soil, of whom an estimated 630,000 were *Reichsdeutsche*. For an exceptional overview, including figures and categories, see Knight, 'National Construction Work and Hierarchies of Empathy in Postwar Austria': 493.

[97] 'Austrian National Committee at Mauthausen', Memorandum 445, NARA, RG 549, Box 336.

[98] This phenomenon could lend itself well to a comparison with other periods where the 'international' dimension has been exaggerated. Efforts to historicise '1968' in recent decades, for instance, have increasingly moved scholars from imagining the turbulent protest years in terms of generational conflict with nation-specific peculiarities to portraying it as a global youth movement transcending state boundaries through transnational activities. See George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Cambridge, MA, 1987); Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958—c. 1974* (New York, 1998); Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Power of Détente* (Cambridge, MA, 2002); Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956—1976* (Oxford, 2007); Martin Klimke, *The "Other" Alliance: Global Protest and Student Unrest in West Germany and the U.S., 1962—1972* (Princeton, 2009).

[99] On how the SS hampered international solidarity among inmates, see Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, pp. 145—147. For divisions among fellow nationals in the camps, see Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 506—609. For solidarity and resistance at Mauthausen, including mention of its outposts, see Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 357—384.

Committee embodied a pervasive, democratically orientated and politically inclusive postwar confidence. Being closer to the reins of power than the Ebensee group, most members—beyond becoming close advisors to the occupying powers in Vienna—were soon propelled into high political positions. Little of the newfound optimism would prove lasting. Dürmayer, for instance, who served as the first Chief of Police in Karl Renner's government from May 1945 onwards, surrounded himself predominantly with KPÖ members. With the advent of the Cold War, his Communist stance prompted the Social Democrats to find a replacement in September 1947.[100] Dürmayer's fate constituted no exception as the efforts to consolidate the unity that had materialised since 1943 eventually disintegrated under the pressures of new realities.[101] While occupation policy aims shifted and the military authorities' presence decreased over time, antidemocratic patterns inherent in Austrian political culture would soon resurface.[102] Divisions would also become increasingly evident when local and federal bureaucracies regained the unfettered confidence to again publicly assert their own

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[100] Dürmayer's dismissal can be understood within the background of the broader political move to weed out communist influences in the Austrian state police. See Siegfried Beer, '"Bound" to Cooperate—Austria's Little-known Intelligence Community Since 1945', *Journal of Intelligence History*, 3/1 (2003): 27—28.

[101] For an overview of the ÖVP and SPÖ's decision to dissolve the federal victims' association ('Bundesverband ehemals politisch Verfolgter') in March 1948, with an emphasis on the Upper Austrian context, see Simon Loidl and Peter März, *"... Garanten gegen den Faschismus ...": Der Landesverband ehemals politisch Verfolgter in Oberösterreich* (Linz, 2010), pp. 191—215. This fate also befell the federal association in West Germany in May 1948.

[102] At first, the victims' associations ('Opferverbände') existed along party-political lines; the only realistic means of surviving as an organisation in the early postwar period. A brief attempt at a federal association in 1946 failed (dissolved in 1948), and the associations were once again absorbed into the parties. Beyond causing serious fragmentation, they were thus subjected to the control of their respective parties, which now favoured anti-Communism—and pursued the reintegration of former National Socialists—over their narratives (save for the Communist party, KPÖ). See Melanie Dejnega, *Rückkehr in die Außenwelt: Öffentliche Anerkennung und Selbstbilder von KZ-Überlebenden in Österreich* (Vienna, 2012), pp. 37—38.

victimhood narratives. NS continuities were to become but a more recently acquired part of longer-term conflicts. The associations-based organisation of political power in particular could thus securely begin re-emerging by 1947.[103]

Back in Ebensee, these developments were already under way. With around ninety per cent of the original DP population having been repatriated by early 1946, international solidarity ceased to be a dominant topic altogether. On the one hand, increasingly national stances among DPs were the product of postwar clashes along racial lines, coupled with the Army's subsequent efforts to reduce conflict by segregating residents according to nationality.[104] The total number of Ebensee camps, collectively referred to as 'the Settlement' by UNRRA, had also increased as a direct result. In January 1946, the Settlement spanned six centres, all of which were located in the vicinity of Ebensee and within a thirty-five-kilometre radius. And residential installations were situated several kilometres from their respective centre. On the other hand, improving conditions and organising daily life in the camps took centre stage for DPs, most of whom were at this point fully employed. DPs became somewhat self-sufficient and coherent in organising social, political, and economic life.[105]

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[103] On how the *Proporz* tradition undermined denazification, see Dieter Stiefel, 'Forschungen zur Entnazifizierung in Österreich: Leistungen, Defizite, Perspektiven', in Walter Schuster and Wolfgang Weber, *Entnazifizierung im regionalen Vergleich* (Linz, 2004): 48.

[104] Despite ongoing discrimination, Jewish DPs were also housed along national lines for some time. See Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps,* p. 70.

[105] UNRRA Team 313 Ebensee, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 January 1946, 'American Zone Reports - UNRRA Monthly Narrative Reports - Team 313 Ebensee, 1944-1949', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

The Settlement population elected 'Commanders' by secret ballot. Commissioners were nominated to oversee health and sanitation, welfare, labour-related questions, police activities, fire precautions, housing and building maintenance, and repatriation. Even the most menial of tasks and positions were covered; four sanitary inspectors and one supervisor for garbage collection were assigned from among the DPs. Additionally, two Settlement Tribunal members, along with a legal adviser, were nominated. Fortnightly meetings were held, always attended by a member of UNRRA's Team 313. Even though politics had been stripped of its international coatings, a growing nationalist fervour could not motivate all DPs to return. Political organisation even tended to work against repatriation efforts. Not only did 'political, racial and religious prejudices' among DPs prevail, it was proving particularly difficult to counteract anti-repatriation propaganda.[106] Speeches by Polish political leaders and members of the Polish Red Cross had the effect of discouraging DPs from returning to their homeland.[107] As a Team 313 narrative report continuously stressed, 'The scarcity of reliable information from Poland is quite regrettable'.[108]

Just as a sense of uncertainty continued to inhibit repatriation, logistical problems over transportation ensued. Movement between, and the inspection of,

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[106] In Germany repatriation propaganda was also overwhelmingly directed at Poles, especially in the US zones. UNRRA took the lead and coined it the 'Polish Repatriation Drive'. See Jacobmeyer, *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum heimatlosen Ausländer*, pp. 116—121.

[107] For postwar anti-Semitism in Poland, see Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust: Polish-Jewish Conflict in the Wake of World War II* (Boulder, 2003); Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (Princeton, 2006).

[108] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 January 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

various centres remained difficult due to both the great distances between the sites and a severe fuel shortage. By the end of January 1946, fuel availability could at least be increased from four hundred to eight hundred gallons by drawing on civilian sources. Adding to resource shortages, the DP population forever fluctuated, with new arrival and repatriation figures never stable. While new centres periodically sprang up, others were being shut down, reopened, or abandoned. Despite this demographic fluidity, health conditions had improved considerably; only sixty-six patients now had to be treated in the two Settlement hospitals. Daily calories for unemployed Settlement workers as well as sick and working DPs amounted to 2300 and 3700, respectively.[109]

As things stood in early 1946, and even while antifascism already seemed dead in the water, cooperation and relief were at a high point. Whereas equipment and tools were still lacking—including educational and vocational material for children and adults in the still unheated kindergarten and schoolrooms—economic life became particularly structured. Central workshops were set up with various departments from shoe and boot making to barber ventures that even expanded into settlements further afield.[110] With the relief effort having taken effect, self-sufficiency through labour became a more central concern. A publicised scheme for a twelve-hour workweek was already under way. This hoped to employ the physically able DPs in maintaining sanitary conditions whilst contributing to their own welfare. The local Austrian

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[109] Ibid.

[110] On how the camps increasingly became self-sufficient communities over time, see Wyman, *DPs*, 106—130.

government also made its first payment to DP workers with a promise of several months' back pay, and the municipality made more rooms available to Team 313, allowing the administration to engage much-needed additional DP staff. Only the *American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee* (AJJDC; 'the "Joint"') gave reason for concern, as it had not kept its promise to supply the Jewish residents of Camp VI.[111]

[111] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 January 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4. For AJJDC, see Cesarani, *Final Solution*, pp. 769, 779. For AJJDC in Austria, see Oertel, *Juden auf der Flucht durch Austria*, pp. 45, 62—65. Oertel notes that 'the Joint' often came under scrutiny for not having enough trained personnel on the ground.

RE-MARGINALISING THE MARGINALISED: A 'JEWISH QUESTION'

Despite an apparent restraint towards survivors in the early postwar period, symptoms of a mounting resistance on the part of Ebensee's bureaucracy began materialising in late July 1945. Local tolerance towards victim groups started to decline as rapidly as international solidarity had at Mauthausen.[112] Ebensee's municipal council began alleging that the DP installations were having a draining effect on local supplies, as the US authorities were supposedly providing the former inmates with food and firewood intended for the villagers' use.[113] Far from wanting to cover up the camp, however, Ebensee's mayor still thought that it could act as one of three lucrative tourist attraction sites in the foreseeable future—one of the others being the famous cable car leading up to the Feuerkogel.[114] Paving the way for the appropriation of the site in symbolic—and later in physical—terms ensured that its memory and remnants would inevitably come under the control of the local bureaucracy. First and foremost, however, the marginalisation of the DPs had to be consolidated.

A year down the line, it became increasingly clear that the *Landfremde* ('individuals foreign to the province') in Ebensee now figured as the central subjects of

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[112] On the transfer of Mauthausen from the Soviet to the Austrian authorities in 1947, and on the decision to mount a memorial plaque listing the number of victims by nationality (with Jewish victims being subsumed into the various national categories), see Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 61—69.

[113] For a poorly worded, albeit interesting, account arguing that the 'material plight' of locals and the 'preferential treatment' of Jewish DPs in Upper Austria strengthened anti-Semitic sentiments, see Norbert Ramp, 'Prejudices and Conflicts between Locals and Jewish DPs in Austria', in Thomas Albrich and Ronald W. Zweig, *Escape Through Austria: Jewish Refugees and the Austrian Route to Palestine* (London, 2002): 69—88.

[114] Max Zieger, Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 25 July 1945, ZME.

blame for the social and economic hardship that the town inhabitants endured.[115] As Ebensee's local political elite began engineering a widespread sense that Upper Austrians had closed the book on National Socialism, formerly persecuted individuals, and foreigners in general, were increasingly ignored by the media and excluded from the political decision-making process at large.[116] A populist turn emerged in the summer of 1946, most eloquently expressed by Josef Neuhauser, a local municipal politician and later mayor of Ebensee:

> We have to see to it that the camp is removed from our village, as we will not otherwise be freed from all these miseries. Much the same concerns nutrition, because so long as we have all these foreigners here, the camps will always be supplied first …. It will be the task of municipal representatives to continuously remind the appropriate authorities of the hardship and difficult days that Ebensee had to endure through the presence of the concentration camp.[117]

A growing *Schlussstrich* mentality started surfacing in Ebensee.[118] The onset of this revisionism was marked by a disassociation between the years of National Socialism and ensuing social, political, and economic hardship. And within this background,

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[115] Gregor makes a similar point that rings particularly true in the case of Ebensee's local bureaucracy: 'Re-founding a workable political community at [the] local level also meant embracing a shared vocabulary of victimhood – and a corresponding "grammar of exculpation" – which could command consensus across the divides of a city that hosted competing political traditions'. See Gregor, *Haunted City*, p. 376—377.

[116] Quatember, Felber, and Rolinek, *Das Salzkammergut*, p. 108.

[117] Josef Neuhauser, Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 30 July 1946, ZME. Original quote: 'Wir müssen unbedingt trachten, das Lager von unserem Ort wegzubringen, da wir sonst von all dem Elend nicht befreit werden. Ganz dasselbe ist auch beim Ernährungswesen, denn solange wir die vielen Fremden hier haben, werden immer die Lager an erster Stelle versorgt werden .... Es wird die Aufgabe der Gemeindevertretungen sein, die maßgebenden Stellen immer wieder auf die schweren Tage, die Ebensee durch das KZ-Lager miterleben mußte, aufmerksam zu machen'.

[118] Understood here as the community's artificially constructed break with its contentious history by casting a shadow of silence over the problematic past.

region-specific interwar and wartime identity patterns of legitimisation were gradually encouraged to resurface. After a fleeting period of social and political tolerance, provincial Ebensee began reverting to a culture of exclusion and demarcation against social groups along old lines.[119] Local disdain towards DPs, Jews, and, to a lesser degree, the American authorities became increasingly evident.[120] All this culminated in a united political line that objected to their continued presence. When in April 1946 plans for a Hungarian refugee camp were announced, Ebensee's mayor, Max Zieger, with the backing of his municipal council members, began fervently opposing this motion. He propagated that Ebensee in particular had to continually take on the burden of supporting NS victims, and that a new 'occupation' ought to be challenged. As Zieger argued, 'It is inconceivable that a camp for Hungarians should once again be established. Only a low percentage of Ebensee inhabitants were members of the Nazi Party, which just comes to show that we must in fact all be the innocent victims of these horrible deeds'.[121]

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[119] This framework was also adopted by the civilian authorities in postwar Nuremberg, who responded to crime by mobilising 'older refrains that constructed outsiders as criminals or bearers of disease by virtue of their national origins or alleged genetic predisposition. … The xenophobic neuroses which resonated through these bureaucratic constructions of the "foreigner" as "criminal" betrayed both a continuation of the racist mentalities which had underpinned the Nazi regime and a strong sense of powerlessness vis-à-vis groups over whom the local authorities had but recently presided to brutal effect'. See Gregor, *Haunted City*, pp. 106—107.

[120] Quatember, Felber, and Rolinek, *Das Salzkammergut*, pp. 107—108.

[121] Zieger, Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 2 April 1946, ZME. Original quote: '[Ich sehe, dass] gerade Ebensee immer die Opfer des NS zu tragen hat und die Gemeindevorstehung gegen eine neuerliche Besetzung protestieren müsse …. Es sei ein untragbarer Zustand, daß wieder ein Lager mit Ungarn errichtet werden sollte …. Nur ein geringer Prozentsatz der Einwohner Ebensees waren Mitglieder der NSDAP, sodaß eigentlich wir alle das unschuldige Opfer von all den Greueltaten sein müssen'.

An unwillingness to further accommodate any remaining foreigners (or indeed to differentiate between the two 'occupations' or between a concentration camp and a refugee camp) reached a point at which the local bureaucracy began resisting and ignoring official directives.[122] Some locals were, for instance, obliged to accommodate victims of National Socialist oppression in their homes, as well as employees from the various relief organisations. While the decision was thought to help dampen a brooding resource crisis and alleviate the pressures of a severe housing shortage, these directives were at times difficult to implement. Aside from the fact that eighty per cent of council houses were still occupied by former National Socialists until the end of 1945,[123] the Director of UNRRA's Team 313 at Ebensee frequently had to prompt the municipal office to cooperate:

> As per our letter from 28 January of this year [1946], we requested that you provide Mr. Tadeusz Piotrowski with a room. We learned that you allocated him a room that does not meet his expectations and is not habitable. Given your conduct of affairs, we have come to the conclusion that you do not respect our requests. We therefore once again ask that you immediately requisition a room from the Nazi family Bromberger in Almhaus Street and assign it to Mr. P. Should the abovementioned demand not be promptly fulfilled, we will be forced to seize the entire said house for our employees.[124]

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[122] The general attitude towards the occupying authorities would nevertheless change after the Second Control Agreement of 28 June 1946, which fully extended the control of the Austrian government (with few exceptions). As one historian put it, 'One is tempted to apply Ed[ward N.] Peterson's dictum about the course of the American occupation in Germany: Through retreat to victory. It was only after the Americans got out of the way of the Austrians and stayed in the way of the Russians that the Austrians, too, discovered virtue in the American occupation'. See Kurt K. Tweraser, 'Military Justice as an Instrument of American Occupation Policy in Austria 1945—1950: From Total Control to Limited Tutelage', *Austrian History Yearbook* 24 (1993): 178.

[123] Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 17 October 1945, ZME.

[124] James B. Woodrum (Team 313 Ebensee UNRRA Director) to Ebensee Municipal Office, 'Necessity

Much to disadvantage of the Allies and various aid organisations, §19 of the *Verbotsgesetz* (Prohibition Act) was only passed in 1947.[125] This subjected all those who were categorised as *Minderbelastete* (less severe former NS) to so-called *Sühnefolgen*, a wide range of legally binding duties. One of these conditions obliged *Minderbelastete* individuals to agree to property requisitions should the necessity for living quarters or office spaces arise. Prior to being embedded in law, it was already commonly applied in practice; the Bromberger family's case was by no means unique. As a legally defined entity with the passing of the *Nationalsozialistengesetz* on 6 February 1947, however, it did not only come too late in time, it was also rather short-lived; the amnesty laws for the roughly half a million *Minderbelastete* across Austria came into effect on 1 April 1948.[126] Even while requisitioning housing greatly facilitated relief efforts, it was neither seamless nor effective in fostering a culture of reconciliation. In Ebensee it appeared to spur on local resistance from the outset. By the end of 1946, even before its legal enactment, Ebensee's mayor relayed that the

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of a room for our employee Mr. Tadeusz Piotrowski', correspondence, Ebensee, 29 January 1946, 'BH Gmunden, PR u. VS Akten, Sammelakten', regional district files, OÖLA, Box 307. Original quote: 'Mit unserem Schreiben vom 28.1. ds. Jhrs. haben wir Sie ersucht, unserem Herrn Tadeusz Piotrowski ein Zimmer anzuweisen. Wie wir feststellen mußten, haben Sie dem genannten ein Zimmer zugewiesen, welches ihm nicht zusagt und auch nicht zu bewohnen ist. Auf Grund Ihrer Handlungsweise sind wir zu dem Entschluß gekommen, daß Sie unsere Ersuchen nicht respektieren. Sie werden daher nochmals aufgefordert, sofort ein Zimmer von der Nazi-Familie Bromberger in der Almhausstr. zu requirieren und dasselbe an Herr P. abzugeben. Sollte obige Angelegenheit nicht sofort erledigt werden, sind wir gezwungen, das ganze genannte Haus für unsere Angestellten in Anspruch zu nehmen'.

[125] For a brief overview of the original *Verbotsgesetz* from 8 May 1945, albeit in relation to bringing war criminals to justice, see Claudia Kuretsidis-Haider, *"Das Volk sitzt zu Gericht": Österreichische Justiz und NS-Verbrechen am Beispiel der Engerau-Prozesse 1945—1954* (Innsbruck, 2006), pp. 36—40. The first part of which offers background on the Austrian People's Courts. For a broader discussion, see Hellmut Butterweck, *Verurteilt und begnadigt: Österreich und seine NS-Straftäter* (Vienna, 2003), pp. 20—24.

[126] Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs: Kultur – Gesellschaft – Politik* (Graz, 2000), p. 320.

community pushed for a swift solution to the 'foreigner question' ('Lösung der Ausländerfrage'). Zieger saw that locals were now openly expressing their wish not to keep a single one of the estimated one thousand foreigners in Ebensee ('keinen einzigen Ausländer zurückzubehalten').[127]

In light of these developments it is not surprising that the *KZ-Häftling* was moved out of Ebensee that same year. Vilko Herman remained its editor until it was entirely discontinued after a mere nine issues. However briefly, the publication still constituted an important indicator of Jewish postwar fates across Austria and provided a platform through which former inmates could bring their frustrations to paper.[128] The many contributions by KZ survivors clearly showed how the promise of the liberation had already faded for those who belonged to formerly persecuted groups. Old patterns of social exclusion had again taken root:

> I have a birth defect: I am a Jew. …. Concentration camp inmates, in regards to how they are faring in their reclaimed freedom and how one is helping them, are no longer relevant in any case. They should be happy that they were not also murdered or crippled. After all, a year has already passed. They should finally be quiet. There are more important things. What a woman wears in the spring, that the daughter of the master shoemaker's wife recovered well from the measles, etc. …. I am an avid radio listener. I am allowed to listen again, whatever I please. As of late, and for the first time in a long time, I have been listening to Werner Fink once again. He was also "withdrawn" from the public for a long period of time. He made an excellent recommendation for the denazification *Fragebogen*. The last

[127] Zieger, Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 19 November 1946, ZME.

[128] Herman also took an active role in representing the interests of former inmates in questions relating to the memorialisation of Ebensee. In August 1946, for instance, he attended a conference in Mauthausen where the erection of memorials at the main camp and its branches were discussed at length. See Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 50—51.

> question ought to read, "How would you have voted if Germany had won the war?[129]

Aided by irony, a former concentration camp inmate expressed his frustrations with the limits of denazification and depicted how the 'birth defect' of being Jewish had continued to affect him and others whom he knew in postwar Austria: a doctor was barred from practicing medicine again; a mother and her daughter had to fight hard to retrieve a small apartment in their former house; and a nineteen-year-old was denied ownership of his parent's Aryanised apartment in Vienna.[130] A year into the Allied victory, such stories were by no means the exception.

Within Ebensee DP centres, a marginalisation of Jews became an increasingly serious issue. This was largely a product of the US Army stationed in the area, who had until the end of 1945 paid insufficient consideration to the security and needs of the over five hundred Jews they were initially in charge of upon the liberation. The Jewish DP population was spread out over five centres and lived among a majority of Poles, with most of them (320) living in 'Camp III'. At the various centres, Jews were subjected to the anti-Semitism of both Polish DPs and a high number of those wrongly

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[129] Heinz Colm, 'Der Geburtsfehler und noch einiges', *Der KZ-Häftling* 7 (July 1946): 7—8. Original quote: 'Ich habe einen Geburtsfehler: Ich bin Jude. …. KZ-ler, wie es ihnen in der wiedergewonnenen Freiheit geht und wie man ihnen hilft, ist doch gar nicht mehr aktuell. Sie sollen doch froh sein, daß sie nicht auch ermordet oder verkrüppelt sind. Schließlich ist doch schon ein Jahr vergangen. Sie sollen endlich Ruhe geben. Es gibt Wichtigeres. Was die Frau im Frühling anzieht, daß der Schumachermeistersgattin Töchterchen die Masern glücklich überstanden hat, usw. .... Ich höre mit Begeisterung Radio. Ich darf wieder hören, was ich will. Neulich höre ich seit langer Zeit wieder einmal Werner Fink. Er war auch lange Zeit der Öffentlichkeit "entzogen". Er hat einen ausgezeichneten Vorschlag für den Fragebogen zur Entnazifizierung gebracht. Die letzte Frage müßte lauten: "Wie hätten Sie gewählt, wenn Deutschland den Krieg gewonnen hätte?'

[130] Ibid.: 7.

claiming to be Poles. False registrations included *Volksdeutsche* who sought to reap the benefits of being categorised as DPs from a friendly allied nation and Ukrainians who had acted as NS mercenaries now seeking to avoid the perils of repatriation to the Soviet Union.[131] Jewish DPs were thus living among a high number of 'vicious anti-Semites' and 'Nazis to the very core of their being'. They reported interminable abuse, persecution, and supply theft, mostly at the hands of a DP camp administration composed entirely of Poles. The situation became progressively serious leading up to 1946, and incidents occurred with increasing frequency.[132] While on one occasion a group of Poles fired on Jewish residents, on another occasion the Poles at the camps almost began rioting when members of AJJDC handed out packages to them before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.[133]

Drawing on a long list of mistreatment, US President Harry S. Truman's first Advisor on Jewish Affairs, Judah Nadich, managed to get the head of Team 313, Bert Fenenga, to agree on a camp exclusively for Jews. Seeing eye to eye with Nadich, Fenenga related how on several occasions Poles had conveyed their intent to harm Jewish DPs. Lieutenant Colonel Hill, who as commanding officer of the 180th Field Battalion was in charge of the centres, likewise agreed with the proposal. Ultimately,

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[131] On how the victimhood narrative of *Volksdeutsche* increasingly won out over that of other DP groups (and Jewish DPs in particular), see Tara Zahra, '"Prisoners of the Postwar": Expellees, Displaced Persons, and Jews in Austria after World War II', *Austrian History Yearbook* 41 (2010): 191—215.

[132] While taking note of the prevalence of violence along national and political lines in German DP camps, Stafford fails to mention Jewish DPs, who often became the primary targets in this connection. He nevertheless points to the perils of repatriation propaganda: 'The situation worsened when representatives from the new communist regimes of Eastern Europe, as well as Soviet army officers, urged inmates to return home'. See Stafford, *Endgame 1945*, p. 488.

[133] Judah Nadich, *Eisenhower and the Jews* (New York, 1953), pp. 187—188.

the problem had arisen because no policy directive to this effect had yet been issued in Austria. In Germany, on the other hand, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, had already ordered for Jewish DPs to be placed in separate camps.[134] The decision in Germany stemmed from the Harrison Report, which had in July 1945 concluded that the US military authorities across thirty DP camps refused by and large to 'recognize Jews as separate category or as stateless despite admitted greater suffering'. Earl Harrison's findings reached President Truman in early August, and the recommendations compelled him to institute exclusively Jewish DP camps and centres.[135] Yet even in Germany this move did not drastically improve their circumstances. Anti-Semitism as well as the aforementioned requisitioning issue was common. By late August 1945, the situation had in fact become so grave across both Austria and Germany that President Truman sent Eisenhower an urgent letter:

> [Current] conditions, I know, are not in conformity with policies promulgated by SHAEF …. [The] policies are not being carried out by some of your subordinate officers. For example, military government officers have been authorized and even directed to requisition billeting facilities from the German population for the benefit of displaced persons. ….

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[134] Further differences between Germany and Austria were highlighted by Nadich: 'The situation in Austria differed from that in Germany vis-a-vis the indigenous population in that the German people were regarded as conquered enemies while the Austrian people were officially looked upon as liberated victims of the enemy. The important consequences so far as the DPs was concerned lay in the fact that while in Germany there could be requisitioning from the native population, in Austria this was impossible. Therefore, proposed solutions to some of the problems of the Jewish displaced persons in Austria could not reckon with requisitioning of housing or supplies of any kind from the Austrian population—in spite of the fact that in reality the majority of the Austrians had been willing accomplices of the German Nazis'.

[135] For original documents and general context, see 'Evolving Conditions for Jewish Displaced Persons' chapter, and 'The Harrison Report and Its Effects' section in particular, in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (ed.), *1945: The Year of the Liberation* (Washington, DC, 1995), pp. 184—197. For its bearing on Austria, see Oertel, *Juden auf der Flucht durch Austria*, p. 40—46.

> Apparently it is being taken for granted that all displaced persons irrespective of their former persecution or the likelihood that their repatriation or resettlement will be delayed, must remain in camps—many of which are overcrowded and heavily guarded. Some of these camps are the very ones where these people were herded together, starved, tortured and made to witness the death of their fellow-inmates and friends and relatives. The announced policy has been to give such persons preference over the German civilian population in housing. …. [Also] we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of S.S. troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi policy.[136]

At the time of the letter, Eisenhower was holidaying on the French Riviera with General Mark Clark, Commander in Chief of US Forces of Occupation in Austria. When Frankfurt Headquarters phoned him to convey its contents, as well as Truman's intervention in the Jewish DP crisis, the two Army generals cut their vacation short and headed back to their respective offices. Spurred on by the order, Clark now took the issue more seriously. He met with Judah Nadich, read his report recommending that Jewish DPs living in various centres across Ebensee be transferred out, and, eventually, ordered the transfer of Jewish residents out of the Austrian DP camps of Ebensee (512 DPs), Lambach (57), Wels (677), and Kammer-Schörfling (250).[137]

Since most of Ebensee's Jews could not be repatriated, they were relocated to a makeshift and all-Jewish DP camp in Bad Gastein, around 130 kilometres southwest of Ebensee. The new camp came under the administration of UNRRA's Team 322 and the

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[136] US President Harry S. Truman to General of the US Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, correspondence, 31 August 1945, quoted in Nadich, *Eisenhower and the Jews*, pp. 113—114.

[137] Nadich, *Eisenhower and the Jews*, pp. 176, 191.

control of the US Army.[138] At the end of December 1945, the Bad Gastein site housed a total of 1247 residents, mainly in requisitioned hotels like the Elizabeth, Straubinger, and Austria. The camp population was mainly made up of strong Zionist groupings, whose members had undergone years of persecution in Central and Western Europe; a mere two per cent wished to be resettled elsewhere than Palestine. According to UNRRA registration interviews, a small minority hoped to join their remaining families in the US, South America, or England.[139]

Residents were categorised according to nationality, and all (except for thirteen) were registered under category '2b', deeming them non-repatriable.[140] The DPs considered repatriable had been born in Palestine but captured by the Germans in Europe at the outbreak of the war; they now awaited transport back to their families in Palestine. The remaining residents, save for one awaiting transportation to Argentina, were less fortunate: 886 Poles (seventy-one per cent of the DP population) feared pogroms and anti-Semitic violence; 143 Romanians faced the prospect of growing anti-Semitism in their homeland; 137 Czechs and 38 Hungarians, either Zionists who feared

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[138] Between 1945 and 1955, around sixty Jewish DP camps emerged across Austria, with around forty-seven of these being located in the US zones. See Thomas Albrich, 'Die zionistische Option: Israel und die Überlebenden des Holocausts', in Thomas Albrich (ed.), *Flucht nach Eretz Israel: Die Bricha und der jüdische Exodus durch Österreich nach 1945* (Innsbruck, 1998): 279.

[139] UNRRA Team 322 Bad Gastein, 'DP Repatriability Report', Bad Gastein, 28 December 1945, 'Ebensee Goisern - Team 313 - Resettlement, Repatriation and Determination of Nationality 1944-1949', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010.

[140] Category 2b defined as 'persons who on account of their political conviction or for racial reasons are non-repatriable, at any rate for the time being'. USFA directives on policy towards Jews: 'Persons of Jewish faith who desire to be repatriated to the country of which they are nationals will be classified as citizens of that country. Those Jews who are without nationality, or those Jews (not Soviet citizens) who do not desire to return to their country of origin, will be reported as "Jews"'. See 'Determination and Reporting of Nationalities', 21 December 1945, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010, p. 3.

persecution or were married to Poles; 19 Germans and Austrians, who were mostly Austrian-born infants to Polish parents; and 10 others deemed non-repatriable due to the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Lithuania, Russia, and elsewhere.[141] It should be noted that in practice these figures are impossible to verify, since DPs had become suspicious of repatriation procedures, making false registrations all too common.[142]

Mistrust beyond repatriation was particularly evident in Bad Gastein. Immediately, conflict between the residents and the forces of order broke out. The Central Committee at Bad Gastein's Jewish Centre provided a statement chronicling the poor treatment they received.[143] Food rationing was lacking in quantity and quality, with children and sick patients affected in equal measures. Over thirty new cases of scurvy came to the attention of the dentist, which quickly reached 'epidemic proportions'. One doctor simply did not suffice. Winter clothing was also lacking.[144] Far from putting this down to a resource shortage, the Central Committee suspected that residents received only a small portion of Red Cross package contents; biscuits and cigarettes were always missing. Infuriated by the Team's mismanagement and

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[141] Team 322, 'DP Repatriability Report', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010.

[142] Vernon R. Kennedy (UNRRA Director, HQ US Zone, Salzburg), 'Repatriation of Allied Displaced Persons in Austria', policy directives, [undated], ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010, pp. 1—3.

[143] The Central Committee, founded in the US zone in Austria, ensured that all aspects of everyday life—political, social, religious—became meticulously organised. It oversaw the other Jewish committees and assumed an above-politics stance to achieve internal unity, namely by integrating various Zionist, political, and ideological persuasions. See Rolinek, 'Transit station: Jewish refugees in Salzburg', in Aschauer-Smolik and Steidl (eds.), *Tamid Kadima – Heading Forward*: 170—172. On how divisions among Jewish DPs in fact signalled a return to 'normality', see Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, p. 148.

[144] Given a lack of clothing in general, apparently former inmates continued wearing their KZ uniforms for quite some time after the liberation. See Rolinek, *Jüdische Lebenswelten 1945—1955*, p. 44.

presumed corruption, the Central Committee demanded that the parcels be delivered straight to them for vetting and distribution within the kitchens and among the over one thousand residents.[145]

Despite expressing their wish to collaborate, the Central Committee's concerns were repeatedly ignored by the Team Director. Their social marginalisation quickly became apparent when it was banned from using the convention hall for political purposes.[146] Communists and Socialists, on the other hand, were free to convene there.[147] Jews were permitted to use the hall purely for concerts and entertainment purposes, an offer that was on one occasion rescinded: 'when the American authorities learned that there was to be a meeting, they withdrew permission'.[148] A continued presence directly in Ebensee might have made little difference, since Jewish marginalisation spanned the entire area.[149] Even their complete absence from Ebensee did not prevent the municipal council from blaming local hardship on (imagined)

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[145] Central Committee of the Jewish Center, statement, Bad Gastein, November 1945, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010.

[146] As Dan Stone points out, one ought not to forget the ultimate value that such centres proved to have: 'Ironically, the heart of Europe, amidst the ruins of the Third Reich, in camps where the Jew's liberators forced them to live and from which they intended to leave as soon as they could, became the setting for the revival of Jewish life and culture'. See Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, p. 147.

[147] Bad Gastein would in 1947 be mobilised by the Austrian authorities to argue that the Jewish DPs living in eight of the town's top hotels were driving the tourist economy into the gutter. As would increasingly come to be the case, Jewish DPs were singled out. See Wyman, *DPs*, p. 170.

[148] Central Committee of the Jewish Center, statement, Bad Gastein, November 1945, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010.

[149] Theft and black market activities were still blamed predominantly on Jewish Ebensee DPs in the autumn of 1946. An official police complaint of this nature is contained in Norbert Ramp, 'Prejudices and Conflicts between Locals and Jewish DPs in Salzburg and Upper Austria', *Journal of Israeli History* 19/3 (1998): 72. The situation in Germany was similar; Jewish DPs were blamed for black market activities despite being far less involved in it than German civilians. See Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, p. 135.

Jewish presence. Under the heading *Judenfrage* ('Jewish question'),[150] the local politicians urged the mayor to rid the town of this negative element ('Übel') in November 1946.[151]

[150] For an overview of the political factors contributing to the marginalisation of the memory of Jewish wartime suffering, see Albrich, '"Es gibt keine jüdische Frage": Zur Aufrechterhaltung des österreichischen Opfermythos', in Rolf Steiniger (ed.), *Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust: Europa – USA – Israel* (Vienna, 1994): 147—166.

[151] Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 19 November 1946, ZME.

DPs LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES

Both during and following the war, Jews in the vicinity of Ebensee had suffered more than any other group. Towards the end of February 1946, however, fortunes began to wane for all DPs residing in and around Ebensee. While welfare activities in the form of boxing gloves and skis with instruction came to the Camp, the US authorities demanded a reduction in the number of Settlement workers on the payroll, down to a mere 3.3 per cent.[152] Being responsible for some 1238 registered residents in February, Team 313 hastened to point out potential repercussions (see Figure A1 for 1946 Ebensee DP statistics). Of the present 149 DP workers, only 42 would remain funded; the latter number alone was required for a smooth operation of administrative work. Additional personnel of at least one hundred was necessary to keep the bakery and hospital running, as well as to keep warehouse workers, drivers, and mechanics employed. The Team suggested that such a move would force them to increase their point issues. Consequently, supply problems would become acute. The Team argued that cashless workers might become ever more tempted to sell commodities purchased with their points, which in turn would fuel the black market economy.[153] During this stage, the US authorities issued another directive on 11 February, ordering the pay of

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[152] In early 1947, the US authorities in Germany began ordering UNRRA to reduce DP supplies in order to make more available to Germans. See Wyman, *DPs*, p. 176. In Austria, however, the directives materialised earlier. This divergence is linked to the fact that the US authorities started giving the Austrians a higher degree of autonomy sooner.

[153] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 27 February 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

instructors in DP schools without providing the extra money.[154] Axing free education was thus next in line, much to the bewilderment of the Team:

> Surely it is very reactionary to provide schooling only for those who can pay? Up to the present we have taken the line—and the Polish Committee has backed us—that schooling is compulsory and we have implored, urged, exhorted and bullied parents to send their children to school, without ever suggesting that they might have to pay for that privilege. To try now to collect payment would cause a great deal of dissatisfaction, especially as the school is, at best, a makeshift affair—the teacher is not qualified and supplies are always inadequate. The teacher is paid in points and has made no complaints. Since it is not easy for all DPs to earn money … some parents might be unable to pay. [155]

The new US directive seeking to place a cap on the number of DP earners seemed illogical, since this risked upsetting a relatively stable and functioning system. As the Team concerned itself more with the wellbeing of the Settlement population than its military counterpart, it was particularly sensitive to the serious problem that a lack of education had presented from the outset. The youth between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, it pointed out, had missed six years of schooling. Some residents were illiterate as a result. Team 313 made every conceivable effort to provide the teenagers with instruction, and those in dire need of teaching were given special consideration.[156] In one particular case, a Jewish orphan received private tuition. Deeming this insufficient, the Team tried to persuade the boy's uncle to transfer to Bad Gastein for

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[154] Cigarettes were a common form of payment; 'For postwar Europe was a cigarette economy, where DP schoolteachers were paid up to five packs a week'. See Wyman, *DPs*, pp. 114—115.

[155] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 27 February 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

[156] On schooling and education regarding DPs in Austria, see Oertel, *Juden auf der Flucht durch Austria*, pp. 76—78.

schooling. Beyond camp instruction, arrangements were made, and clothing coupons obtained, for students from the Settlement to return to Graz University for their second term.[157]

Social welfare in general remained a priority for Team 313. Until February, the reshuffling of DPs, although frequent, was commonly done with the wellbeing of those affected in mind. For instance, children and expectant mothers, who received monthly examinations, were transferred from wooden barracks in 'Camp II' to better accommodation in 'Camp III'. Yet reallocations were not always constructive, since overcrowding remained an issue. At one point in February, people had to be transferred from Bahnhofstraße 7—next to Vilko Herman's office—to stables in the neighbouring town of Altmünster.[158]

In March 1946, the DP population was dealt a series of further blows. The district authorities no longer made good on their promise of salary payments. And the POW working parties that had for half a year seen to the maintenance of Settlement installations were transferred to another locality. The Camp thus became more dependent on DP craftsmen, workers, and apprentices. With resources and support

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[157] UNRRA even had its own official university in Munich between February 1946 and September 1948. It was conceived by DPs and funded primarily by the Administration. At its height, the University hosted over two thousand students from twenty-eight countries. It began disintegrating in spring 1947 when UNRRA funding dried up and no alternative sources of aid could be secured. The *International Refugee Organization* (IRO), UNRRA's successor, went as far as discouraging DPs from embarking on higher education. As an IRO official argued in early 1948, 'It does not seem sound to create a new intellectual proletariat'. See Anna Holian, 'Displacement and the Post-war Reconstruction of Education: Displaced Persons at the UNRRA University of Munich, 1945–1948', *Contemporary European History* 17 (2008): 167—195. See p. 194 for IRO official's statement.

[158] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 27 February 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

being increasingly drawn away from the Settlement, hard work and a greater focus on self-sufficiency became essential. Improvements in diet and sustaining bi-weekly vegetable consumption required Settlement residences to initiate vegetable plot projects. Despite the uphill struggle, the UNRRA Team nevertheless continued to pursue its goals in the field of education with considerable success: all between the ages of six and fourteen were now receiving schooling, and the Jewish boy at the Bad Ischl residence was attending the local Polish school.[159]

Jews in the Settlement were nevertheless still faring poorly, and efforts to accommodate them remained inadequate. The installation at Bad Ischl, around seventeen kilometres southwest of Ebensee, was receiving daily applications from Jewish DPs. Thirty applications in March 1946 came alone from discharged residents who had received treatment at Goisern Hospital, the sanatorium for TB patients located twenty-five kilometres south of Ebensee. Since the Bad Ischl installation initially consisted of a hotel with only forty-five rooms, all applications had to be turned down until an additional building could be requisitioned.[160] In contrast to other DP cases that were deemed legitimate, Jews were consistently barred from entering the Settlement.[161]

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[159] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 March 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

[160] In September 1947 all Jewish DPs in Bad Ischl were transferred to the Ebelsberg camp in Linz. See Rolinek, *Jüdische Lebenswelten 1945—1955*, p. 46; Oertel, *Juden auf der Flucht durch Austria*, p. 137, which also provides a brief overview of camps in the US zones.

[161] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 March 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

As four hundred Poles had been moved to Germany on 27 April, two of the camps could be closed down; Württemberg Castle in Altmünster and three medium-sized buildings close to Ebensee.[162] The housing shortage subsided for some time. Yet the announcement that Ebensee's local Military unit would soon be redeployed without being replaced added to the pressure that Team 313 was under. The closest US Army Company remained stationed in Gmunden. Since the Austrian authorities were now responsible for a steady supply of firewood, coal, and clothing, the Team would be left to its own devices in ensuring timely delivery.[163] Considering that firewood supply was already insufficient, the local Army's absence would exacerbate the situation. Right before its departure, matters further deteriorated. Some voluntary agencies like AJJDC in Goisern were neither fully cooperating nor being particularly helpful to the residents. And the Polish Red Cross at the Children's Centre freely went about taking children living with Austrian families to the Centre without Military authorisation, resulting in a number of Austrians requesting they be returned.[164]

On 22 April 1946, Team 313 took over Goisern Hospital, consolidating it with the Mendelsohn Orphanage. Confronted with appalling circumstances, this new responsibility appeared to have brought on a major turning point. Shortly before the

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[162] Such transfers intensified from this time. Between September and October 1946 alone, 35,000 Jewish DPs were transferred to Germany from the US zone in Austria. See Albrich, *Exodus durch Österreich*, p. 117.

[163] Yet Austrian attitudes towards DPs in general were not conducive to a smooth transition. DPs in the French zone, for instance, felt that the Allies were now 'leaving far too much to the Austrians', who treated them 'more as prisoners than anything else'. Jewish DPs were also attacked by mobs in Austria. See Wyman, *DPs*, p. 170.

[164] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 31 May 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

Team assumed administrative control over the site, V. S. Harshbarger, UNRRA's Acting Director at Goisern, prepared a thoroughly researched report chronicling conditions leading up to 10 April. He spent a week interviewing local military officials as well as Austrian medical and administrative staff, conversing with patients and their Committee representatives, and inspecting the entire site on a number of occasions.[165]

At the time, hospital facilities were scattered throughout the village. The camp consisted of one administrative building and five others housing a total 294 patients, of whom 229 were Polish. Most of the 181 Jewish patients were Poles with 'a history of concentration camp experience', such that the majority of residents were in fact Jewish Poles. The all-Austrian staff included nine physicians and twenty-four nurses, as well as the cleaners, clerical staff, and administrative personnel. With only one officer and six enlisted men at the camp, the Army had stationed fewer men than there were residential locations.[166] Considering the Acting Director's findings, this was entirely insufficient. Not only did some thirty-four cured patients refuse to evacuate buildings where sick patients remained, the absolute lack of order made the set-up seemingly untenable in the long run:

> It has been next to impossible to control the patients to date. They will not follow orders of the Austrian medical staff and refer to them as Nazi and

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[165] V. S. Harshbarger (UNRRA Acting Director Goisern Hospital) to Warren H. Cornwell (Area Supervisor US Zone Area II), 'Subject: Present Situation at Goisern Tuberculosis Hospital', Goisern Hospital, 10 April 1946, 'Ebensee Goisern - Team 313 - Correspondence and Reports', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[166] This can be understood within the background of new US foreign policy aims as well as America's disillusionment with UNNRA. The relief personnel, as Jessica Reinisch sees, ultimately came 'under suspicion for not conforming to the new Cold War realities'. See Reinisch, '"Auntie UNRRA" at the Crossroads': 70—97.

> scream "SS" at them when they attempt to enforce hospital routine or even medical treatment. The military have run into the same difficulty and patients will ignore their orders and even dare the soldiers to shoot, dramatically baring their chests …. No control has been exercised over patients' movements … and they are constantly traveling about the country, attending movies and other public gatherings. The Burgomeister [sic] has the past week presented a request [for] better control for fear of further infection in the community. …. [Last Friday there was] a near riot on the hospital grounds when an Austrian ambulance driver was beaten by patients and the enlisted men present were threatened by a mob of some fifty patients. …. It is regarded as an explosive situation that will require the cooperation of all agencies and organizations involved. All attempts to date to control the situation have failed …. I strongly recommend that UNRRA entertain no consideration whatever of assuming full control of the hospital at this time.[167]

After what had amounted to a year of chaos and interminable strikes, Team 313 nevertheless took over less than a fortnight later. As no site around Ebensee better exposed the increasingly negligent stance towards DPs than Goisern Hospital, its history since being absorbed into the Ebensee DP Settlement in late April 1946 deserves some attention. The Team immediately set the target of having healthy patients sent to Wels (en route to Linz) or Enns (near Mauthausen) by early May, and, if need be, removed by the Army.[168] In contrast to the other Settlement camps in the vicinity of Ebensee, conditions at the TB installation nevertheless showed few signs of improvement between April and July 1946. The Team met with great resistance to all new rules and regulations. In spite of its best efforts to alleviate tensions, the

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[167] Harshbarger to Cornwell, 'Subject: Present Situation at Goisern Tuberculosis Hospital', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[168] Enns was known as 'Green Shelter' (1946—1948). It had a DP population of around 550. Wels, which was much larger, sought to prepare DPs for a life in Palestine in particular. Wels was overcrowded (1377 DPs in July 1947) and conditions were poor, but it boasted a vibrant and active community. See Bernadette Lietzow, 'Green Shelter 106: Das Lager für jüdische DPs in Enns 1946—1948: Eine Fallstudie' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Innsbruck, 1995); Oertel, *Juden auf der Flucht durch Austria*, p. 138.

personnel's hands were bound. On the one hand, patients were particularly well organised and, as they saw it, had long mastered the art of dissent. On the other hand, a persistence of rebellious acts over time seemed to be more the product of external factors: personnel 'understretch' and continuous policy fluctuations.

A lack of and an inconsistency in US and external UNRRA directives meant that, for months on end, the local staff was at the mercy of Military indecisions. When the US authorities proposed moving the camp to Roith, patients responded by initiating a hunger strike.[169] Learning that the decision was not final, they suspended their strike on 8 May 1946.[170] UNRRA and Army policy confusions prevailed throughout the following month. In early June, the local Team was informed that the camp would be sustained indefinitely, provided that control could be achieved within thirty days. Two weeks later it was told it would be closed almost immediately, only to again be alerted on 27 June that the hospital would remain open indefinitely.[171]

Goisern's poor reputation also made it difficult to recruit DP personnel, which in itself seemed preferable to the patients, who requested to have all DP staff members removed. Similarly to Bad Ischl, enduring mistrust prompted patients to demand that

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[169] Hunger strikes were not always directed at the Army of relief workers. In the Bergen-Belsen DP camp tensions between the wider Jewish community (represented by the Central Jewish Committee) and the camp's Orthodox Jews over keeping kosher culminated in a hunger strike by a number of young Orthodox women. A kitchen was finally opened in August 1945. See Henri L. Thaler, 'History and Memory: The Orthodox Experience in the Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27/1 (2013): 39—42.

[170] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Weekly Report', Goisern, 10 May 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[171] Harshbarger, report on month's operations, Goisern, 28 June 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

the contents of Red Cross parcels remain unopened; they refused to eat corned beef from opened tins. As a result of the parcel dilemma, progress regarding welfare programmes remained at a standstill.[172] The residents continuously faced neglect, and not only because of the unit being too small for effective administration. On one occasion, patients needed ambulance transportation to the Bad Ischl Hospital Centre for treatment, which did not arrive for hours on end. Another typical instance was that laundry transportation did not arrive for days. Each time the local Team bore the brunt of discontent, despite trying in vain to address issues. Disorder and external disregard for the Goisern Team's needs continued unabated. Requesting immediate support from the Director of Team 313, Harshbarger expressed his outrage in the following terms:

> Confused statements of policy by different members of the team and uncertainty of responsibilities have caused no end of trouble. Some of these things are of course natural to a transfer of functions, but there is no reason now for the local Goisern staff to be longer embarrassed by this confusion. …. 10 patients are to be transferred from the hospital by force and without notification on 22 May. Although I am supposedly in charge I was not consulted as to the move nor the method of moving the patients. As it happens I am unalterably opposed to moving the patients without notification …. [I]t would be easy for headquarters personnel to conclude that nothing has been done at Goisern, since they are not in the position to know the amount of real work this job has taken to date. Naturally I do not like to be in this kind of situation. Therefore I am asking for clarification and for the necessary personnel to pull me out of this situation.[173]

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[172] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Weekly Report', 17 May 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[173] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Administration of Goisern Hospital', Goisern, 21 May 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

Harshbarger further stated his intention to contract out of the Acting Director position if staff shortages were not addressed, a threat that never materialised—despite the plea falling on deaf ears. The day he posted the letter, matters deteriorated. A fire erupted in 'Home II' after another altercation with protesting patients who the staff had struggled to keep under control. Unverifiable rumours soon circulated that this was yet another act of revenge on the part of the residents. As the building had stood unguarded for some days prior, the incident heightened concerns of an insufficient Military personnel presence.[174] Following mounting tension in May, circumstances continued in a typically disastrous vein: patients still breached regulations through minor smuggling offences and overnight stays in private lodgings; the Gmunden District physician breached the hierarchy code by issuing an order to contain patients, evoking another expression of outrage from the Acting Director;[175] necessary property was periodically transported to Ebensee for other DP operations, and done so without authorisation;[176] two typewriters were removed in the aforementioned manner by the Children's Hospital and never returned, forcing Harshbarger's secretary to give up hers for most of the time;[177] communication infrastructure was so poor that it took up to half a day to

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[174] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Fire in Home II', Goisern, 22 May 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[175] Harshbarger on the matter: 'Obviously this gentleman is not aware that this hospital is under military control, or he would not be giving an order of this nature. I am personally ignoring the note'. See Dr Tenschert to the Directorate of Hospital 904 in Goisern, 'Subject: Patients leaving the hospital', Gmunden, 18 June 1946; Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Letter from Austrian District Physician', Goisern, 7 July 1946; both in ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[176] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Property transport to Ebensee', Goisern, 27 June 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[177] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Typewriters removed from Goisern', Goisern, 9 July 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

place a call to Ebensee, with service ending after eight o'clock in the evening.[178] The number of issues hampering effective administration contained in June reports continued in this fashion.

By the end of June, the Team realised that it would receive little outside help. Guarding the premises around the clock required at least twenty-five men, with the US Army providing only twelve. Harshbarger furthermore noted that 'any contacts with UNRRA officials above the local Team 313 level has usually brought only the response that UNRRA was not responsible for Goisern', which 'had a rather dampening effect' on a personnel faced with difficult situations and living in 'comparative isolation'.[179] Harshbarger nevertheless kept on furnishing reports. He related his intention to secure a statement from UNRRA Headquarters as to their responsibility. Harshbarger went on to report that the Army in Salzburg had guaranteed to 'do everything in its power' to render the Goisern operation more efficient and to keep the camp open, since a high number of Jews were expected to arrive in the area shortly. Sixteen guards and a refurbishment of the still burnt-out hospital building were promised. The Acting Director was also expressly told that Goisern Hospital certainly remained under US Army control, and that insubordination on the part of the civilian staff ought to be reported, so that an order for any offenders could be issued.[180] Yet all this amounted to

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[178] Harshbarger, report on month's operations, Goisern, 28 June 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Continuation of Hospital, Goisern, 28 June 1946; Harshbarger to Woodrum, 'Subject: Conference with Col. Ross', Goisern, 3 July 1946; both in ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

empty promises. On 8 July a medical officer clearly conveyed the grim outlook of Goisern's future, seeing that none of the pertinent issues had been solved: contagious patients still roamed the streets; instead of a bolstering of the guarded presence, three soldiers were removed; and poor discipline rendered hygiene below standard. Just like Harshbarger, the medical officer could not conceive of any possible improvements so long as the Military evaded responsibility.[181]

Perhaps in part due to the additional chaos brought about by Goisern, both the Army Commander and the UNRRA Director had in late April already decided that a 'firm stand' at all centres would be essential. At other camps, DP resistance in particular added to the administration's frustrations.[182] Settlement residents often 'drifted back' to their residencies after their departure, and trust ran so low that the Team began conducting surprise investigations to locate returnees. As per a local Army-UNRRA agreement, they would 'therewith be placed in a guarded truck convoy', transported to a transit camp, and sent on to Germany. Despite a new wave of mistrust, DP self-sufficiency reached its highest point in April, with one thousand out of the total 1250 DPs engaged in work.[183]

A year into the Settlement's existence, Team 313 began preparing to depart, thus making a series of final efforts to cut administrative personnel. It strove for an

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[181] Dr R. E. W. Spencer (Medical Officer Goisern Sanatorium) to Dr Rogoff, 'Subject: Discipline at Goisern', Goisern, 8 July 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 235, File S-1510-0000-0008.

[182] On American soldiers' growing 'preference for Germans over DPs' in 1946, and resulting confrontations between the Army and Jewish DPs in particular, see Wyman, *DPs*, pp. 173—174.

[183] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 April 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

entire transfer of governance from the Team to the elected Settlement Committee. Within this context, the Team's aggressive repatriation policy and push for the self-sufficiency of residents since February 1946 becomes clearer. Despite Truman's letter from August 1945, tensions had steadily increased: an overemphasis on swift repatriation efforts, coupled with some officers' disobedience towards policy directives, came at the expense of non-repatriable DPs. This was precisely the problem that local UNRRA teams faced, and one that UN's Director General (DG) also came across. The DG noted that while earliest possible repatriation was one of the Administration's foremost objectives, policy explicitly commanded that 'no displaced person in UNRRA care, can, or will be, forcibly repatriated against his will'. As repatriation was advanced with ever-greater fervour, however, this policy was increasingly ignored.[184] To counteract anti-repatriation propaganda, Team 313 even crafted plans to send a delegation—made up of the Principle Welfare Officer and volunteer DPs—on a fact-finding mission to Poland.[185]

The repercussions of past austerity measures could already be felt, but the greatest push yet came between June and July 1946. An immediate increase in Committee responsibilities by thirty per cent was sought, making self-governance near to complete. Despite personnel reductions by almost fifty per cent in some areas, voluntary donations from among the DPs were made to keep those no longer on the

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[184] Kennedy, 'Repatriation of Allied Displaced Persons', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0235, File S-1510-0000-0010, pp. 1—3.

[185] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 27 February 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

payroll in work for the time being. The global food shortage placed further downward pressure on the already exhausted stocks. This depleted the availability of resources for work-points purchases, and thus threatened to bring down a system that had worked almost flawlessly for eight months.[186] Furthermore, the Team had to be on high alert and prepared for the imminent arrival of three thousand transient Jewish DPs.[187] The Army even ordered a reopening of three former SS camps, despite the greatest repatriation push yet: 'No efforts are spared to induce as many persons of the Settlement population as possible to return to their homeland'. Only one site—Camp Roith—was in sufficiently good condition to accommodate around a fourth of the arrivals. Individuals had subjected the other sites to extensive 'pilfering'. And Austrian firms had only just illegally stripped the unguarded local camps of their necessary installations, including entire barracks.[188] Yet in July 1946, the local authorities reclaimed Camp Roith and Württemberg, which had a combined capacity for 750 residents. Team 313 was left with but one local camp. Referred to as 'DA2' and consisting of twenty barracks that still contained the former KZ bunks, this camp had been almost entirely stripped of its infrastructure.[189]

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[186] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 June 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

[187] The exodus of Jews from Poland in the summer of 1946, fleeing mostly to the US zone, contributed significantly to resource pressures. The Americans accepted and cared for the majority of DPs. Any attempts on the part of the US to negotiate a proportional redistribution failed. While Britain and France refused to absorb a portion of America's DPs in Austria, the Soviets soon sealed its borders to prevent Jews from reaching Austria. See Albrich, *Exodus durch Österreich*, pp. 113—120.

[188] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 June 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

[189] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 27 July 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

In the light of new Austrian property repossessions, requisitioning additional housing for DP purposes became evermore challenging. New arrivals were still trickling in, with 295 Jews and ten White Russians being registered in July. In the case of the Seehotel, intended for the Orphan Children's Centre, the Team hoped to accommodate twenty-three children already awaiting admission at the Centre. Referencing the Seehotel struggle, the Team pointed to the symptomatic nature of the issue: 'This long delay is showing clearly the great difficulties which are encountered in the course of projects connected with Displaced Person's operations in Austria if they require the new requisitioning of any property and even when the necessity to obtain the building has been proved and recongized without any doubt'.[190]

Special treatment of DPs had clearly declined, but high therapy session figures—an average of ten a day—only further highlights that residents were not ready to be treated like civilians. Beyond psychological factors, basic food supply was now regulated at the same level as that of locals. The administration seemingly no longer took into account that most residents had undergone prolonged periods of starvation in concentration camps. And the number of DPs receiving goods for labour was cut to the absolute minimum in July 1946 (by a total of two hundred).[191] With a more utilitarian view to the future, and in the hopes of strengthening the point system economy now

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[190] Ibid.

[191] The year 1946 marked a universal turning point. The Austrian authorities attempted to rid the country of DPs by appealing to the occupying powers for help. To this effect, the chief Austrian political advisor to the US, addressing a UNRRA official, apparently said, 'Isn't it a pity that the Jews are now spoiling everything by making money out of Austria's misery? The DP camps are all black market centers, while our own people are starving'. Quoted in Wyman, *DPs*, p. 170.

weakened by resource shortages, new regulation demanding all DPs to take up full employment came into effect on 5 August. The sum of these dwindling circumstances made UNRRA more adamant on disseminating repatriation propaganda. At the fortnightly Committee meetings, attending Team members endlessly drove home the necessity of DPs to return and rebuild their homeland.[192]

The final available UNRRA report, covering September 1946, chronicled the last major efforts of Team 313 in and around Ebensee. A complete transfer of the Polish DP population was now underway. Non-repatriable Jews, on the other hand, constituted a continued challenge to this goal. The Team recommended that all Jewish refugees in the vicinity of Ebensee be amalgamated into a larger Jewish camp in Bad Ischl.[193] The conviction behind this plan—which was ultimately rejected—was to reduce its engagement with Jewish DPs outside of Ebensee. 'Should it prove impracticable', however, the Team suggested that 'this commitment should be entirely divorced from the Ebensee commitment'.[194]

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[192] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 27 July 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

[193] Jewish presence in Bad Ischl would in August 1947 lead to violent anti-Semitic protests. Mobilising a rumour that the fresh milk intended for children—which the American authorities had replaced with a powder—was being siphoned off for black market activities, some two hundred locals (many mothers among them) marched on a hotel (Jewish DP centre). The Jewish residents were blamed for the poor supply situation. See Margit Reiter, '"In unser aller Herzen brennt dieses Urteil": Der Bad Ischler "Milch-Prozeß" von 1947 vor dem amerikanischen Militärgericht', in Michael Gehler and Hubert Sickinger (eds.), *Politische Affären und Skandale in Österreich: Von Mayerling bis Waldheim* (Vienna, 1995): 323—345. On how the government discussed the case in strikingly ambivalent terms, see 'Protokoll der 81. Ministerratssitzung vom 26. September 1947: Demonstration in Bad Ischl', in Robert Knight (ed.), *"Ich bin dafür, die Sache in die Länge zu ziehen": Wortprotokolle der österreichischen Bundesregierung von 1945—52 über die Entschädigung der Juden* (Frankfurt, 1988): 179—187.

[194] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 September 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

Those deemed repatriable, on the other hand, were now handled more insensitively than ever. Team 313 even planned on organising a hospital train to repatriate the few Polish DPs too ill to travel by means of ordinary transport. Team officers additionally pursued a more pragmatic line by explaining to repatriable DPs that returning to their homelands would be 'their best course of action', since the Ebensee settlement was being dissolved.[195] As stress levels ran high, relations between the Team and the US Army Major in command of the refugee camps were in a 'very precarious position' for the first time, and these continued to worsen for some weeks. Even while the Polish DPs' behaviour was considered 'quiet and orderly', their relationship with UNRRA staff also suffered in the process. Against the will of most DPs concerned, two groups of 150 Poles had already been moved out of Ebensee by 30 September. As the final narrative report summed up the issue:

> The great majority of the Poles were bitterly opposed to this move. They had been a long time in Ebensee and had come to feel that it was their place and that they had a right to remain there. It was, however, brought home to them that it was an Army order and that they would have to obey it. Patient endeavours were also made to explain to them the reasons for the move and to convince them that it was made in their own interests (it is not believed that the majority of them were, in fact, convinced). …. The dissolution of the Polish settlement in Ebensee and the movement to Hellbrunn [just

[195] As of 21 April 1947 the Americans in Austria officially no longer admitted DPs in their zone. By the end of May 1948 less than twenty thousand Jewish DPs remained in the American zone in Austria. See Albrich, *Exodus durch Österreich*, pp. 155—162. Albrich's conclusion in this section (p. 162) is poorly formulated: 'Das wichtigste Ereignis für die DPs war zweifellos die Ausrufung des Staates Israel [in mid-May 1948] .... Das jüdische DP-Problem schien nun in wenigen Monaten gelöst zu sein'. Conversely, one might suggest that the American and (moreover) Austrian problem had thus been solved.

> outside of Salzburg] implies the severance of local ties and associations, which have been strong enough to act as impediments to repatriation.[196]

In the light of enduring resource shortages and dwindling social circumstances, monthly statistics for 1946 showed no drastic changes in overall health. Sanitary conditions were gradually improving and a complete immunisation of all DPs for typhoid, typhus, diphtheria, and smallpox could be achieved by the end of August. Yet while the DP population decreased from 1365 to 630 between February and September,[197] total patient days increased from 1696 to 5361 and out-patient clinic visits went up from 1312 to 1424. These figures are representative of a general upward trend in relative terms. Some of the possible reasons for these increases can be deduced from the health reports alone: a lack of drugs for 'women diseases' and transportation-related difficulties due to the Settlement spanning eight sites in February; a complete administrative takeover of Goisern Hospital in late April; a small Malaria outbreak yet shortage of drugs in August; and an absence of medical supply deliveries for five months, as per a report from 30 September.[198] The rather linear nature of 'Figure A1'

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[196] Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 September 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

[197] The first available Austrian-wide statistics from 1 August 1946 suggest that a total of 606,153 foreigners were still living within the four zones of occupation. At 233,766, the US zone boasted the highest number: 34,703 non-repatriable DPs; 4120 repatriable DPs; 104,425 non-repatriable *Volksdeutsche*; 33,374 repatriable *Volksdeutsche*; 12,216 *Reichsdeutsche*; 23,601 Jews; 8044 Hungarians; 7267 South Tyroleans; 3378 stateless; 2544 others. See Gabriela Stieber, *Nachkriegsflüchtlinge in Kärnten und der Steiermark* (Graz, 1997), p. 49. The categorisation of Jews as 'sonstige Ausländer' is unclear.

[198] Team 313, 'UNRRA Austrian Mission Monthly Health Report (Displaced Persons)', Camp 400 (Ebensee): February 1946; March 1946; April 1946; May 1946; June 1946; August 1946; September 1946; [Reports for July, October and November 1946 missing from file]; all contained in 'American Zone Reports - Monthly Health Reports - Team 313 Ebensee 1944-1949', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 138, File S-1494-0000-0297, Folder US/H/31.

only further highlights how little progress and positive change could be observed in the final months of Team 313's administration.

In terms of administrative challenges, Team 313 faced never-ending dilemmas that were rooted in long-term deficits. As early as January 1945 there had already been a growing conviction that the outlook of UNRRA in general was not practical; a view shared by many of its personnel and SHAEF. From the outset, the relief organisation's high number of Anglo-Americans generated suspicion among the other participating nations. The US Army encouraged changes in this respect that did materialise over time. UNRRA had also managed to achieve its primary objective of serving as a 'public-spirited co-ordinating agency of the army'.[199] Despite improvements, however, the effectiveness of the Administration was still called into question at the end of 1946.[200]

Bert Fenenga, the initial Team 313 Director who led the first team into Austria in July 1945, openly criticised the whole endeavour upon returning to St. Louis a year later. While Fenenga believed that UNRRA efforts had amounted to a 'noble experiment', he saw that Austrian operations had been hampered in three respects. Firstly, more could have been achieved if teams had been organised on a national basis rather than an international—and thus 'uneconomical'—one comprising forty-four

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[199] Brigadier A.G. Salisbury-Jones (Deputy Chief, Displaced Persons) to Brigadier General S.R. Mickelson, 'Subject: The position of UNRRA as regards Displaced Persons', memorandum, 23 January 1945, NARA, RG 331, Box 52, File SHAEF/G-5/276/4.

[200] In assessing the failures, successes, and ultimate value of UNRRA, scholars have tended to be far more forgiving than contemporaries. For a comprehensive historical analysis and ardent defence of the Administration, see chapter entitled 'Freedom from Want: UNRRA and the Relief Effort to Save Europe', in Hitchcock, *Liberation*, pp. 215—248.

nations. This point also made him 'question whether its existence is justified'. As a result, positions were disproportionately handed out to nationals whose countries had not contributed greatly to the war effort, which in turn added to the 'considerable useless red tape'. Secondly, UNRRA for a long time had not received the necessary supplies from the US Army. The Army was in a 'chaotic state' at first, and redeployment drew away the majority of its abler men; those remaining 'were unfamiliar with the problems of peace'. The Allied occupation of Austria in four zones also made effective work difficult, given the resulting restrictions in various areas. Finally, Fenenga criticised the Americans for bringing in a great number of social workers who, as he related, 'are more interested in their own comfort and in building up their own small empires than they are in hard work'.[201]

For all its shortcomings, the efforts of UNRRA proved indispensable in bringing relief during the most trying postwar period.[202] Many contemporaries, however sober their interpretations might have been, clearly recognised its ultimate value in providing a glimmer of hope to the victims of Nazism. Tackling the question 'What again of Displaced Persons?', a British MP astutely summarised the overall situation in the autumn of 1946:

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[201] Bert Fenenga, quoted in 'Co-operation in UNRRA Lacking, Fenenga says', *St. Louis Globe—Democrat*, 23 June 1946: 6A.

[202] Malcolm Proudfoot, in charge of overseeing US Army relief operations, agreed with most of the public criticism at the time (but did not differentiate between the Anglo-American armies and UNRRA), seeing it as 'a constant spur to greater effort and timely remedial action'. See Malcolm J. Proudfoot, 'The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 6/1 (October 1946): 51—53. For his later publication, see Proudfoot, *European Refugees: 1939–52: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston, IL, 1956).

> Leaving aside *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* who for the most part are outside camps, the British zone contains within camps some 45,000, the American zone 50,000 (in addition to over 30,000 Jews in transit) and the French zone 6,000. Here again Russia enters the picture, because it is useless to deny that the Displaced Persons are mainly refugees from Communism, if not from Russia itself. The best brains in U.N.R.R.A. are more concerned with winding up its operation than with constructive emigration of the unrepatriables. It is part of the irony of Austria that some of the best educational work now visible is to be seen in U.N.R.R.A. camps; from the nursery schools in Leoben and Ebensee to the *Studentenheim* at Graz, the by-product of devoted social workers from many lands; the beautiful painting and crafts, the musical and theatrical entertainments to be found in many camps are bright spots in an unhappy world. …. What Mr. Churchill calls "the act of faith that will create a United States of Europe" must now enlist a new band of workers[203]

Emerging from a consideration of Ebensee DP Settlement camps are various factors contributing to the marginalisation of former inmates leading up to 1947. Aside from the role played by the local bureaucracy, a pattern of preferential treatment towards DPs located in centres that generally did not contain Jews becomes clear.[204] As most non-repatriable Jewish residents had KZ backgrounds, their thresholds for neglect were thus understandably lower. Their organised resistance activities in concentration camps furthermore allowed them to draw on these experiences to fight new injustices upon liberation. Greater camp mistreatment in the past—and a continued persecution by other residents, locals, and personnel—likely made some Jews more suspicious and disorderly. Stemming from an ever more determined repatriation push and continued

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[203] Kenneth Lindsay, 'Austria and Britain', *The Spectator*, 11 October 1946: 6—7.

[204] The Austrian political elite also became increasingly hostile towards Jews. In the summer of 1947 Ministers began asserting that 'all of Austria will be flooded by Jews' (the context being that many were fleeing persecution in Yugoslavia and Romania), and that 'the Jews want to be taken care of and believe that they are not here to work'. The latter of these statements smacked of NS propaganda seeing Jews as 'arbeitsscheu'. See documents 13 and 14 in Knight (ed.), *"Ich bin dafür, die Sache in die Länge zu ziehen"*: 173—177.

resource shortages, the process of marginalisation was ultimately extended to all DPs over time.

LAISSEZ-FAIRE AMERICAN MEMORIALISATION POLICIES

> The Office of Political Affairs, while in complete agreement with the objective of the [United Nations] proposal for the erection of monuments at the sites of concentration camps, feels a reluctance to endorse the plan at the present time. This hesitation grows primarily out of a belief that it is unwise for victor powers to erect monuments in a vanquished country and particularly when the heat of war passions has not sufficiently abated to allow a judicious assessment of all the factors and a calculation of prospective consequences.[205]

Even in regards to memorialisation the United Nations met with military opposition. In the wake of a UN proposal seeking to establish postwar monuments at—or steel crosses over—all former SS sites, memorialisation became a brief matter of debate among the Americans. At first, Berlin's *Office of the US Political Advisor to Germany* (POLAD)—representing the postwar interests of the State Department—showed considerable interest. First Lieutenant William Fearnside, who joined the US Group Control Council's Legal Division after briefly serving at Mauthausen, seemed equally impressed by the proposal. He speculated that such a project would 'catch public imagination' and bring the Control Council favourable publicity. Fearnside's only hesitation was that the issue did not fit into the scope of his office, or any other division for that matter.[206] On a theoretical level, the policy shapers nevertheless agreed with the document's intellectual considerations as well as its twofold objective of providing

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[205] David Harris to Mr Heath, memorandum, 'Subject: Proposal for the establishment of a uniform monument at all concentration camp sites', 16 November 1945, Office of Military Government for Germany (US), Office of the Director of Political Affairs, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41

[206] First Lt. William W. Fearnside (Legal Division, US Group Control Council) to the Director of the Legal Division Charles Fahy, memorandum, 'Establishment of a uniform monument at all concentration camp sites', 27 October 1945, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

a tribute to victims of NS brutality and installing a lasting reminder. Civilian populations, it was thought, ought not to lose sight of the system that applied extreme methods to encroach on individual liberties and human rights.[207]

From the outset, the complexities of such a pursuit evaded neither the UN nor the occupying power. They anticipated that local bureaucracies and federal governments, if left to their own devices, would not likely embark on monument building: 'No German or Austrian Government will wish to perpetuate the memory of the concentration camp'.[208] Early critique centred more on logistical matters. The authorities pointed out problems associated with choosing a cross as a symbol. Even while Berlin's Tiergarten monument garnered little US support, the Russians were hailed for embracing the star and thus not alienating Muslims, Jews, or Agnostics. Some within POLAD contemplated putting their names under the proposal, so long as the universal UN emblem would be adopted instead.[209] Yet the lessons learned from the study of previous wars won and lost ultimately cautioned them into exercising restraint.

On 24 November 1945, the proposal was finally quashed altogether. This outright rejection stemmed from a series of historical and psychological considerations. The State Department's Associate Chief of Central European Affairs, David Harris, an academic historian whose many reports helped shape US policy towards Austria,[210]

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[207] Erwin Wendt to Muccio (Political Division), communication, 13 November 1945, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

[208] Wenner to Muccio, 'Proposal', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

[209] Wendt to Muccio, communication, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

[210] David Harris, a former assistant professor of History at Stanford University, served as Associate Chief between 1942 and 1947. See James J. Carafano, 'Deconstructing U.S. Army Intelligence Operation in

thought it unfruitful to translate 'passions into plastic representations …. [and] proclaim the glory of the one or the wickedness of the other'.[211] Countless memorials built after the Great War, with all their admonitions, had not fostered international understanding; these symbolised attitudes that fell short of educational purposes. Harris was particularly concerned by the way in which KZ information had been handled. The purpose of the monuments remained ambiguous to him, making him question whether these sites would simply act as an indictment against all former *Reichsdeutsche*. Policy shapers like Harris held that imposing remorse and guilt on civilians artificially would prove counterproductive in the long run.[212] Hastily constructed reminders of defeat could have the unwanted effect of stirring up resentment.[213] These experienced political minds evidently feared playing into the hands of prospective political despots who might garner support through revanchist rhetoric.

The policy men saw that an expression of sincere shame for KZ horrors could only be derived from genuine acts. By the time the proposal was shelved, the discussion

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Postwar Austria: The Early Years 1945—1948', in Erwin A. Schmidl (ed.), *Österreich im frühen Kalten Krieg 1945-1958: Spione, Partisanen, Kriegspläne* (Vienna, 2000): 58.

[211] Harris to Heath, memorandum, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

[212] The value of early postwar memorials might be called into question if one considers their potential in acting as a front, namely by detracting from broader structural continuities with the Third Reich. As Christian Dürr notes, 'Der Nationalsozialismus hatte in Wahrheit wesentliche Fundamente der Nachkriegsgesellschaft geschaffen. Je mehr er als Gründungsverbrechen geleugnet und verdrängt wird, desto stärker wirkt er strukturell in der Gegenwart weiter. Denkmäler erfüllen häufig den Zweck, dieser Leugnung und Verdrängung den Anschein von Aufarbeitung zu geben'. See Christian Dürr, 'Von Mauthausen nach Gusen und zurück: Verlassene Konzentrationslager – Gedenkstätten – traumatische Orte', in Daniela Allmeier, Inge Manka, Peter Mörtenböck, and Rudolf Scheuvens (eds.), *Erinnerungsorte in Bewegung: Zur Neugestaltung des Gedenkens an Orten nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen* (Bielefeld, 2016): 150.

[213] Harris to Heath, memorandum, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

had been increasingly informed by a careful consideration of the inter-war factors that had led to ethnic nationalism. The US was keen to avoid an ideological resurgence of undemocratic ideals. Preserving lessons and guarding the memory of the dead, the Americans thought, would also be better served through functional buildings like hospitals and sanatoria. Several State Department officials applauded Harris' appraisal, concluding that 'it would be better if the German people should deal with the subject'.[214] It appeared preferable to them that communities living in close proximity to these sites demonstrated their disapproval: 'Why not wait to see if Germans in several years will wish to commemorate the suffering and sacrifice of their own and other peoples in the concentration camps by suitable memorials'.[215]

The outcome of this 'wait-to-see' policy largely had the polar opposite effect.[216] At Ebensee, plans to erect a housing development on the former concentration camp grounds could be seen as the municipal council's final step in marginalising the memory of Ebensee's problematic past. At the former subcamp this postwar housing development was indeed realised; it began replacing the camp infrastructure by 1949. Commemoratively, only the concentration camp graveyard remained at the site of the

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[214] Herman Phleger (Legal Division) to Muccio, communication, 27 November 1945, NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

[215] Wenner to Muccio, 'Proposal', NARA, RG 84, Box 17, Decimal 804.41.

[216] On the Austrian commemorative shift from remembering the genuine victims of National Socialism to increasingly honouring the fallen SS and *Wehrmacht* soldiers through war memorials from the 1950s onwards, see Heidemarie Uhl, 'Vom Opfermythos zur Mitverantwortungsthese: NS-Herrschaft, Krieg und Holocaust im "österreichischen Gedächtnis"', in Christian Gerbel, Manfred Lechner, Dagmar C.G. Lorenz, Oliver Marchart, Vrääth Öhner, Ines Steiner, Andrea Strutz, and Heidemarie Uhl (eds.), *Transformationen gesellschaftlicher Erinnerung: Studien zur "Gedächtnisgeschichte" der Zweiten Republik* (Vienna, 2005): 86—131.

former SS guard quarters and crematorium. When a former Ebensee inmate attended a commemoration ceremony some forty-five years after the liberation, he could hardly make out any traces of the camp in which he had been incarcerated as a teenager—nor could he fathom the local community's 'opaqueness' and lack of concern:

> In the middle of the proceedings it began to rain. Neither my wife nor I had an umbrella with us so we went back to our car, which was parked several blocks away from the activities but within the housing project erected on the grounds of the former Concentration Camp. We got into our car and I started the engine so that we could dry ourselves. An Austrian policeman came up to us and told us that we had to shut the engine off. "Why?" I asked. "Because in Austria", he answered, "it is forbidden to start a car's engine in a residential area in order to protect the air". "Excuse me", I replied, "you are talking about protecting the air, here in Ebensee you are living in a place where tens of thousands of humans were burned and you are talking to me about keeping the air clean?"[217] I felt as if I were in a surrealistic place! …. My impression of what had happened and what surprised me was what the Austrians had done in that area since the time of our liberation. Almost the entire area that had been covered by the Concentration Camp had been made into a housing project of private homes and the people who lived in them sit there and live there in pastoral peace in the very place where thousands are buried. Of this entire enormously large Camp they left only a very tiny area devoted to a Memorial; around it is profanation. With their opaqueness, which creates an anger within us, they erected their homes as if this Cemetery, which holds thousands of victims, did not belong to eternity for those who are buried there. It had simply become a piece of real estate for the City of Ebensee.[218]

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[217] A former inmate of Auschwitz, Melk, and Ebensee had a similarly telling experience with an Austrian policeman in Melk, which he brought to paper a fortnight before the Waldheim Affair erupted: 'What many people do not know is that Melk, like Ebensee, had sizeable tunnels dug into the surrounding granite mountains in which whole factories had been built in which we, prisoners and civilians alike, worked on assembling V-2's. When my wife and I visited Melk a few years ago, we could not find a marker anywhere that a KZ … had existed there. When at last I went to the police headquarters … I asked the policeman on duty where the KZ had been. He insisted that none had ever existed. When I forcefully insisted that I had been a prisoner there, he began to blush and stammer, and then apologized for "having misunderstood" me'. See Max R. Garcia, 'Melk', *The New York Times*, 16 February 1986.

[218] Jacob, 'Interview of Professor Doctor Erwin T. Jacob', USHMM, AN 1997.A.0212, p. 2. Jacob, an Israeli doctor at the time of the interview, was seventeen when Ebensee was liberated. He had previously been imprisoned at Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Melk.

Amidst these postwar family houses remains the subcamp's last trace: the main gate.[219] Ill at ease among its fellow neighbours of stone, this isolated, rocky testimony speaks volumes to the community's chosen path of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Almost four decades after the liberation, an 83-year-old Ebensee resident still unashamedly alleged that 'The opponents—above all, those of them who were first—the Jews, for example, have shown interest [in the camp]. Naturally, they have now made propaganda against the National Socialists. And from this side, then, persecution has proceeded against former National Socialists'.[220] Well into the early 1980s many from among the generation of Ebensee residents who had lived through the Third Reich still maintained an unwaveringly revisionist attitude towards a camp that had undoubtedly doubled as a killing site and forced labour project.

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[219] Much like the fate that befell the two camp grounds of Gusen, where new housing projects had the effect of 'camouflaging the history of underground systems in suburban areas for decades'. See Haunschmied, Mills, and Witzany-Durda, *St. Georgen – Gusen – Mauthausen*, pp. 257—258.

[220] Engelbert K., in discussion with Gordon J. Horwitz, Ebensee, 29 June 1983, quoted in Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death*, p. 179.

II. Local Wartime Perspectives on the Loiblpass

'Self-liberation' between fact and fiction

Virtually all war-related developments arrived sooner and lasted longer in Southern Carinthia than elsewhere in Austria.[1] In the short run, *Gauleiter* Friedrich Rainer appeared utterly unmoved by the reality of defeat and held out until the last minute. Taking his time in capitulating, he wished above all to prevent a Yugoslav invasion and occupation. In the hopes of sparing Carinthia from becoming a battlefield, however, calls for Rainer's resignation or unconditional surrender began emerging on 2 May 1945. The *Gauleiter* rejected these requests, arguing that his loyalty remained with Karl Dönitz and that he had been tasked with keeping vital escape routes open[2] for Alexander Löhr.[3] As such, Rainer noted that only two scenarios would lead to a voluntary resignation on his part: either the loss of contact with the *Führer* Dönitz or the arrival of Allied troops in combination with Löhr's surrender to the Anglo-

[1] For an overview of the final months leading up to the capitulation in Carinthia, see Manfried Rauchensteiner, *Der Krieg in Österreich: 1945* (Vienna, 2015), pp. 355—361.

[2] Rainer had on 6 March 1945 already ordered that the Loiblpass be sufficiently defended: 'Angesichts der Lage im Südosten ist die beschleunigte Fertigstellung der Karawanken-Verteidigungslinie notwendig. Die vorhandenen Baukapazitäten müssen restlos ausgenützt werden. Besonders wichtig ist die Verteidigung des Loibl-Tunnels'. See Friedrich Rainer, order to Gruppenstabsleiter Nord, quoted in Walzl, *Kärnten 1945*, p. 94.

[3] *Generaloberst* Alexander Löhr, *Oberbefehlshaber Südost* ('Commander-in-Chief in southeast Europe'), was in charge of *Heeresgruppe* 'E'. This Army Group became notorious for the deportation of Jewish Greeks and its brutal operations against Yugoslav partisans. It later emerged that Kurt Waldheim had been a part of Army Group E in the Balkans after March 1942. See Ruth Wodak, 'Suppression of the Nazi Past, Coded Languages, and Discourses of Silence: Applying the Discourse-Historical Approach to Post-War Anti-Semitism in Austria', in Willibald Steinmetz (ed.), *Political Language in the Age of Extremes* (Oxford, 2011): 357.

Americans but not to Tito. In the meantime, an executive committee comprising Christian Socials and Socialists began meeting at the *Landhaus* in the centre of Klagenfurt. *Wehrmacht* support, including three hundred *Luftwaffe* men, was promptly secured to facilitate a putsch to remove Rainer.[4]

During an afternoon radio broadcast on 4 May, shortly after having met with the committee and rejecting their requests anew, Rainer demonstrated that he would stay the course.[5] Not only did he desperately seek to strengthen public and military morale, the *Gauleiter* also accused the executive committee of treason. Almost resigning after briefly losing contact with Dönitz, Rainer tried again to motivate a last stand in Carinthia in a subsequent broadcast that night. Rumours began circulating on 5 May that Erwin Rösener, accompanied by SS troops, would be coming to Rainer's rescue.[6] Adding to the prevailing mood of uncertainty, the *Wehrmacht* men who had initially agreed to execute a coup were no longer united. The executive nevertheless urged the Socialist Hans Piesch to organise a provisional government.[7] And an OSS officer who had been released from imprisonment in Klagenfurt now made his way to

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[4] 6 Special Force Staff Section (SFSS) HQ 5 Corps, 'Notes on the New Carinthian Government', 22 May 1945, in 'Political situation in Carinthia and Western Styria, May 1945', Report No. 65F/17, 13 June 1945, TNA, FO 371/46610, Appendix B.

[5] From 3 May Rainer began propagating the 1918/1920 *Abwehrkampf* parole 'Kärnten frei und ungeteilt'. See Rauchensteiner, *Der Krieg in Österreich*, p. 358.

[6] As 'Alpenfestung' Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF), *Obergruppenführer* Erwin Rösener had also commanded the Slovene Domobranci and was responsible for a high number of hostage shootings and reprisals in Ljubljana province. See Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich*, pp. 134, 139, 257.

[7] Hans Piesch became the mayor of Villach in 1933. After the *Anschluss*, he joined the NSDAP and worked on racial and political settlement questions in the Villach area. Piesch reassumed his Socialist (SPÖ) political affiliation and acted as the first postwar governor of Carinthia between 1945 and 1947. See Knight, 'Denazification and Integration in the Austrian Province of Carinthia', *The Journal of Modern History* 79 (September 2007): 580—581.

Salzburg to clarify the situation in Carinthia and call for the rapid arrival of Allied troops.

On 7 May, Rainer finally lost the loyalty of the gendarmerie, which now openly declared its support for a new provisional government. An hour before midnight, the members of this government paid Rainer a visit to inform him that they were now assuming executive power. Rainer resigned four minutes later. Henceforth, and until the arrival of the British forces that were now making their way through northern Italy, the provisional government went about employing stalling techniques to hold off an imminent Yugoslav takeover for as long as possible. Even before the war had officially ended, Carinthia boasted a government that was almost equally divided into members with strong pan-German or Fascist backgrounds and individuals who had fallen victim to the NS regime. One of its two Communist members, whose sympathies for Tito became increasingly evident, soon resigned. [8] The re-emergence of political life along pre-*Anschluss* lines had thus begun.

The rapidly unfolding clashes in Southern Carinthia lay at the heart of the swift rehabilitation of antidemocratic traditions. The old *Heimat* idea was deeply embedded in historical memory, and Rainer had spent the duration of his tenure promoting the legacy of the 'Carinthian freedom struggle'.[9] To Southern Carinthians, an impending Yugoslav occupation thus smacked of the territorial war that had seen pan-German,

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[8] 6 SFSS, 'Notes on the New Carinthian Government', TNA, FO 371/46610, Appendix B.

[9] As a veteran *Abwehrkämpfer*, Rainer had made it a central goal to rehabilitate the tradition of the 'freedom struggle' (der 'Geist von 1920'), and to link it to those who had fought for Nazism during the pre-Anschluss era. See Williams, *Gau, Volk und Reich*, p. 152.

Social Democrat, and Christian Social adherents unite in opposition to the South Slavs of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (SHS) between 1918 and 1920. While the borders that were drawn then remained unchanged, the territorial conflict would persist and continue to challenge Southern Carinthia's stability throughout the first years of the post-Third Reich order. Summing up the dire outlook for a democratically oriented Carinthia, Robert Knight argues that 'even before Nazi rule had ended, mobilization behind the *Heimat* undercut denazification. ... Piesch was soon rewriting the end of the Nazi regime as a Carinthian "self-liberation," with the implication that no further purges were required'.[10]

The only true self-liberation materialising in Carinthia seems to have been linked to the Loiblpass subcamp itself.[11] Hours before Rainer's resignation, around one thousand inmates—guarded by some forty SS men—made their way through the tunnel, down the Loibl Valley, and into the Rosental. The following morning the convoy set off again. Shortly after passing by Feistritz in the Valley of Roses, partisans liberated the prisoners and apprehended all of the guardsmen.[12] Although the Third Reich had been defeated and the south camp now stood almost entirely empty (nineteen sick

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[10] Knight, 'Denazification and Integration in the Austrian Province of Carinthia': 582.

[11] Asking 'Wie und von wem wurden nun aber die Häftlinge aus dem KZ am Loiblpass befreit?', Peter Gstettner arrives at a similar conclusion: 'Mit Blick auf die KZ-Häftlinge vom Loiblpaß ist die Antwort klar: Die KZ-Häftlinge wurden weder von der britischen Besatzungsmacht noch vom alten oder neuen Kärnten befreit. Diese Befreiung war – mit Hilfe der sympathisierenden slowenischen Zivilbevölkerung – eine Kombination von Selbstbefreiung und Befreiung durch die PartisanInnen. Das offizielle Kärnten hatte daran keinen Anteil, zu keinem Zeitpunkt. Diese Tatsache ist weder umzuinterpretieren noch durch Lügen aus der Welt zu schaffen'. See Gstettner, 'Die Legende von der Selbstbefreiung Kärntens': 90, 105.

[12] Janko Tišler, quoted in Zausnig, *Der Loibl-Tunnel*, pp. 129—130.

inmates, along with two voluntary caretakers, stayed behind in the south camp hospital for a few more days), the Loiblpass remained a war zone until mid-May 1945. The mountain passage acted as the first point of entry into Austria for thousands of fleeing *Wehrmacht* and SS men, as well as members of the Croat Ustaša and Slovene Domobranci[13] who had collaborated with the Nazis to fight the partisans.[14] As for the tunnel: 'Intended to give German armies speedier access to the Adriatic, in the end it only facilitated their flight in defeat'.[15] Motivated above all by a fear of Yugoslav and Soviet reprisals, soldiers retreated from former German-occupied territories south of the pass in great haste.[16]

With partisan activities linked to territorial claims reaching unprecedented proportions with the German defeat, large parts of Carinthia soon fell into the hands of Tito's army. On 8 May, for instance, a partisan unit had already arrived in Ferlach and

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[13] The Croatian Revolutionary Movement (Ustaša)—which existed from 1929 to 1945 and functioned as a Nazi puppet state during WWII—was responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Roma and Sinti, Jews, and Communists in Yugoslavia. The Slovene *Landeswehr* ('Home Guard'), whose members collectively were referred to as Domobranci, actively fought against the partisans on the side of the Nazis. Their exceptional brutality in weeding out Communist influences between 1943 and 1945 earned them the nickname 'Slovene SS'. For a comprehensive overview of the Ustaša in particular, see Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941—1945*, especially 'The End of the Collaborationist Regimes in Yugoslavia' chapter (pp. 751—785); Alexander Korb, *Im Schatten des Weltkriegs: Massengewalt der Ustaša gegen Serben, Juden und Roma in Kroatien 1941—1945* (Hamburg, 2013), particularly 'Konzentrierte Gewalt: Die Lager der Ustaša' chapter (pp. 371—428).

[14] See 'Hauptfluchtwege nach Kärnten' chapter in Florian T. Rulitz, *Die Tragödie von Bleiburg und Viktring: Partisanengewalt in Kärnten am Beispiel der antikommunistischen Flüchtlinge im Mai 1945* (Klagenfurt, 2012), pp. 81—154, especially 'Fluchtweg 1: über den Loiblpass nach Klagenfurt-Viktring' section (pp. 87—112). There were three main escape routes.

[15] John Corsellis and Marcus Ferrar, *Slovenia 1945: Memories of Death and Survival after WWII* (London, 2015), p. 16. Also see 'Over the Mountain' chapter more generally, which offers a detailed account of the retreat of Slovene civilians and Domobranci via the Loiblpass (pp. 6—21).

[16] The main German Army groups streaming into Carinthia were *Heeresgruppen* 'C' via Italy, 'E' via Yugoslavia, and 'Süd' ('Ostmark') via Styria. See Rauchensteiner, *Der Krieg in Österreich*, p. 356.

temporarily succeeded in occupying the Drau Bridge below the Hollenburg castle. Between 10 and 12 May, however, a concoction of partisans and Austrian guerrilla fighters positioned around Ferlach were 'bloodied by a far superior force' comprising Prinz Eugen Waffen-SS Division men, three German police regiments, and Nazi collaborationist militias.[17] With a partisan death toll exceeding two hundred,[18] this episode has since become widely recognised as 'the tragedy of Ferlach'.[19] As it took British troops some time to reach Carinthia and gain control, the first fortnight was marked by grave territorial uncertainties. While anxieties began subsiding after the British secured a deal with Tito to ensure the departure of Yugoslav troops from Carinthia by 21 May, the traumatic wartime experiences and the short-lived occupation left a lasting impression on the mentality of the local population.[20] Within the background of these postwar clashes and ensuing conflicts, the concentration camp at

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[17] On this post-armistice bloodshed, see Thomas M. Barker, 'Partisan Warfare in the Bilingual Region of Carinthia', *Slovene Studies* 11/1—2 (1989): 206. Also see Thomas M. Barker, *The Slovene Minority of Carinthia* (New York, 1984).

[18] Walzl provides a slightly different version of events and cites a lower death toll. According to him, the conflict began in Unterloibl, moved into Unterbergen, and unfolded in full around Ferlach. Three members of the White Guard and some fifty partisans were supposedly killed; thirty-seven of the dead were Carinthian partisans. See Walzl, *Kärnten 1945*, pp. 186—187.

[19] As an overtly pan-German account (embodying the *Heimattreue* and anti-partisan style to boot) purports, a makeshift group comprising former members of the SS and individuals of the Slovene White Guard allegedly fought back: 'Eine zusammengewürfelte, starke Kampfgruppe führte zwei Tage nach dem Zusammenbruch der deutschen Wehrmacht im Raum Ferlach "Krieg auf eigene Faust" .... sie vertrieb die Partisanen aus Ferlach, erzwang sich den Übergang über die Drau und ergab sich den Briten am 11. Mai auf der Hollenburg. Die letzten Kanonenschüsse des Zweiten Weltkrieges fielen in Kärnten, im Rosental'. See 'Rosental: Der Krieg kam nach dem Krieg' chapter in Pust, *Titostern über Kärnten*, pp. 179—205. For a more balanced version of events, albeit from the perspective of a former Carinthian Slovene partisan, see Karel Prušnik-Gašper, *Gemsen auf der Lawine: Der Kärntner Partisanenkampf*, trans. Avguštin Malle, Florjan Lipuš, and Gerri Musger (Klagenfurt, 1981), p. 382—383.

[20] At the same time, the expulsion of partisans—many of whom had collaborated with the British SOE—felt like a stab in the back. On wartime partisans-SOE collaboration and growing tensions over ideological and territorial considerations, see Pirker, *Subversion deutscher Herrschaft*, pp. 273—382.

the Loiblpass—in all its manifestations—effectively fell into a state of dormancy. The locals' memory and awareness of the camp, though trapped in the wartime prism, did not dissipate.

Having witnessed at first hand the rise and fall of the forced labour camp, it was difficult for people from the Windisch-Bleiberg district to deny its existence. Proximity mattered in this respect. While some living further afield could feign ignorance with greater ease, the camp also genuinely went unnoticed by others. As a young boy during the war, the Ferlach resident Jakob Müller did not find out until much later: 'About the camp? No. To many people this was actually more or less a secret that was only disclosed later on—that they up there… that there was a camp. There were perhaps some informed people who knew about it, but the general public… little or nothing'.[21] In stark contrast—and apart from their inability to contest having had any knowledge of the wartime KZ with any credibility—some Loibl Valley locals appeared to contemplate the site with a degree of affection. Even hindsight, with the realities of the Third Reich's genocidal policies having long come to light, seemed incapable of souring the memory of the Loiblpass camp. Siegfried Ogris, who grew up in the Valley

[21] Jakob Müller, personal interview, Unterloibl, 22 August 2012. Müller was born in 1930 and began working at Ferlach's municipal office after the war, ultimately becoming one of its *Amtsleiter* (head of the district office). Original quote: 'Von dem Lager? Nein. Das war eigentlich für viele mehr oder weniger ein Geheimnis, das erst später gelüftet wurde—dass die da oben… dass es dieses Lager gegeben hat. Die haben ja fallweise Brot hier geholt. Da waren einige vielleicht Eingeweihte, die davon gewusst haben, aber so die Allgemeinheit—wenig oder nichts'.

and initially supplied the camp with food, reflected on the tunnelling project's dissolution in nostalgic terms:[22]

> After the war, everybody always said, "That camp up there still belongs to Hitler". …. Hitler created the camps. There were convicts. They worked. When the war was over, it was as though [the KZ had been] extinguished! Nobody was there anymore. They disappeared. The SS took them away and they fled. No one saw where the convicts went. And the English made sure that they got home. Then you no longer saw any inmates, convicts. Civilians were up there—Italians, *Slowener* [derogatory term for Slovenes]. Yes, their work was tough. They also made money. "Yes", they said, "too bad that Hitler is gone. Now we cannot work anymore". They stood up there—eight days, fourteen days—every day fewer people. Then they started feeling hungry. Then the camp was gone. And after that the people, if someone needed something—a farmer or someone—he could go up there and take what he wanted. We went up. Such nice tools. I took a machine or whatever I needed. So sad when nobody was up there anymore. Well, back in those days it was so lively, it was so inhabited. Every day you got to see something. It was suddenly dead. No convict, no civilian …. The people were glad [that the camp was gone], the Loibl Valley inhabitants [were glad]. But we youth, we said, "back then it was fun!" There were young soldiers up there—they handed out cigarettes, chocolate, and so on. The SS up there,

[22] Similarly, albeit on a much larger scale, the Gusen camps were supplied directly by local farmers; inhabitants generally profited from the existence of the site. The night following the liberation, the butcher who had delivered all the meat to Gusen I committed suicide. Another businessman allegedly followed suit by walking into an electric transformer with his entire family. See Kropf and Baumgartner, *"Man hat halt mit dem leben müssen"*, p. 68.

> they were top lads. So long as you did not do anything, they were not evil. A human being is a human being.[23]

With the departure of the remaining inmates by mid-May, the site had almost entirely ceased to play a role in local life. As elsewhere in Austria, however, the presence of DPs across Carinthia in general stimulated publicly visible reversions to undemocratic modes of thinking.[24] This had at least in part been a product of the public's overwhelming reluctance to distinguish between distinctly different groups of refugees.[25] The reputation of genuine displaced victims of the Third Reich was increasingly tarnished by the high concentration of foreign Fascists in Southern

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[23] Siegfried Ogris, personal interview, Klagenfurt, 21 August 2012. Original quote: 'Nach dem Krieg haben alle immer gesagt, "Das Lager dort oben gehört noch dem Hitler" …. Der Hitler hat die Lager gemacht. Sind Sträflinge gewesen. Haben's gearbeitet. Wie der Krieg aus war, ist so gewesen wie ausgelöscht! Es war keiner mehr dort. Die sind verschwunden. Die SS haben sie weggeführt und die sind abgehauen. Kein Mensch hat mehr gesehen wo die Sträflinge hin sind. Und die Engländer [haben] alles so geführt, dass sie nachhause kommen. Da hast' keine Häftlinge, Sträflinge mehr gesehen. Zivilisten waren oben—Italiener, Slowener. Ja, die haben's schön g'habt bei der Arbeit. Die haben auch verdient. "Ja", haben sie gesagt, "schade, dass der Hitler davon ist. Jetzt können wir nicht mehr arbeiten". Die sind oben gestanden—acht Tage, vierzehn Tage—jeden Tag weniger Leut'. Dann haben sie schon einen Hunger g'habt. Dann war das Lager weg, und nachher die Leut'. Wenn einer was gebraucht hat—ein Bauer oder [sonst] einer—der hat können hinaufgehen und nehmen was er dort will. Wir sind hinaufgegangen. So ein schönes Werkzeug. Ich hab' genommen eine Maschine oder was ich gebraucht hab'. So traurig, als dort kein Mensch mehr oben war. Naja, früher war so lebendig, war ja so bewohnt. Jeden Tag hast' was gesehen. War tot auf einmal. .... Die Leut' waren ja froh, die Loibltaler. Aber wir Jugend, haben wir gesagt, "früher war lustig!" Sind junge Soldaten oben gewesen—haben sie Zigaretten einem geben, Schokolade und so. SSler oben, die waren feine Burschen. Wenn du nichts gemacht hast, waren die nicht böse. Mensch ist Mensch'.

[24] On the early postwar DP situation in Carinthia, see Gabriela Stieber, *Die Briten als Besatzungsmacht in Kärnten 1945—1955* (Klagenfurt, 2005), pp. 116—125.

[25] Pragmatism and relative neglect in British DP policy accentuated the issue, as it did in the case of Germany: 'Although the organisation for refugee matters was eventually "handed over" by Britain to the German administration, it was a poisoned chalice, stemming from the earlier crucial phase of occupation that had witnessed a mounting humanitarian catastrophe managed by an improvised, piecemeal approach'. See Francis Graham-Dixon, *The Allied Occupation of Germany: The Refugee Crisis, Denazification and the Path to Reconstruction* (London, 2013), p. 14.

Carinthia who claimed DP status.[26] According to an article in *Der KZ-Häftling* from late 1946, they received rations and exercised 'open terror' by engaging in crimes ranging from theft to *Lustmord* ('sexually-motivated murder'). The growing disdain towards displaced Fascists from the former Nazi-occupied territories ultimately contributed to the social marginalisation of displaced victims of the regime.[27] Yet a lack of former inmates or refugees in the Loibl Valley allowed its locals to construct a unique narrative around the subcamp; a product of external factors that had little to do with inmates or the site itself. And at the core of postwar views lay pre-1945 experiences.

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[26] On 1 August 1946, some 147,729 'foreigners' were still living in the British zones of occupation: 51,288 non-repatriable DPs; 8864 repatriable DPs; 38,292 non-repatriable *Volksdeutsche*; 8468 repatriable *Volksdeutsche*; 18,146 *Reichsdeutsche*; 1467 Jews; 8581 Hungarians; 2949 South Tyroleans; 7190 stateless; 3389 others. Stieber, *Nachkriegsflüchtlinge in Kärnten und der Steiermark*, p. 49.

[27] L. Andrejew, '"Prominente Ausländer" in Österreich I', *Der KZ-Häftling* 7/11 (September/November 1946): 14—16. Initially published in *Neue Zeit*, the Christian Democratic Union's (CDU) official daily newspaper of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

THE CAMP AND 'THE GOLDEN YEARS'

> Do not forget that the Loibltal is a poor village in any case. Always was and always will be. When one works, one can survive—and this is how it always was, and it just kept on going on like this. Nothing was different. We had cows, we had pigs, we had chickens. We had them during the war; we had them after the war. There was not much more to it. …. The farmers all had oxen—and they transported sand—and they made money. For example, Tschaschl [the farmer living closest to the north camp], he was very poor, and because of Hitler he made something of himself. …. We were dependent on agriculture. There was more poverty before the war than after the war, because the war made it possible for everyone to create something. [I ask, "How so?"] Well, through the work at the tunnel. The *Loibltaler* worked at the tunnel just the same, and more specifically, they made a stone quarry there—a small one—and transported the sand up to the tunnel with the oxen. Everyone earned something.[28]

Beyond a youthful yearning for the lively camp days, locals saw that a deserted Loiblpass had taken its toll on their economic fortunes. To some degree, its closure marked the return of the old, poverty-stricken times. A positive association with the subcamp appeared to have been rooted in its ability to herald in a couple of 'golden years' of socioeconomic prosperity. Given their isolated existence, coupled with a comparatively high degree of poverty, these matters were close to the villagers' hearts. Being predominantly 'Windisch' Roman Catholic mountain farmers and woodworkers

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[28] Mrs Scheiring, personal interview, Ferlach, 25 August 2012. Original quote: 'Sie dürfen nicht vergessen, Loibltal ist sowieso ein armes Dorf—immer gewesen und wird es immer bleiben. Wenn man arbeitet, kann man leben—und so war es immer und es ist einfach immer weitergegangen. Es war nichts anders. Wir haben Kühe gehabt, wir haben Schweine g'habt, wir haben Hühner gehabt. Die hama im Krieg g'habt, die hama nach dem Krieg g'habt. Also viel mehr war da nicht drinnen. …. Die Bauern haben alle Ochsen g'habt und da haben sie Sand geführt—und die haben verdient. Also zum Beispiel dieser Tschaschl, der ist ja ganz arm gewesen und der ist ja, durch den Hitler hat sich der so herausgemacht. …. Man hat von der Landwirtschaft gelebt. Es gab vor dem Krieg mehr Armut als wie nach dem Krieg, weil ja im Krieg doch ein jeder sich was schaffen konnte. [In welcher Hinsicht?] Na, durch die Arbeit beim Tunnel. Die Loibltaler haben ja genauso beim Tunnel gearbeitet und zwar, da haben sie dann einen Steinbruch gemacht—einen kleinen—und da hat man mit den Ochsen den Sand hochgeführt zu dem Tunnel. Es hat ein jeder was verdient'.

meant that following the war they were again left with little but their traditional means of survival: cattle breeding and woodwork. Making matters worse, the dwindling population in the Windisch-Bleiberg district reached a low of 560 in 1945, down from 812 in 1811.[29] Against this background, and even while continuity remained more prevalent than any short-term breaks that National Socialism and the camp brought about, it comes as no surprise that Mrs Scheiring recalled the economic impact of the wartime tunnel in positive terms.

Born in 1932 and living in the Loibltal until 1950, Scheiring was one among only a few dozen children whose perception of the SS camp had been nurtured at a young age. Scheiring grew up at the Raidenwirt *Gasthaus* ('inn') on the Loiblpass road, located a few hundred metres below the tunnel. Adding to the solitude of her adolescent years, she had no siblings and was raised by her grandparents; her mother had left upon marrying into a farming family that lived vis-à-vis Siegfried Ogris, the aforementioned local who had initially supplied the camp with food. In the wake of Rainer's wartime Germanisation push, however, two South Tyrolean woodworking families moved into the village.[30] This resettlement meant that there were now forty instead of the usual

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[29] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, 'Bestand des Postens', AdPiF, p. 13.

[30] The initial plan to Germanise the region by replacing deported Slovene-speaking farming families with German ones from South Tyrol and the Kanaltal (Val Canale)—in Italy's north-eastern region of Udine, which borders on Austria—proved largely unsuccessful due to a number of factors. The NSDAP had managed to secure merely half of the intended two hundred farms. These farmers not only lacked the necessary farming experience, they also increasingly refused to leave the Val Canale because of the increase in partisan activities in Southern Carinthia. The local Carinthian population soon recognised that the new arrivals were poor farmers, leading some inhabitants to request the deportees' swift return. See Williams, *Gau, Volk und Reich*, p. 149.

thirty children attending the village school.[31] With an elementary school that consisted of a single classroom and one teacher who was educating forty students across eight subject areas, it appears safe to presume that the children of the Valley received a fairly limited education.[32]

Aspirations and hopes for a better tomorrow were furthermore dampened by the fact that the majority of families did not own any property. Including the north camp grounds, the entire Valley virtually belonged to Mr Voigt, a wealthy and highly regarded landowner who had married into the aristocratic Firon family. Voigt-Firon's small empire spanned thousands of hectares. Many of the locals were on his payroll as employees of his sawmill business. Most leased property from him—like Scheiring's grandparents, who would otherwise not have been able to run the Raidenwirt inn. Voigt-Firon was very much the lord of the Valley. When he came around to pursue his love of chamois hunting, a gamekeeper would announce his visit the day before. To prepare for his imminent arrival at the Raidenwirt breakfast table, Scheiring's grandmother would typically get up at two o'clock in the morning to bake a fresh batch of brioches for breakfast.[33]

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[31] The number of resettled individuals from South Tyrol living in other parts of the Reich by the beginning of 1944: 34,000 in Tyrol and Vorarlberg; 7700 in Upper Danube; 6300 in Carinthia; 6300 in Styria; 1200 in Lower Danube; 1000 in Vienna; 700 in the Sudetenland; 500 in the Reichsprotektorat; 400 in Luxembourg. See August Walzl, *"Als erster Gau...": Entwicklungen und Strukturen des Nationalsozialismus in Kärnten* (Klagenfurt, 1992), p. 222.

[32] Scheiring, personal interview.

[33] Ibid.

Like the rest of the farming community, Siegfried Ogris' family was on a Voigt-Firon lease; unlike Scheiring, he had a sister and was the eldest of six sons. Their high altitude existence—at around one thousand metres above sea level—consisted mainly of the usual woodwork and livestock farming, with three oxen for hauling the timber and some cows as well as pigs covering the agricultural and nutritional necessities. Living near the northern extremity of the mountain pass made 'cruising around on a mule' impossible, not least because of the road's particularly steep gradients. During the harsh winter months, the family carried wood on their backs whilst tramping through deep snow. And no matter the depth of the winter, the teacher never gave the children a day off school. Since Ogris' parents had seven mouths to feed—around twenty per cent of all Loibltal children—a tight household budget was the norm. Before the *Anschluss*, and symptomatic of a valley in which not a single farmer boasted a budget surplus, Ogris wore ripped trousers as part of his limited wardrobe.

Thereafter, conditions improved: 'Then Hitler came. Work! So many handsome boys were working for the farmers. … Within three, four months all of them left to build planes, the biplanes. … Everybody had money'.[34] With the invasion of Poland, however, those fit for service were sent to the Eastern Front, leaving the village fairly deserted until the arrival of the camp. Ogris would join the war later in 1943, working at a farm for a daily salary of five German Marks until then. Prior to being drafted, he was also tasked with transporting inmate rations to the north camp with an ox; the camp

[34] Ogris, personal interview. Original quote: 'Dann ist der Hitler gekommen. Arbeit! So viele junge, fesche Burschen waren bei den Bauern. …. Binnen drei, vier Monaten waren alle draußen und haben sie Flieger gebaut, die Doppeldecker. …. Jeder hat ein Geld gehabt'.

administration did not typically use trucks for this purpose until after his departure. Ogris would pass the small railway track leading into the tunnel and stop at the front gate. A couple of SS men would command him to stay outside, they would then bring the supplies into the camp, and return again with the ox. While this regimented procedure ensured that Ogris never got a glimpse of the camp's inner workings, he could nevertheless observe the poor working conditions around the tunnel entrance. Ogris remembers seeing how a Russian inmate—carrying wooden planks—was shot at point blank range. The SS then allegedly transported the dead inmate through the tunnel and incinerated his body in the south camp's open-air crematorium; 'dort haben sie ihn verheizt, haben ihn angezündet' ('they burned him there, set fire to him'). Ogris did not appear fazed by the mistreatment of particular groups and nationals—a certain mode of thinking that he readily applied to socioeconomic aspects.

While Ogris respected Voigt-Firon senior for helping the Valley survive throughout these socioeconomic peaks and troughs,[35] not everyone who had come into wealth fared well in his memory. Asked to describe past economic circumstances, Ogris revealed his aversion to foreigners. After briefly recounting how he had come to make his Marks, he honed in on the habitual figures of economic blame: 'I went to Ferlach and I got the nicest shoes for one and a half Mark. So cheap … up there was a store

[35] The land on both sides of the Loiblpass was expropriated ahead of the construction of the twin camp: Voigt-Firon's sloping forests on the northern side and Baron Friedrich von Born's land on the southern side. Von Born, a Jewish landowner who also had a hunting lodge on the southern extreme of the pass, was a fervent anti-Nazi. He was arrested in Italy in 1943, sent to Dachau, and murdered on 5 February 1944. See Peter Gstettner, 'Die KZ-Opfer vom Loiblpass', in Wilhelm Baum, Peter Gstettner, Hans Haider, Vinzenz Jobst, and Peter Pirker (eds.), *Das Buch der Namen: Die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus in Kärnten* (Vienna, 2010): 360.

where the Jews…' After briefly trailing off and laughing, Ogris went on: 'They hunted them. They robbed and sold them. …. The Jews had money, but our people had no money. …. Jews. Those whom Hitler killed. But those who survived are in a country where they have it nice. We had no money. I went back home again. I fed and pastured cows. We had no radio, no television, no newspaper. We were powerless'.[36]

Continuing in this vein, Ogris suggested that the local Jews were abruptly deported.[37] Where they went, he did not know.[38] Since he had read that millions were killed, Ogris swiftly began questioning why so many were resurfacing: 'And now they are coming like ticks—there are so many Jews. Where are they coming back from again? [Laughs] That is a federation. … And now they are here, increasing heavily,

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[36] Ogris, personal interview. Original quote: 'Bin ich nach Ferlach gegangen und hab' ich für eineinhalb Mark die schönsten Schuhe bekommen, so billig war das .... oben war ein Geschäft, wo die Juden... [lacht] Die haben sie gejagt. Haben sie ausgeraubt und verkauft. .... Die Juden haben Geld gehabt, aber unserer [einer] hat keiner ein Geld gehabt. .... Juden. Ja, die was der Hitler hingemacht hat. Aber die, die überlebt haben, sind in einem anderen Land, wo sie's schön haben. Wir haben kein Geld gehabt. So bin ich wieder nachhause. Habe ich Kühe gefüttert und geweidet. Hama ka Radio, ka Fernsehen, keine Zeitung gehabt. War'ma machtlos'.

[37] On the Aryanisation of Jewish property and businesses in Carinthia following the Anschluss (including prior planning, arrests, and postwar return and restitution issues), and south of the Karawanks from April 1941, see August Walzl, *Die Juden in Kärnten und das Dritte Reich* (Klagenfurt, 2009), pp. 153—201, 255—272, 303—322.

[38] Until 1867, Jews were prohibited from freely settling and acquiring property in Carinthia and Carniola. By 1910 there were only 341 people of Mosaic faith; less than 0.1 per cent of the total Carinthian population at the time (371,372). Despite the consistently low presence of Jews, Carinthia had already been rife with anti-Semitism prior to 1938. For an overview of Carinthian anti-Semitism in the Third Reich, including the names and brief details of Carinthian Jewish victims, see Hans Haider, 'Opferliste der Jüdinnen und Juden aus Kärnten', in Baum, Gstettner, Haider, et al. (eds.), *Das Buch der Namen*: 119–129.

fucking trash'.[39] Periodically inserting the word 'Jews' or 'the Jew' completely at random, and three times in the space of around 130 spoken words, Ogris espoused an unmistakable suspicion of and ambivalence towards Jews. Though not exactly earning his sympathy, the Roma—as a persecuted group—fared slightly better in his account. By contrast, he perceived some injustice in their eventual deportation. Towards the end of the war, as Ogris remembers, around sixty Roma people were living in the area: 'They did honest work here in our community. Really nice people. But even so Hitler deported them. There was an eighty-year-old woman. Had never drunk a good pure coffee like hers. And on Sundays we often marched over and annoyed her. And we said, "Oh, nice that Hitler came. They were crazy, the gypsies". Hitler chased them away'.[40] Just as with the Jews: where they ultimately ended up, he did not know.[41] In marked contrast, Scheiring steered clear of socioeconomically motivated discrimination. Interestingly enough, however, she equated KZ inmates with conventional prisoners,

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[39] Ogris, personal interview. Original, slightly longer, quote: 'Auf einmal haben sie sie ausse [hinaus], weggeführt, die Juden. .... Ich weiß nicht wo die Juden hingekommen sind. Sie schreiben, so viele Tausende, Millionen haben sie umgebracht. Von wo kommen so viele? Und jetzt kommen's so wie die Zecken—san [sind] so viele Juden. Von wo kommen die her wieder [lacht]? Das ist ein Verein. Hat ja kein Mensch gewusst, dass in Russland so viel Juden umadum san [weitverstreut leben]. In jeder Stadt. Und jetzt san [sind] sie da, kommen sie stark, scheiß Geraffel. Ein Geschäft war, ein großes Geschäft. Billige, schöne Sachen. Weißt eh bei den Juden, was sie mit ihnen gemacht haben'.

[40] Ibid. Original, slightly longer, quote: 'Viele Leute haben in der Hitler-Zeit Arbeit aufgenommen. Haben sie brav gearbeitet da bei uns. Wirklich nette Leut'. Aber trotzdem hat der Hitler sie verschleppt. A Frau war, eine 80 Jahr' alte. Noch nie so einen guten Bohnenkaffee getrunken, wie von ihr der. Und öfters sind wir sonntags ume [hinüber] marschiert und haben sie geärgert. Und haben gesagt, "Oh, schön, dass der Hitler gekommen ist. Die waren damisch, die Zigeuner". Der Hitler hat sie verjagt. Wo sie sie hinhaben, weiß ich nicht'.

[41] On the persecution, deportation, and murder of Roma and Sinti in Carinthia during the Third Reich, see Nadja Danglmaier and Werner Koroschitz, *Nationalsozialismus in Kärnten: Opfer . Täter . Gegner* (Innsbruck, 2015), pp. 269—281. According to estimates, a total of 500,000 Roma and Sinti were murdered by the Nazis; around 9000 of the total 11,000 Austrian Roma and Sinti were killed.

and even appeared to view the tunnel itself in terms of unfinished business that was taken up again in the postwar period:[42]

> Actually, well almost certainly nobody suffered, I believe. Please, you know, I do not want to speak for the others. But I cannot imagine that someone suffered there. [I ask, "Not the inmates as well?"] I have no idea. Sure, an inmate will never have had it easy. An inmate is an inmate. And this is the same the world over. …. One did not really pay any attention to them. The real tunnel was not actually built until after the war. That also took some time. …. [I ask about the material fate of the camp] There was a lot of crockery and beds and bedding. Where all this went, nobody knows. …. Us further down got nothing. Pamsch, who was of course at the source, he was directly at the doorstep, he could take everything home with the oxen …. Or one also still needed the barracks for when the new workers came, but those were the normal construction workers [in 1960].[43]

When thousands were retreating from Yugoslavia via the mountain passage at the war's end, the Loiblpass provided its last gifts. Not only could Valley inhabitants dismantle the barracks and load machinery onto their oxen, there were also opportunities to pick up weapons and military horses left behind by the retreating soldiers.[44] Claiming that

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[42] See 'Eine Tote Grenze mit einem schlafenden Tunnel: 1945 – 1950' and 'Der Endausbau des Tunnels' chapters in Adamik, *Der Loibl von der Römerzeit bis heute*, pp. 41—56.

[43] Scheiring, personal interview. Original quote: '[Also nicht gelitten?] Eigentlich, also gelitten hat da bestimmt niemand, nehm ich an. Bitte, wissen Sie, ich möcht' nicht für die Anderen reden. Aber, dass da wer gelitten hat, kann ich mir nicht vorstellen. [Auch nicht die Häftlinge?] Ich hab' keine Ahnung. Sicher, ein Häftling wird's nie gut gehabt haben. Ein Häftling ist ein Häftling. Und das ist auf der ganzen Welt gleich. …. Man hat denen eigentlich gar keine Bemerkung [Beachtung] geschenkt. Es ist ja eigentlich erst dann der richtige Tunnel gebaut worden, nach dem Krieg. Das hat ja auch eine Weile gedauert. …. [Auf meine Frage, ob Teile des Lagers abgetragen wurden:] Es war ja wahnsinnig viel Geschirr und Betten und Bettzeug. Wo das hingekommen ist, weiß kein Mensch. .... Wir herunten haben nichts bekommen. Der Pamsch, der war natürlich an der Quelle, der war ja direkt vor der Türe, der konnte ja alles mit den Ochsen heimführen ….. Oder man hat ja dann auch noch die Baracken gebraucht, wie die neuen Arbeiter gekommen sind, aber das waren dann die normalen Bauarbeiter'.

[44] Also see Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 410—417. Retreating Nazi collaborationist groups sought to burn the south camp to the ground by throwing grenades at, and placing incendiary bombs in, some of the barracks on 11 May (pp. 412—413). As a former inmate described the aftermath on 12 May, 'Im ganzen Tal ist nur Rauch zu sehen. ... Gegen elf Uhr hören wir wieder Gewehr- und Kanonensalven. In der Nacht sehen wir die Lagerfeuer der Weißgardisten, die – etwa achthundert Meter vom Tunnelportal entfernt – ... Schüsse abgeben. Sie beschießen ohne Unterbrechung die Straßeneinmündung

some two thousand horses were left to their own devices—and soon running around the Alpine meadows—Ogris alleges that quite a few locals adopted two or more. Beyond taking some machinery and loading it onto two oxen, he appropriated ten military rifles that were lying by the roadside. Ogris would later go on to sell the breeches of these rifles to a weapons manufacturing company that set up shop in Ferlach a year later. Although each breech sold supposedly made him two hundred Schillings richer, inflation and the black market quickly swallowed the profits. The wealthy farmers living further afield—and mainly around Klagenfurt—could nevertheless make a fair amount. A kilogram of fat and butter set a person back 140 and 120 Schillings, respectively. And a litre of black market milk cost between four and five Schillings.[45]

The wartime camp appeared to have brought a degree of 'modernisation' to the village. Despite the mounting pressures of war, the site rather ironically represented a brief break with the socioeconomic hardship that had hitherto been but a fact of life for local inhabitants. Due to construction work at the tunnel, for instance, electric lighting had also been installed for the first time in the Loibltal's history. Yet following the short-lived Yugoslav occupation in May 1945, as Scheiring recalls, the Valley was plunged into darkness once again: 'When the war was over, Tito took all the

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und wir befinden uns genau in der Schusslinie. .... Der Strom ist versiegt, die Straße ist wieder leer. .... Wir nehmen unseren Weg [nach Tržič] wieder auf und kommen nur schwer voran inmitten von Trümmern aller Art, die von der wilden Verbissenheit zeugen, mit der die Feinde gekämpft haben. Leichen von Männern und Frauen, Pferdekadaver, umgestürzte, aufgerissene Wägen, Munition, Waffen, Kanonen, verbrannte Lastwagen, Schriftstücke, Lebensmittel, Wäsche, Schuhe, verstreute Zigaretten, Fahrräder, Schreibmaschinen' (pp. 413—415).

[45] Ogris, personal interview.

transformers and everything, and then we had petroleum again, after the war. There was no light after this—until electrical light returned again many years later'.[46] In the short run, the Loibltal more or less sunk back into its pre-war socioeconomic state, with the memory of the camp being but a reminder of a brief promise of greater prosperity.[47] And in the long run, the tunnelling project remained engraved in the minds of locals just as Rainer had apparently intended: as an economically beneficial link.

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[46] Scheiring, personal interview. Original quote: 'Das hat ja auch eine Weile gedauert. Na zum Beispiel im Krieg haben wir zum ersten Mal elektrisches Licht bekommen. Weil ja oben beim Tunnel kein Licht war. Aber als der Krieg aus war, hat der Tito die ganzen Transformatoren, alles genommen, und dann haben wir wieder Petroleum gehabt nach dem Krieg. Da hat es kein Licht gegeben—bis dann wieder nach Jahren wieder elektrisches Licht gekommen ist'.

[47] Zausnig might argue otherwise: 'Die Liebe zum Führer wurde von der Liebe zum Konsum abgelöst, und die nationale Kränkung mit Hilfe materieller Ersatzbefriedigung in den Hintergrund gedrängt'. This interpretation arguably cannot be applied to the Loibl Valley, as it would subsume its particular socioeconomic situation into the regional, early postwar context. See Zausnig, 'Der Loibltunnel und seine Entstehungsgeschichte': 172.

BORDERLAND EXPERIENCES: 'SS BY DAY, PARTISANS BY NIGHT'

> There were a lot of partisans in the Loibl Valley. Also when we went to the mountain pasture—to look for cattle or something—one came across partisans. Never at the Raidenwirt, they did not dare to go there. Rather [they went to] the farmers in the area, but about that one did not speak. [I ask why] Well, why? When they come at night and steal or say "Give us food", and then you give him something just so that he leaves again. Well, what should I do then, whom should I inform? There was no phone, there was nothing. Everybody just gave what they had. [I ask whether one feared the partisans] One feared them perhaps just as much as the SS, because there were also strict ones—SS, no? Therefore I would say [a fear of partisans and the SS] in equal measures. Surely, [it was frightening] when one came across each another in the forests, but they did not do us children any harm. [I ask a leading question: whether one was caught between the frontlines—the SS by day, the partisans by night] Yes! This is exactly how it was. That was exactly how it was… That was exactly how it was…[48]

Living on a fault-line that saw two opposing ideological worlds collide,[49] the local inhabitants' wartime and early postwar experiences gravely impaired the extent to which they understood the concentration camp. For fear of potential repercussions, it appears that choosing silence over conversation in political matters amounted to a rational survival strategy. A widespread realisation that the war would be lost began

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[48] Scheiring, personal interview. Original quote: 'Es hat im Loibltal viel Partisanen gegeben. Auch wenn wir auf die Alm gegangen sind—das Vieh suchen oder was—ist man Partisanen begegnet. Beim Raidenwirt nie, da haben sie sich nicht her getraut. Wenn, dann nur bei den Bauern rundherum, aber darüber hat man nicht gesprochen. [Weshalb?] Ja, weshalb? Wenn die kommen in der Nacht und stehlen, oder sagen: "Geben'S uns zu essen", und da gibst du ihm, nur damit er wieder geht. Ja, was soll i da machen, wen soll ich verständigen? Es gab ja kein Telefon, es gab ja gar nichts. Hat halt a jeder geben was er g'habt hat. [Hat man sich gefürchtet vor den Partisanen?] Man hat sich vielleicht gleich gefürchtet wie vor der SS, weil es hat ja strenge auch gegeben—SS, na? Also folgedessen sag ich gleich. Sicherlich, wenn man sich im Wald begegnet ist, aber sie haben uns Kindern ja nichts getan. [Musste man zwischen den Fronten leben? Einerseits die SS tagsüber und nachts über die Partisanen?] Ja! Genau so war's. Genau so war das. Genau so war das'.

[49] It would be interesting to compare the wartime situation in Carinthia to the territorial issue between 1918 and 1920—when the conflict 'was waged between neighbors, dividing little villages, and even hamlets into two armed camps'. See Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2009), p. 167.

materialising in 1943, and a decided increase in partisan activities could be observed thenceforth.[50] The reality of defeat prompted some Carinthians to switch sides and join the partisans in the woods.[51] Most people nevertheless chose to remain apolitical, at least in part because the SS and partisans would murder those who supported their respective enemies.[52] Acts of revenge by partisans also continued for some time after the Reich's capitulation.[53] A combination of these factors raised territorial uncertainties to a level that had not been observed since shortly after the Habsburg monarchy crumbled, which in turn nourished ambivalence and deepened silence. Appreciating the

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[50] Between 1941 and 1945 an estimated 100,000 men and women had fought in Slovene partisan groupings. See Pirker, *Subversion deutscher Herrschaft*, p. 275. Approximately 3000 fought in Carinthia during the war. Of these some 927 were Carinthians (mostly part of the Slovene-speaking minority). See Marjan Linasi, *Die Kärntner Partisanen: Der antifaschistische Widerstand im zweisprachigen Kärnten unter Berücksichtigung des slowenischen und jugoslawischen Widerstandes* (Klagenfurt, 2013), pp. 389—390. For the role of women in Yugoslav partisan units, see Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (New York, 2015).

[51] A number of Carinthian Slovenes also fled across the border to avoid being drafted into the *Wehrmacht* in 1938. Tomaž Olip from Zell Pfarre figures among the most prominent deserters. He was eventually caught, tried by the infamous Nazi judge Roland Freisler, and executed in April 1943 (along with twelve others). The Austrian government annulled the NS *Volksgerichtshof* sentences in 2009. See Danglmaier and Koroschitz, *Nationalsozialismus in Kärnten*, pp. 357—358; Wilhelm Baum, *"Wie ein im Käfig eingesperrter Vogel": Das Tagebuch des Thomas Olip* (Klagenfurt, 2010); Baum, *Die Freisler-Prozesse in Kärnten: Zeugnisse des Widerstandes gegen das NS-Regime in Österreich* (Klagenfurt, 2011), pp. 30—136, 231—232.

[52] For an overview of the situation leading up to the mass deportations in 1942—particularly in regards to desertion, exile in Yugoslavia, and the Carinthian partisans of the first hour ('Grüne Kader')—see 'Die slowenischen Naziopfer im Partisanenkrieg in Zell-Pfarre, Eisenkappel, Bleiburg, im Rosental und auf der Saualm (1942—1945)', in Baum, Gstettner, Haider, et al. (eds.), *Das Buch der Namen*: 130—137; Josef Rausch, *Der Partisanenkampf in Kärnten im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Vienna, 1994).

[53] Yet as one might derive from Zausnig's conclusion, equating the role of the partisans with that of the Nazis would be to assume the local inhabitants' postwar pattern of remembrance: 'In den geschilderten Gesprächssequenzen und Interpretationen offenbarte sich einerseits die Einstellung der Befragten zur NS-Vergangenheit, die mehrheitlich von Schuldverschiebung, Projektion der Schuld auf andere, Verleugnung, Verdrängung und dem Vergessenwollen gekennzeichnet ist. Andererseits wurden Erinnerungen zur Aufrechnung von eigener und fremder Schuld mißbraucht, und der Terror des Nazi-Regimes mit dem Freiheitskampf des Partisanenwiderstandes gleichgesetzt'. See Zausnig, 'Der Loibltunnel und seine Entstehungsgeschichte': 171.

relationship between the mounting zones of grey (understood here as the issue of choosing one side over the other) and the intensifying culture of silence—namely how the former advanced the latter—requires tracing the history and memory of developments from 1943 onwards. Only thus can one fully appreciate the way in which the concentration camp came to be viewed and remembered.

Since Friedrich Rainer's speech in Ljubljana on 27 February 1942, partisan actions had shown no signs of subsiding.[54] Quite to the contrary: 1943 marked a noticeable increase. Almost all acts of violence took place within a forty-kilometre radius of the Loiblpass. The vast majority of the attacks occurred in Southern Carinthia, with a heavy concentration on and in close proximity to the Windisch-Bleiberg and Ferlach districts. Although the National Socialists stepped up their efforts to counter assaults in 1943, the situation continued to deteriorate over time. As the *Landesgendarmerie Chronik* (provincial police records) suggests, both sides boosted their methods of terror considerably.

A first significant attack occurred a mere six days into 1943. A group of two hundred partisans armed with machine guns and hand grenades surrounded the village of Globasnitz, located forty kilometres east of Ferlach. After infiltrating the district, party and postal service offices—and trashing them—they set the municipal office ablaze, looted a nearby grocery store, and murdered the local *DAF-Obmann* Lorenz

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[54] In having successfully grown the Liberation Front (OF) network during the summer of 1942, Slovene Carinthian partisans first fought against the Nazis on Carinthian soil on 25 August 1942. The clash occurred in Abtei, a mountain village some eighteen kilometres east of Ferlach. See Wolfgang Neugebauer, *The Austrian Resistance 1938—1945*, trans. John Nicholson and Eric Capena (Vienna, 2014), pp. 202. Also see 'Armed Resistance and Partisan War' chapter (pp. 196—205).

Lassnig in the 'Gasthaus Zankl'. In light of these high numbers, the gendarmerie could do little to avert the assault and had to concentrate its efforts on protecting the military barrack.[55] As can be seen from Scheiring's recollection of the situation, some villages lacked the necessary communication infrastructure to inform the authorities.

So it appears feasible that countless incidents were never reported, chiefly to avoid encouraging another act of vengeance. Secluded communities could not rely on military protection. In the Loibltal, for instance, partisans only avoided farms that were in the north camp's field of view.[56] Moreover, extensive increases in guard posts—of which there were many at the beginning of February 1943—remained limited to more populated areas.[57]

The forcible expulsion of a Slovene-speaking family in Blasnitzen, a rural farming settlement thirty kilometres east of Ferlach, led to the next recorded incident that year.[58] The Gritsch family replaced the deportees and took over their lease. In mid-

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[55] 'Chronik LGK.f.Ktntn. 1943' (henceforth 'Police Report'), 6 January 1943, 'Chronik Landesgendarmerie 1938—1945', provincial police records, in Egon Payr Sammlung (henceforth 'Payr Collection'), Kärntner Landesarchiv (KLA), Katalog Nr. 336, Schachtel 1, Signatur 3. All provincial police records in this collection are contained in the same box.

[56] Based on an anonymous eyewitness account by a farmer whom I visited in August 2012.

[57] Police Report, 5 February 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[58] The mass deportation programme ceased after April 1942. Thenceforth, families and individuals suspected of supporting the partisans were targeted. See Valentin Sima, 'Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen 1942: Vorgeschichte, Reaktionen und Interventionen von Wehrmachtsstellen', in Verband ausgesiedelter Slowenen, Institut für Zeitgeschichte der UBW Klagenfurt, and Slowenisches wissenschaftliches Institut (eds.), *Volks- und staatsfeindlichkeit: Die Vertreibung von Kärntner Slowenen 1942* (Klagenfurt, 1992): 206. Slovene-speaking Carinthians were also sent to concentration camps like Dachau, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, and Auschwitz. See Filipič, *Slowenen in Mauthausen*; Avguštin Malle, 'Dachau – die Pflicht der Erinnerung', in Avguštin Malle (ed.), *Pregon koroških Slovencev: 1942 / Die Vertreibung der Kärntner Slowenen* (Klagenfurt, 2002): 29—46. For a list of Carinthians and Upper Carniolans who died at Mauthausen, see 'Opferliste KZ Mauthausen – Kärnten und Oberkrain', in Baum, Gstettner, Haider, et al. (eds.), *Das Buch der Namen*: 374.

March, a group of partisans arrived at the farm, coming across Alois Gritsch and his wife, daughter, and son-in-law Dr Brencsik—a vacationing Captain of the German *Luftwaffe*. Looting the place and allegedly binge drinking through the night, they set off again in the small hours of the morning, shortly after torturing and killing the two men and reportedly leaving the women unscathed.[59] Defensive countermeasures at the time were focused on the most affected areas, and thus mainly on districts immediately to the east of the Loibltal and Ferlach. Yet the Gendarmerie observed 'no success' following large-scale deployments to combat 'the bandits',[60] as Carinthian officials and Nazi-sympathisers commonly referred to partisans.[61] Escalating security problems inspired them to set up a gendarmerie post at the Drau Bridge in Strau by Ferlach.[62] Defensive methods were more effective, since the partisans were particularly difficult to track down. Aside from operating predominantly under the cover of darkness, they roamed and more or less controlled the forests. Guerrilla warfare tactics allowed them to escape with relative ease.[63]

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[59] Police Report, 11 March 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[60] Referring to the resistance fighters as partisans was considered too honourable a term. See Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark*, pp. 307, 430.

[61] Police Report, 18 March 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[62] Police Report, 19 March 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[63] During 'hunt-and-kill' operations, however, Carinthian Nazis increasingly adopted guerilla tactics of their own to solve the difficulty of tracking down partisans in the forests: 'Disposing of usually excellent intelligence the SS soldiers would plunge into the woods and converge from three or four directions on a partisan unit, hoping for surprise; normally they would remain there several days, occupying tactically critical positions, beating the bushes and scouring outlying buildings. Local partisan supporters were shot out of hand or deported and their property burned or wrecked'. See Barker, 'Partisan Warfare in the Bilingual Region of Carinthia': 199.

The gendarmerie nevertheless scouted out partisan camps in the woods on a regular basis. On 23 March, for example, the police 'smoked out' a bunker in the Valley of Roses and killed two partisans in the process.[64] And a few weeks thereafter, realising that looting, murder, and violence had increased in the area, an SS regiment moved into the Rosental.[65] Just sixteen days following this reallocation, however, partisans managed to burn down the sawmill and sabotage the electricity plant in Feistritz im Rosental, situated around ten kilometres to the west of Ferlach.[66] The following month, the Valley witnessed the next supposed reprisal that the gendarmerie deemed noteworthy enough to document.[67] In Sankt Margareten, eleven kilometres east of Ferlach, between eight and ten partisans dragged a farmer up to his attic, shot him twice, and disappeared into the woods. According to rumours, the man had been murdered because of his National Socialist stance in neighbourhood feuds. Other local statements pointed to a simple settling of scores: the farmer had never paid for the cattle he had received from Slovenia and smuggled into Carinthia prior to 1938.[68]

After another report detailing how a woman had been shot for allegedly collaborating with 'the Germans', a rare non-partisan-related announcement was made:

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[64] Police Report, 23 March 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[65] Police Report, 11 April 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[66] Police Report, 27 April 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA. Hermann Hagspiel provides a slightly different version of events: 'Anfang Mai 1943 überfielen 70 Partisanen einen deutschen Stützpunkt in Feistritz im Rosental. Dort befreiten sie 41 sowjetische Kriegsgefangene, setzten ein Sägewerk in Brand und zerstörten die örtliche Akkumulatorenfabrik'. See Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark*, p. 307.

[67] On growing conflict in the Rosental from early 1943, see Barker, 'Partisan Warfare in the Bilingual Region of Carinthia': 196.

[68] Police Report, May 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

'During the month of May, work on a tunnel between St. Leonhard and St. Anna (Yugoslavia) began'. It reported on the arrival of between three and four hundred foreign civilian workers as well as an approximately equal number of inmates from KZ Mauthausen—with these setting up barracks on both sides of the tunnel-to-be.[69] The resulting surge in SS numbers may perhaps have motivated the group of partisans, who had lingered in the Valley of Roses for some time, to move on and into the Valley of Bears. Reaching the Bärental on 18 May, they orchestrated and effected vengeance at half past three in the morning. They knocked at the door of *Oberjäger* Rohr and said 'Security Police is here' in German. Upon unlocking, Rohr was dragged outside and promptly shot in the neck with a nine-millimetre pistol. The intruders entered the home and acquired a number of hunting rifles, ammunition, clothing, and food. Having avenged the murder of a fellow partisan, whom Rohr had apparently killed whilst on duty over a year earlier, the partisans left the house and moved on to set fire to the 'Klagenfurter Hütte', situated at an altitude of 1664 meters and located around one kilometre west of the Loiblpass when measured in a direct (bee)line; from point to point.[70]

At the end of May, the area referred to as Old Carinthia ('Alt-Kärnten')—south of the river Drau, from Unterdrauburg (Dravograd) in the east to Arnoldstein in the west—was divided into four defence sections. With the Rosental marking the halfway

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[69] Police Report, 5 May 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA. The first transport of some 330 inmates from Mauthausen did not arrive at the Loiblpass' south camp until the beginning of June 1943. Initially, only contract workers laboured at the tunnel (between 29 March and mid-July 1943). See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 99, 64.

[70] Police Report, 18 May 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

point and the centre of the conflict zone, Ferlach's chief of the gendarmerie Riegerl received the assignment to head Operation Section II.[71] Waning military fortunes only added further pressures to a local situation that was nearing a state of emergency. Aerial raids across the Reich had brought high numbers of evacuated people to Carinthia. In June of 1943, the gendarmerie noted how a total war began noticeably taking its toll on national strength ('Volkskraft'). While agriculture and other industries were now predominantly in the hands of women, elder men, foreign workers, and POWs, the gendarmerie posts were run by men considered to be either barely fit for military action ('bedingt kriegsverwendungsfähig') or no longer showing any operational competence. The figure of fallen and missing men increased exponentially, with the greatest losses being observed in Upper Carniola/Gorenjska.[72] Security sharply deteriorated, and the month of June could be seen as a turning point. For the first time on record, the gendarmerie noticeably changed its stance:

> In the Altgau Carinthia, particularly in the border region, a continual increase in partisan activities became noticeable. These partisan activities took on such big dimensions because many people were no longer content with the long duration of the war, which can perhaps be primarily attributed to inhumane acts and atrocities carried out by German troops, particularly by the SS and police. Contributing to this in great measures were the deportations of Slovenes from Upper Carniola and Old Carinthia ["Altkärnten"] ordered by the [former] deputy Gauleiter [Franz] Kutschera and Gauleiter Rainer, during which heart-breaking scenes could be witnessed.[73]

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[71] Police Report, 30 May 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[72] Police Report, June 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[73] Police Report, 10 June 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA. Original quote: 'Im Altgau Kärnten, insbesondere im Grenzgebiet war eine immer stärker werdende Partisanentätigkeit festzustellen. Die

With their successes steadily on the rise, partisans gained the necessary confidence to start targeting military bases. In one case, for instance, a group attacked and robbed a *Landwachtstützpunkt* nine kilometres from Ferlach, killing two guards in the process.[74] By the end of 1943, there remained little doubt that the situation had become altogether untenable. Even while the party propaganda machinery strongly put forward the notion that Germany would be victorious, vacationing soldiers spoke in 'hushed whispers' of the resistance movements taking shape on the territory of their Italian and Romanian allies. Those having fled to Southern Carinthia from heavily bombarded areas likewise strengthened people's growing conviction that 'the war would be lost'. The gendarmerie perceived that party functionaries began to exhibit a degree of jealousy towards those locals who dared to openly question and cast a shadow of doubt over expressions of the *Siegerhoffnung* ('hope for victory').

Whereas the building of the Loiblpass tunnel had only just begun, the sum of that year's events marked the beginning of the end.[75] The emphasis rested chiefly on the inhabitants whose lives were dictated by the reality of being caught in the crossfire between partisan rebels and National Socialist forces. As the Carinthian gendarmerie

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Partisanentätigkeit nahm deshalb einen so großen Umfang an, weil viele Menschen mit der langen Dauer des Krieges nicht mehr einverstanden waren und war wohl hauptsächlich darauf zurückzuführen, weil von deutschen Truppen, besonders von der SS und Polizei überall unmenschliche Handlungen und Grausamkeiten durchgeführt werden. Viel hat dazu auch die vom Gauleiter Stellvertreter Kutschera und Gauleiter Rainer angeordnete Aussiedlung von Slowenen aus Oberkrain und Altkärnten beigetragen, wobei es zu herzzerreißenden Szenen kam'.

[74] Police Report, 13 July 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[75] Despite the exponential increases in police and Gendarmerie posts—from 43 to 153 in the course of the war—the Nazis failed to break the partisan resistance. Between 1944 and 1945 some 15,000 armed men were fighting the partisans. See Valentin, *Kärnten*, p. 77.

concluded, 'Although mass arrests among the civilian population were made by the Gestapo, sympathy and support from the local population for the partisans could not be prevented'.[76] Noting the events of 1943 and observing a diminishing local morale in the process, the gendarmerie gradually began facing reality, albeit with a considerable degree of ambivalence. The human cost of a taxing conflict and the growing suspicion that one was embroiled in a forlorn war with the partisans became most evident in 1944:

> At the turn of the year '43/'44, *Reichsminister* Dr Goebbels addressed the German Volk, as he does every year, in a radio broadcast. While acknowledging the struggle of the bygone year, he nevertheless believed that he could foresee all the conditions for the final victory in the hands of the leadership and troops. He even went so far as to brand mark those who doubted the final victory as criminals of the German *Volk*. …. With the fading prospect of a German victory, the foreign agricultural workers (Yugoslavs, Poles, labourers from Eastern Europe) became more work shy [or reluctant], so that a refusal to work and an abandonment of the work place increased through such labourers. Many of these fleeing workers joined the partisans. Among the local population, the once substantial enthusiasm for National Socialism sank as well, which had the effect that a high number of people found encouragement in progressively stronger partisan appearances, established contact with these, and supported their undertaking.[77]

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[76] Police Report, 17 November 1943, in Payr Collection, KLA. Original quote: 'Obwohl Massenverhaftungen durch die Gestapo aus den Reihen der Zivilbevölkerung vorgenommen wurden, konnte nicht verhindert werden, daß die Sympathie und Unterstützung von Seite der Bevölkerung den Partisanen gegenüber ausgeblieben wäre'.

[77] 'Chronik LGK.f.Ktntn. 1944' (henceforth also 'Police Report'), January 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA. Original quote: 'Zur Jahreswende 43/44 hielt Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels, wie jedes Jahr, eine Rundfunkansprache an das deutsche Volk, in der er zwar die Schwere des abgelaufenen Jahres kennzeichnete, aber dennoch alle Chancen für den Endsieg in den Händen unserer Führung und Truppen zu erblicken glaubte. Er ging sogar soweit, daß er jenen, der an den Endsieg Zweifel hegen sollte, als einen Verbrecher an dem deutschen Volke brandmarkte. .... Mit der immer mehr schwindenden Aussicht auf einen Sieg Deutschlands wurden die eingesetzten fremdländischen Landarbeiter (Jugoslawen, Polen, Ostarbeiter) arbeitsunlustiger, so daß sich Arbeitsverweigerung und Verlassen der Arbeitsplätze durch solche Arbeiter mehrten. Viele dieser flüchtigen Arbeiter schlossen sich den Partisanen an. Auch bei der heimischen Bevölkerung sank die ehemals sehr große Begeisterung für den Nationalsozialismus, was zur Folge hatte, daß eine größere Anzahl von Personen, durch die immer stärker auftretenden Partisanen ermuntert, mit diesen Fühlung nahm und ihre Tätigkeit unterstützte'.

The year 1944 started with an aerial attack that further shook local morale. The aggressive Allied bombing campaign had finally reached Southern Carinthia in mid-January, with 162 civilian casualties counted in Klagenfurt following a single American air raid.[78] Most of the attacks throughout the year focused heavily on the *Gauhauptstadt*, as well as on neighbouring areas and infrastructure to the north. The dampening effect on civilian confidence motivated the Carinthian Reich Governor's gendarmerie commander, *Oberst* Rudolf Handl, to call for the 'eradication' and absolute prohibition of the word 'catastrophe' on 4 February. The use of the term had become common practice, particularly in the wake of aerial attacks and in relation to party official and *Wehrmacht* response efforts. Emergency relief vehicles typically sported a sign that read 'disaster relief operation' (*Katastropheneinsatz*). Hoping to alleviate psychological and political strains caused by this label, Handl recommended that

[78] Police Report, 16 January 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA. Also see Siegfried Beer and Stefan Karner, *Der Krieg aus der Luft: Kärnten und Steiermark 1941—1945* (Graz, 1992), pp. 198—209, who cite a higher death toll of 226 (p. 203); 108 women, 78 men, 19 French POWs, 17 children, 6 unidentified (which in fact adds up to 228). Their book also contains a British attack assessment report (p. 207) estimating that damage caused to the Klagenfurt division of the 'Wiener Neustädter Flugzeugwerke' would set output back by three weeks.

‘catastrophe’ with all its variants should be replaced with ‘immediate aid’ (*Soforthilfe*).[79]

The aerial raids further intensified in early 1944, with airborne combat between German and Anglo-American planes in the skies over Carinthia being a common occurrence.[80] On 25 February, an English bomber was shot down, killing seven of the eleven crew on board. After the survivors were arrested and ten five-hundred-kilogram bombs had been made safe, the community of Metnitz organised a funeral. Sympathies appeared to run high, with the service attracting a high number of locals.[81] A day later, an Allied plane managed a more successful emergency landing. Surviving the impact, and having landed twenty kilometres east of Ferlach, the men succeeded in locating and joining a group of partisans around the village of Abriach. As time went on, the causal relationship between declining civilian morale and increasing sympathy for (as well as collaboration with) opponents of the Reich became more apparent.[82]

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[79] Rudolf Handl (Kommandeur der Gendarmerie bei dem Reichsstatthalter in Kärnten), ‘Amtliche Verlautbarung Nr. 5: Wunsch des Reichsmarschalls auf Beseitigung des Wortes “Katastrophe”’, official directive, Klagenfurt, 4 February 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA. Original quote: ‘Nachstehend wird der Erl.d.Reichsministeriums für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda vom 9.12.1943, Az.2595/8.12.43/82-13 1, zur Kenntnis und Beachtung verlautbart: “Das Wort ‘Katastrophe’ hat sich im Zusammenhang mit Luftangriffen und der Beseitigung der Folgen der Luftangriffe insbesondere für den Sondereinsatz der Wehrmacht und der Parteigliederung eingebürgert. Ebenso war es bisher üblich, die zur Durchführung von Hilfsmaßnahmen eingesetzten entwickelten Fahrzeuge mit einem Schild ‘Katastropheneinsatz’ kenntlich zu machen. Ich bitte dafür zu sorgen, daß aus allen Organisationsplänen, Erlassen und Verordnung und aus dem gesamten Sprachgebrauch das Wort ‘Katastrophe’ ausgemerzt wird, da es sich psychologisch und politisch unerfreulich auswirkt. Ich empfehle anstelle des Wortes “Katastropheneinsatz” einheitlich die Verwendung des Wortes ‘Soforthilfe’”’.

[80] For a chiefly empirical overview of aerial attacks across Carinthia, see Beer and Karner, *Der Krieg aus der Luft*, pp. 155—214.

[81] Police Report, 25 February 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[82] Police Report, 26 February 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

The comparatively late arrival of the bombing campaign meant that the civilian population living in Carinthia had little time to become accustomed to the terror from above that now joined the terror from within. Whereas the particular timing of the campaign only further brought home the dawning reality of defeat, the circumstances in the Klagenfurt basin were different from those in much of the rest of the Reich. The analysis presented in Richard Overy's study *The Bombing War* (2013) cannot account for the Southern Carinthian situation, not least because Austria itself is mentioned but a handful of times.[83] Any evidence pointing towards a further radicalisation of civilians in the face of Allied attacks is thin, and that, as Overy argues, the 'bombing made the German population more rather than less dependent on the state and the party'[84] did not altogether ring true for rural areas of the Klagenfurt basin. In fact, one might contend that a number of factors coming together towards the end of 1944 produced the polar opposite. Some of the causes were indeed typical, relating for instance to widespread war fatigue and a loss of faith in triumph. From the perspective of the gendarmerie, however, the falling bombs were chief in catalysing more than just a defeat of morale:

> The overall situation is serious, especially since a large portion of the population no longer believes in victory anyway. While a year ago one did not think of an enemy plane when one heard the sound of an airplane, the opposite was now the case, because a German plane could no longer be seen. Due to fuel shortages, few rescue vehicles could be mobilised. The year 1944 also put a great deal of pressure on the gendarmerie. Deserters and other questionable elements among the foreign work force gadded around. …. The population is so worn down and war weary from the aerial attacks

[83] For a civilian account of everyday life during the bombing campaign in the Villach area, see Gertrud Tschamer, 'Tagebuch über die Bombenangriffe auf Villach und Umgebung', in Wilhelm Neumann (ed.), *Neues aus Alt-Villach*: *2. Jahrbuch des Stadtmuseums 1965* (Villach, 1965): 123—134.

[84] Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe 1939—1945* (London, 2014), p. 357.

> and bombardments that there can no longer be any talk of normal work performance, since it often has to spend many hours a day in air-raid shelters. These prevailing, dangerous circumstances, which are more or less met with no defensive measures, have an increasingly dampening effect on civilian mood and leave only the dominant wish for a rapid end to the war. …. Not only were bombs dropped, but also flyers that informed the population of the actual war situation. It was strictly prohibited to read these writings, to keep a hold of them, or to pass them on, a ban that was however rarely respected any more.[85]

Severe resource shortages meant that civilians had learned to rely less on the state in the course of 1944. Food supplies now generally arrived, if at all, too late, especially as railway transportation links were out of commission for long periods. Foreign workers, apart from increasingly refusing to work and receiving insufficient amounts of food, reportedly began executing acts of sabotage. Overy's interpretation may be applicable to those living in urban areas, of which there were comparatively few in this specific region. Dependence on the state for survival also meant distinctly different things to largely self-sufficient farming communities on the one hand, and city dwellers on the

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[85] Police Report, 29 November 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA. Original quote: 'Die allgemeine Lage ist ernst, zumal ein Großteil der Bevölkerung ohnehin an einen Sieg nicht mehr glaubt. Wenn man vor einem Jahr beim Wahrnehmen eines Fliegergeräusches gar nicht an einen Feindflieger dachte, so war es jetzt umgekehrt, denn ein deutsches Flugzeug war überhaupt nicht zu sehen. Infolge Benzinmangels konnte kaum mehr ein Rettungsfahrzeug ausfahren. Das Jahr 1944 stellte auch die Gendarmerie vor große Anforderungen. Deserteure und sonstige fragwürdige Elemente der ausländischen Arbeiter trieben sich herum. .... Die Bevölkerung ist durch die fortgesetzten feindlichen Luftangriffe und Bombardierungen derart zermürbt und kriegsmüde, daß von einer normalen Arbeitsleistung keine Rede mehr sein kann, weil sie ja oft mehrere Stunden am Tag in Luftschutzkellern verbringen muß. Diese anhaltenden gefahrdrohenden Zustände, denen soviel wie gar keine Abwehr entgegensteht, haben zur Folge, daß die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung immer gedrückter wird und nur der Wunsch nach einem baldigen Kriegsende vorherrscht. Der Eisenbahnverkehr ist durchwegs infolge der Luftangriffe stark behindert, wenn nicht gar zeitweise unmöglich gemacht. Ein besonderes Kapitel stellt die Tätigkeit der Gendarmerie auf dem Gebiet der fremdländischen Arbeiter dar, weil diese infolge der langen Kriegsdauer nicht mehr arbeiten wollen und darüber hinaus, wo es sein konnte, Sabotage betrieben. .... Es wurden jedoch nicht immer Bomben, sondern auch Flugblätter abgeworfen, in welchen die Bevölkerung über die wahre Kriegslage aufgeklärt wurde. Es war streng verboten, solche Schriften zu lesen, bei sich zu behalten oder gar weiterzugeben, welches Verbot aber kaum mehr beachtet wurde'.

other hand. Adding to this, Southern Carinthia presented an abnormal situation. Those living in areas where high partisan movements were observed did indeed have another choice—however perilous—if they wished to change allegiance.[86] Whether stemming from personal ideological conviction or a calculated necessity, joining the partisans progressively presented itself as an 'alternative' to National Socialism.[87] Young men like Ogris, who wished not to join the rebels, had to leave the Valley and head to the Eastern Front: 'I joined the military; did not want to join the partisans'.[88]

Brutalities and revenge killings by SS men nevertheless pushed an ever-greater number of locals into partisan collaboration.[89] Murders of this kind grew steadily in early 1944, with the first report detailing the shooting and subsequent torching of two men and a woman in late January for having supported the partisans ('Bandenbegünstigung').[90] As the reign of terror continued from both sides, most living

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[86] General indication of the number of Carinthian partisans in the following communities: Windisch Bleiberg (26), Unterloibl (11), Ferlach (25), Waidisch (19), Bad Vellach (54), Gösselsdorf (12), Leppen (49), Lobnig (27), Ebriach (46), Oberblasnitzen (16), Remschenig (61), Zell Pfarre area (87), Eisenkappel (36), St. Veit im Jauntal area (52), Klagenfurt and immediate surroundings (17), Villach and surroundings (6). See Linasi, *Die Kärntner Partisanen*, p. 391.

[87] Within the background of being the targets of forcible expulsions, a disproportionately high number of Carinthian Slovenes joined the partisans. That they were not exempt from military conscription also played a crucial role. See Walter Manoschek, 'Kärntner Slowenen als Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz', in Walter Manoschek (ed.), *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz: Urteilspraxis – Strafvollzug – Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich* (Vienna, 2003): 358—389.

[88] Ogris, personal interview. Original quote: 'Ich bin zum Militär gegangen; hab' nicht wollen zu den Partisanen gehen'. Like the Slovene-speaking minority in Carinthia, Slovenes were also not exempt from military service. In Upper Carniola and the Southern Carinthia some 7216 men were drafted into the *Wehrmacht* (28,092 in Lower Styria), a figure that does not take partisan deserters into account. See Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941—1945*, p. 92. The author nevertheless appears to exhibit bias by referring to Southern Carinthia as 'the occupied part of Carinthia', rendering the nature of these figures unclear.

[89] The phenomenon of *Wehrmacht* deserters joining the partisans first became an issue for Friedrich Rainer in early 1942. See Williams, *Gau, Volk und Reich*, p. 151.

[90] Police Report, 24 January 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

in high conflict zones opted for the safer option and kept their heads down as long as possible. Yet partisan methods were also evolving. Since some had acquired SS uniforms by way of murder, they managed to sustain an element of surprise long enough to prevent their target from fleeing. Such was the fate of a farmer by the name of Blasius Kaiser, living thirty kilometres east of Ferlach. Two partisans dressed as SS officers approached him with the request that he help free a tractor that had gotten stuck in the woods. Upon reaching the forest, they turned on Kaiser and shot him in the back of the neck.[91] For Nazi-sympathisers, relying on the SS for protection became all the more difficult, which in turn fuelled partisan collaboration and collaborationism.

As public enthusiasm for National Socialism continued weakening over time, a reversal in roles now appeared to emerge. Whilst the Gestapo and SS increasingly resorted to shooting native 'traitors', the partisans began applying a method that boosted their numbers. This approach, surfacing with growing frequency throughout 1944, involved recruiting locals by force ('Zwangsrekrutierung').[92] Many of these so-called

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[91] Police Report, 12 April 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[92] On so-called 'Zwangsrekrutierungen' by partisans, see Walter Manoschek, *Opfer der NS-Militärjustiz: Urteilspraxis, Strafvollzug, Entschädigungspolitik in Österreich* (Vienna, 2003), pp. 366—367; Valentin, *Der Sonderfall*, p. 129. For a more traditional Carinthian version of this issue, which takes the NS propaganda notion that forced recruitment became a common occurrence in 1944 at face value, see Walzl, *Kärnten 1945*, p. 59.

forced recruitments were likely of a more voluntary nature.[93] Nevertheless, the situation further developed at the end of April, at least in part as a result of Ferlach becoming a key base from which Nazi operations were launched. An SS and police regiment moved into the town, and at the Hollenburg—perched on top of a hill with a view of the entire Rosental and located near Ferlach in the direction of Klagenfurt—a *Landwacht* base set up camp. A series of offensives against partisan strongholds followed. In Ferlach itself, the Gestapo ordered the arrest of the municipal inspector Johann Richter and the gunsmith Franz Schmied.[94] The two men managed to evade capture by joining the partisans in the woods. Yet the following day, on 6 May, the Gestapo launched another assault involving a gunsmith and a chauffeur in the Valley of Roses, killing both in the process. Representative of the new role reversal, two armed partisans climbed through the window of Vinzens Olip—a resident of the village of Zell-Pfarre, located twelve

[93] Forced recruitments have commonly been linked to military conscription into the *Wehrmacht*. A recent contribution in the annual journal overseen by Wilhelm Wadl, the head of KLA, goes as far as appropriating the term *Zwangsrekrutierung* to present the cases of three seventeen-year old German soldiers from Southern Carinthia. The first had joined the *Wehrmacht* voluntarily 'in order to survive', the second voluntarily 'by conviction', and the third involuntarily 'due to conscription'. The second individual retreated over the Loiblpass on 8 May. All of these printed oral history accounts remain without comment. See Andreas Kleewein, 'Freiwillig oder zwangsrekrutiert?: Ein Vergleich über die Einberufung und das Kriegsende 1945 dreier siebzehnjähriger Soldaten', *Carinthia I: Zeitschrift für geschichtliche Landeskunde von Kärnten* 205 (2015): 459—468. In 2005 a Carinthian ÖVP politician caused a small kerfuffle when he argued, 'Für mich gibt es auch einen klaren Unterschied zwischen Wehrmachtsangehörigen und den zu den anderen Einheiten Zwangsrekrutierten einerseits, und Mitgliedern der SS-Totenkopfverbände und Waffen-SS andererseits, die ihre menschenverachtenden Taten, und wir kennen diese, in den Konzentrationslagern, aber nicht nur dort, begangen haben'. See Josef Martinz, quoted in Villa, 'Das KZ Loibl Nord in der Kärntner Erinnerungskultur', p. 59.

[94] Applying the principle of clan liability ('Sippenhaftung')—in order to spread fear through reprisals more easily—the Nazis also arrested and tried family members of suspected partisan leaders if these had evaded capture. See Baum, *Die Freisler-Prozesse in Kärnten*, p. 227.

kilometres southeast of Ferlach—later that night and allegedly recruited him by coercive means.[95]

With increasing successes, the partisans could develop activities and expand their realm of influence considerably, even reaching the outskirts of Klagenfurt in May 1944.[96] Aside from pursuing a killing and looting spree unabated, they had now mustered up the confidence to take more decisive action. Assuming political control over Zell-Pfarre—or perhaps filling a void in governance—seemed to be high on their list of priorities (and rather fittingly, 'Zell' is also the Slovene word for soul). On the evening of 7 May, seventeen partisans stormed the private residence of NSDAP-*Ortsgruppenleiter* Julius Rainer, making off with fifteen kilograms of bacon and four loaves of bread, only to return four months later with around forty men who slaughtered and stole his hefty pig.[97] Every other day a robbery was reported in Zell-Pfarre. On 22 May, however, a single, unarmed partisan approached a local merely to enquire about the state of affairs regarding the police.[98]

Partisan groups also began targeting the local leadership more aggressively. In the summer of 1944, SS and gendarmerie units regularly came under fire in the Rosental,

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[95] Police Report, 20 April 1944; 25 April 1944; 5 May 1944; and 6 May 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[96] The Nazis had in April 1944 set up an *Einsatzstab zur Bandenbekämpfung* in Klagenfurt, and in August 1944 Himmler also declared Carinthia a *Bandenkampfgebiet*. See Neugebauer, *The Austrian Resistance 1938—1945*, p. 204.

[97] Police Report, 7 May 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA; Police Report, 1 September 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[98] Police Report, 22 May 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

which led to an unprecedented number of deaths within their own ranks.[99] Local Nazis were likewise hunted. NSDAP-*Ortsgruppenleiter* Karl Hammerschmied, for instance, was killed while trying to escape at the end of July.[100] These targeted assaults occurred in the Loibl Valley just the same. Symptomatic of heightened partisan confidence, attacks were soon being launched within the Loibl north camp's field of view. Upon being asked about her memory of the SS, Scheiring—after describing them as 'very nice gentlemen'—recalled an event at her mother's farm that had hitherto been unthinkable:

> There were these old SS men, who would simply go over to my mother's on Sundays, because her husband was with the military. And therefore there was always some coffee, buttered bread, or a bacon sandwich—because she had agricultural land. And this one time of course this very bad thing happened. They always came over on a Sunday afternoon. Ogris, Siegfried lived vis-à-vis, whom you also interviewed—did he perhaps tell you this story? No? All of a sudden the door swings open. Partisans enter. In the afternoon! And then they shot at the two men in the kitchen. Took them out to the front door. One was dead; one was still alive. And of course they wanted all the bread, and snatched up everything one had and disappeared again. There was, however, a watchtower of sorts up by the tunnel, just like the ones that one saw everywhere at concentration camps, no? And they [the SS guards] got wind of this, that something happened there. And of course

[99] This noticeable increase in firepower and partisan attacks around the Karawanken was directly linked to the British SOE 'Clowder Mission' during the summer and autumn of 1944. Tito approved the British plan to use Slovene territory as a base. The mission sanctioned the supply of weapons and military assistance to Slovene partisans for the purpose of growing the resistance and infiltrating the Carinthian borderland. See Pirker, *Subversion deutscher Herrschaft*; Pirker, 'British Subversive Politics towards Austria and Partisan Resistance in the Austrian-Slovene Borderland, 1938—45'; Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, 1993), pp. 150—151.

[100] Police Report, 29 July 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

> they came immediately, but the partisans had at that point already headed over the hills and far away.[101]

In the light of the swelling partisan activities, the SS decided to dissolve the north camp and transfer the inmates to its southern twin by mid-April 1945.[102] Aided by an increasing number of local converts, partisans soon began expanding their hunt for National Socialists into formerly unexplored territories, venturing as far north of the Loibl Valley as Eberstein—nearly sixty kilometres. The pursuit of exacting revenge on the regime's loyal henchmen led a group of German and Slavic speaking partisans to a local NSDAP leader and farmer in Mirnig, just a few kilometres east of Eberstein. After forcing their way in and reaching the farmhouse parlour, they identified a large portrait of Hitler hanging on the wall. The men smashed the picture, forced the farmer to eat the cardboard bits, and beat him to a pulp with a German waist-belt in front of his wife and six children. Having allegedly tortured and abused the man for three hours, they ordered his family to leave the house. The 53-year-old farmer, showing but feeble signs of life, was then shot in the back of the neck and reportedly placed in the kitchen

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[101] Scheiring, personal interview. Original quote: 'Da waren so alte SS-Herren, die einfach am Sonntag zur Mutter hinüber gegangen sind, denn von ihr der Mann, der war beim Militär. Und da hat's halt einen Kaffee gegeben und ein Butterbrot oder ein Speckbrot—weil sie hat ja Landwirtschaft g'habt. Und da war ja natürlich einmal sehr eine schlimme Sache. Die sind immer am Sonntagnachmittag hinübergegangen. Vis-à-vis hat dieser Ogris, Siegfried gewohnt, den Sie auch interviewt haben. Hat er Ihnen das erzählt? Diese G'schicht vielleicht? Nein? Plötzlich geht die Tür auf. Kommen Partisanen. Am Nachmittag! Und die haben dann auf die zwei Männer geschossen in der Küche drinnen. Haben sie dann vor die Türe hinaus. Einer war tot, einer war noch lebendig. Und die wollten natürlich das ganze Brot und haben alles was man gehabt hat zusammengerafft und sind wieder verschwunden. Es war aber oben beim Tunnel so ein Aussichtsturm, so wie man sie überall gesehen hat bei die KZ, na? Und die haben das mitbekommen, dass da was passiert ist. Und die waren natürlich sofort da, aber da waren die Partisanen schon über alle Berge'.

[102] Tišler, quoted in Zausnig, *Der Loibl-Tunnel*, p. 129.

oven.[103] The Gestapo responded to such attacks by creating even more fear in the local community, proceeding with mass arrests that landed most of Ferlach's Socialists in prison. No longer being able to control whole areas, a new tactic emerged that placed terror above security.[104]

Only a year earlier, the Gestapo had cracked down on rumours. Those who tried their hand at black humour were given jail sentences. Such was the fate of an unassuming local who went fishing along the river Drau on 19 May 1943. Upon being approached by Maria Varch, Karl Blatnig related how he was collecting six litres of cider for his partisan friends. He joked that they were the very 'bandits'—with between four and five having been regularly sighted at the time—who had been causing havoc in Feistritz im Rosental. Having ostensibly been drunk, Blatnig even tried enchanting the lady by producing his own ballad: 'We are from Yugoslavia. At night we prowl about and by day we go fishing'. The rumour began to spread, even reaching the police in Klagenfurt. As it turned out, Blatnig was a member of Carinthia's strictly pan-German *Heimatbund*, a product of the post-WWI *Abwehrkampf* that later did much to strengthen National Socialism in the region.[105] Despite confessing and apologising, he

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[103] Police Report, 13 November 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[104] The swelling number of Austrian fighters led to the establishment of an Austrian partisan battalion in October 1944, which was founded with the consent of the Slovene leadership, and with the understanding that it would be absorbed into the 'Verband der Slowenischen Volksbefreiungsarmee'. See Prušnik-Gašper, *Gemsen auf der Lawine*, pp. 338—352. This account is based on the experiences of a former Carinthian Slovene partisan.

[105] In large part due to Friedrich Rainer's efforts to rekindle the *Abwehrkampf* myth by trying to convince Carinthians that the risk of a Yugoslav territorial takeover was now far greater than it had been between 1918 and 1920. See Hellwig Valentin, *Kärnten: Vom Ersten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck, 2011), p. 69.

was sentenced to one month in the 'dungeon' (*Kerker*) with a probation period of three years. The judge, deeming the stunt rather inappropriate at such a sensitive point in time, hoped to discourage others from generating widespread fear of this nature by making an example of Blatnig.[106]

From mid-1944, however, the Nazis may perhaps have begun deliberately fanning rather than combating civilian distress, with one case being particularly enlightening. When on 26 October the Loibl Valley's primary school went up in flames and the Sankt Leonhard and Devil's bridges exploded, the gendarmerie was quick to blame the partisans.[107] Yet as Scheiring recalls, the act of arson at the *Ottokar Kernstock Volksschule*—named after the pan-German, Styrian poet who penned the *Hakenkreuzlied* in 1923—might have been the Army's doing: 'I can only say [it was] rumoured that the military burned it down, because it was afraid to stay there. ['So it was not the partisans?' I ask] No, no. One claimed that back then. It was not the partisans. It was the military itself that set fire to it. Everybody probably saw it differently'.[108] As Scheiring suggested, 'truth' amounted to a fairly loose concept in the wartime Loibltal. The locals and the gendarmerie turned the proverbial blind eye to

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[106] Postenführer to Amtsgericht in Ferlach, 'Betrifft: Karl Blatnig, Ausstreuung beunruhigender Gerüchte. Bezug: Anzeige des Besitzers Friedrich Varch in Trieblach', criminal charge, 27 May 1943, in U-Akten Geschäftszahl (Zl.) U 46/43, Bezirksgericht (BG) Ferlach, U-Akten, 1939—1968, municipal court records, KLA, Katalog Nr. 244, Schachtel 229, Signatur 229.4 Su.

[107] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, '1945!', in municipal police records, AdPiF, p. 17. The *Volksschule* was located around three hundred metres up the road from the 'Deutscher Peter'.

[108] Scheiring, personal interview. Original quote: 'Ich kann nur sagen, gemunkelt [wurde], dass das das Militär niedergebrannt hat, weil sie Angst gehabt haben, drinnen zu bleiben. [Also waren das nicht die Partisanen?] Nein, nein. Hat man damals gesagt. Es waren nicht die Partisanen. Es war das Militär selber, dass das an'zündet hat. Jeder hat es wahrscheinlich anders gesehen'.

many things 'factual'. A focus on merely getting by came to the fore. Blaming one side over the other could do little to ease anxiety.

The NS and partisan reigns of terror made politics a double-edged sword with which few dared to duel. Being effectively governed by two opposing factions simultaneously meant that local choices were largely directed by survival instincts. Fluctuations in loyalties appeared to be products more of a respective faction's success than ideological conviction. The partisan campaign after 1943 pushed some locals into their camp, whether by force or voluntarily. In Unterloibl, the home to many steelworkers at the foothills of the Loibl Valley, recruitment-by-force allegedly absorbed a few workers into the partisan ranks in September and October 1944.[109] Very much in line with Scheiring's illustration of the situation, the gendarmerie was fully aware of this predicament and began to abandon its feigned ignorance at the end of the year:

> That many a human life fell victim to these bandits, that many farmers had to hand over their last food products, was a matter of self-evidence in this unusual battle. …. From among the sons of the *Wehrmacht*, many [Carinthian] Slovenes became deserters and joined the Yugoslav gangs.[110] From among the [Carinthian] Slovene population, whole families defected to the gangs in the woods and put the indigenous population in a state of anxiety and fear. The gangsterism took on very frightening proportions this year. Due to the aiding and abetting of bandits, orders given by the Gestapo Klagenfurt resulted in many people being arrested, deported, or shot. ….

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[109] Police Report, 14 September 1944 and 17 October 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[110] For the most comprehensive account on the seamless integration of Austrians into the *Wehrmacht* from 1938, see Thomas R. Grischany, *Der Ostmark treue Alpensöhne: Die Integration der Österreicher in die großdeutsche Wehrmacht, 1938—45* (Göttingen, 2015). *Wehrmacht* deserters were also an asset to the partisans due to the military experience and weapons that they brought with them. See Maria Fritsche, *Entziehungen: Österreichische Deserteure und Selbstverstümmler in der Deutschen Wehrmacht* (Vienna, 2004), p. 60.

> Combatting gang-related activities is difficult in that the civilian population is, partly out of fear and partly out of sympathy, working together with the gangs. The local men, with these being the ones who were allegedly recruited by force, impacted significantly on civilian gang activities and attitudes.[111]

In the early months of 1945, and until the Allied victory, the partisans began preparing for a Yugoslavian occupation in the now foreseeable future. The Loibltal and Windisch-Bleiberg became particularly vulnerable to kidnappings and murder. Whole gendarmerie patrol units started vanishing without a trace. In March, one such unit comprising six men was making its way down Windisch-Bleiberg and into the Valley of Roses when it disappeared.[112] The corpses of these men were later discovered, albeit in different places and at different times.[113] Another patrol unit of the Windisch-Bleiberg district was ambushed that month, resulting in the death of the gendarmerie

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[111] Police Report, 29 November 1944, in Payr Collection, KLA. Original quote: 'Daß durch diese Banditen so manches an Menschenleben zum Opfer fiel, daß viele Bauern ihre letzten Lebensmittel hergeben mußten, war bei diesem ungewöhnlichen Kampfe eine Selbstverständlichkeit. …. Von den Slowenen sind viele Söhne von der Wehrmacht fahnenflüchtig geworden und haben sich den jugoslawischen Banden angeschlossen. Von der slowenischen Bevölkerung sind auch ganze Familien zu den Banden in den Wäldern übergelaufen und haben die heimische Bevölkerung in Angst und Schrecken versetzt. Das Bandenwesen hat in diesem Jahr ganz erschreckende Formen angenommen. Wegen Bandenbegünstigung wurden über den Auftrag der Gestapo Klagenfurt viele Personen festgenommen, ausgesiedelt oder erschossen. …. Die Bekämpfung der Bandentätigkeit ist insofern schwierig, da die Bevölkerung teils aus Angst und teils aus Sympathie mit den Banden zusammenarbeitet. Die einheimischen Männer, es sind dies jene Männer, die angeblich zwangsrekrutiert wurden, trugen viel zu dieser Bandentätigkeit und Einstellung der Bevölkerung bei'.

[112] The Rosental had been the cradle of the *Osvobodilna fronta* (OF; 'Liberation Front') movement in Southern Carinthia, from where it spread in 1941, absorbing a considerable number of *Wehrmacht* deserters at first. See Linasi, *Die Kärntner Partisanen*, pp. 41—56, who also argues that many from among the local population trusted and confided in its members.

[113] Police Report, 8 March 1945, in Payr Collection, KLA.

commander Woschank and the capture of his six subordinates.[114] And in March and April respectively, Josef Lausegger and Valentin Lausegger were taken. A Windisch-Bleiberg patrol unit discovered their skeletons in mid-October 1945.[115]

On 26 April, the United States' Fifteenth Air Force dropped its last aerial bomb of the war on Klagenfurt.[116] But the conflict did not end for at least another fortnight. With defeat and chaos now governing all, the SS became progressively more impulsive. Making its way up to Salzburg from Carinthia, a unit of twenty-five men terrorised whole communities. It shot at red-white-red flags on buildings, looted houses as it went, and kidnapped and killed four civilians along the way.[117] The month of German defeat continued in the same vein, with battles between Tito fighters and German forces raging on in and around the Hollenburg until the very end.[118] Meanwhile, in towns and villages, partisan representatives had been holding meetings with gendarmerie officials to negotiate terms and conditions following the National Socialist surrender.[119]

With the collapse of the German front lines, great numbers of soldiers stationed in the south began retreating over the Loiblpass, making their way up from Italy, Greece,

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[114] On the conflict between partisans and police units in Windisch-Bleiberg during March 1945, including details regarding the above-mentioned clashes, see Prušnik-Gašper, *Gemsen auf der Lawine*, pp. 368—369. The chapter entitled 'Die letzten Kämpfe' provides a detailed overview of the last major battles fought between the partisans and Nazi loyalists (pp. 368—378).

[115] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, '1945!', in municipal police records, AdPiF, p. 16.

[116] Overy, *The Bombing War*, p. 397.

[117] Police Report, 28 April 1945, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[118] Police Report, 7 May 1945, in Payr Collection, KLA. In fact, the final, most violent clashes occurred in the vicinity of Ferlach between 8 and 12 May. See 'Die Ferlacher Tragödie' chapter in Prušnik-Gašper, *Gemsen auf der Lawine*, pp. 379—383.

[119] Police Report, 5 May 1945, in Payr Collection, KLA.

and the Balkans, and leaving a vast trail of discarded combat equipment in their wake.[120] Local Nazi loyalists now equally attempted an escape: the Windisch-Bleiberg gendarmerie abandoned its post and joined the fleeing masses; Friedrich Rainer and his followers were on the run before being captured by the British to await their *Volksgericht* trial[121] or, in the case of Rainer himself, be subjected to long stretches of interrogation.[122] Hans Piesch's provisional government could do little to stem the rising tide of inbound Yugoslav troops. The resulting power vacuum allowed Tito's men—who had been trailing behind the fleeing soldiers—to effect an occupation of the Loibltal until 12 May 1945.[123]

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[120] As Prušnik-Gašper later learned from two of his partisan comrades: 'Die breite Straße vom Loibl bis zur Ferlacher Draubrücke war mit Fahrzeugen, gepanzerten Wägen und Artillerieeinheiten der zurückweichenden deutschen Divisionen vollgestopft. Auf der Ebene unmittelbar vor der Brücke entwaffnete das einheimische Partisanenbataillon diese Schlange. Es bestand aus Aufständischen aus Zell-Pfarre, Kärntner Burschen – Deserteuren der Deutschen Wehrmacht –, Ferlacher Büchsenmachern und Holzarbeitern aus Ebriach'. See Prušnik-Gašper, *Gemsen auf der Lawine*, p. 379—380.

[121] For a comprehensive account on the Austrian People's Courts between 1945 and 1955, see Butterweck, *Verurteilt und begnadigt*, particularly the chapter entitled 'Das Jahr 1947: Man konnte es sich richten', pp. 121—158.

[122] As Williams summarises Rainer's postwar stance: 'Loyalty to his cause was transformed into a search for survival'. Captured on 31 May, Rainer went on to prove himself particularly useful to the British, US, and Yugoslav governments. After being extensively interrogated by the British, he was summoned to Nuremberg to act as a witness for Arthur Seyss-Inquart during the International Military Tribunal (IMT) proceedings between October 1945 and June 1946. Rainer was taken to Dachau prison for further questioning, and was at one point also asked about KZ Loiblpass. On 13 February 1947, the Americans handed him over to the Yugoslavs who charged Rainer for the arrest of 14,000 people, 822 of whom were hanged or shot as hostages; the torture of 4000 individuals, 712 of whom suffered grave injuries; the deportation of 3441 to concentration camps; the mass killing of 3671 and injury of 1096 people; burning 3219 houses and farm buildings to the ground; 7000 deportations; the seizure of assets; 30,000 robberies and thefts; and for the military conscription of 4216 and labour conscription of 4216 individuals by force. Though sentenced to death in the summer of 1947, nobody knows for certain when and how Rainer died ('The only certainty is that it was not in 1947'). See Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich*, pp. 207—279; Friedrich Rainer, *My Internment and Testimony at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial: The Account of Friedrich Rainer, Austrian Nazi: Edited, Annotated, and Introduced by Maurice Williams*, trans. Val Witham (Lewiston, NY, 2006).

[123] Police Report, 8 May 1945, in Payr Collection, KLA.

ALLIED EXPEDIENCY: COUNTERING ANTIFASCISM

When British troops began trickling into the Klagenfurt basin two days after the war, they were faced with a chaotic situation that took some time to stabilise. Representative of their pragmatic approach, the Allies promptly mapped out a prohibited frontier zone (*Grenzsperrzone*) that effectively sealed off the Loibltal from the outside world. This passage ran along the Karawanks to the south and the Gail and Drau rivers to the north, with a varying width of between ten and fifteen kilometres.[124] A fortnight into the occupation, ten British soldiers took over the Windisch-Bleiberg gendarmerie building's living quarters to better deal with the high concentrations of German collaborators of the Croat Ustaša and Slovene Domobranci in the area.[125] Having reinstated the gendarmerie post on 27 May, the occupying forces employed all available gendarmes to help with this task thenceforth.[126] An attempt at denazifying the post,

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[124] Effecting the occupation remained geographically vague for some time; it took until the end of the month to achieve in full. The British attempted to get the area between Windisch-Bleiberg and the Loiblpass under control and successfully prompted the remaining partisan groupings to leave on 12 May. They did not, however, move into Ferlach until 16 May. See Walzl, *Kärnten 1945*, pp. 178—179.

[125] On British repatriation of Nazi collaborators to Yugoslavia in May and June 1945, and the mass killings that followed, see Rulitz, *Die Tragödie von Bleiburg und Viktring*, pp. 170—193. The author argues that the decision to hand over anti-communist collaborators made the British complicit in the subsequent massacres of thousands at the hands of Tito's soldiers (pp. 340—344).

[126] A large number of some twenty thousand Slovene anti-Communists were ultimately tortured and executed by Tito's men. As the authors of a recent study on the fate of Slovene civilians and Domobranci on the run have argued: 'The presence of the British Army should have been good for the fleeing Slovenes, but it was not. Most of those making their way over the Ljubelj [Loibl] Pass were sent back by the British into the hands of the Communists, who had embarked on a frenzy of killing aimed at eliminating their remaining opponents and enforcing a proletarian dictatorship. The British military may not have known exactly the fate to which they condemned the Slovenes coming under their protection. The Partisans had been Britain's chosen allies in the war against Nazism. However, a brutal reaction was predictable, in the light of the extreme force used by Communists elsewhere, and the Partisans had scores to settle after a two-year civil war with their anti-Communist opponents. Certainly the British knew enough to suspect that death was the most likely outcome'. See Corsellis and Ferrar, *Slovenia 1945*, p. 3.

however meagre, also inspired the arrest of the former gendarmerie commander; Arthur Fritzer was sent to Wolfsberg on 9 July to answer for his crimes.[127] And a day later, the old Austrian gendarmerie signboards were dusted off and reattached for the first time since 1938.[128] Having dispersed the Yugoslav occupation, British soldiers now began patrolling the Loiblpass. For some time, however, the demarcation line and guarded presence did little to deter trespassers. The former British official Reginald Herschy recalled how troops would often look on as Tito forces loaded weapons onto trucks at the Loibl border. Although the same Yugoslav soldiers had been spotted moments earlier in Ferlach, the British remained reluctant to intervene.[129] Unlike the Austrian population, Tito's men did not have to answer to the British.

Southern Carinthia's local bureaucracies showed no resistance and willingly followed the occupying forces' directives from the outset. In so doing, Austrians demonstrated the obedience that the British had already come to anticipate: 'The main factor productive of stability will always be the natural lethargy and laziness of the Austrians, which will tend to make them particularly amenable to occupation by the Western Allies'.[130] Not surprisingly, therefore, a command to rename the many Hitler squares and streets bearing NS-related names in Southern Carinthia met with little resistance. Ferlach witnessed a total of six reversions. In contrast to Ebensee, political

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[127] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, '1945!', in municipal police records, AdPiF, p. 17.

[128] Police Report, 10 July 1945, in Payr Collection, KLA.

[129] Reginald Herschy, *Freiheit um Mitternacht: Österreich 1938—1955: Traumatische Besatzungsjahre* (Klagenfurt, 2011), pp. 49—50.

[130] 6 SFSS, 'Conclusions', 22 May 1945, in Report No. 65F/17, TNA, FO 371/46610, p. 4.

connotations were not prohibited. *Seyß-Inquart-Straße* could thus once again become *12.-November-Straße*. This allusion to the *Deutschösterreich* declaration of 12 November 1918 remained but a nostalgic relic; the fulfilment of a pan-German dream had lasted until the Allies removed 'the German' from the equation with Article 88 of the Saint Germain treaty on 10 September 1919.

Even while the Allied-drawn borders, the rehabilitated street names, and many of the signposts from the pre-*Anschluss* period would prove lasting, territorial anxieties continued to challenge Southern Carinthian stability throughout the first few years of the post-Third Reich order.[131] A fear of reprisals saw Windisch-Bleiberg locals vote for the Communist party in the first election on 25 November 1945.[132] Of the 290 eligible voters, 259 cast their ballot: 116 voted for the Communists (KPÖ), eighty-eight for the Socialists (SPÖ), and fifty-five in favour of the Conservatives (ÖVP).[133] The triumphant Communist mayor—with partisan ties—remained in power for a year.[134] Far from representing a genuine pro-Yugoslav stance, as testimonies from the Valley

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[131] As Robert Knight notes, 'although the border dispute disappeared from international politics in August 1949, ethnic politics intensified in the provincial heartland throughout the 1950s. See Robert Knight, 'Ethnicity and Identity in the Cold War: The Carinthian Border Dispute, 1945–1949', *The International History Review* 22/2 (2000): 277.

[132] Lingering territorial anxieties at the time made strategic voting entirely rational. One needs only to consider the fate of the anti-Communist Slovenes of the Home Guard following the war: 'The tormented journeys ended for most at one of two mass execution sites, in Hrastnik in eastern Slovenia and at Kočevski Rog in the wooded hills of the south. There the battered remnants of the 11,000 *domobranci* were dispatched with a shot in the back on the edge of a pit'. See Corsellis and Ferrar, *Slovenia 1945*, p. 74.

[133] Gendarmeriepostenkommando Windisch-Bleiberg, '1945!', in municipal police records, AdPiF, p. 17.

[134] Writing from a traditional Carinthian perspective, August Walzl makes a questionable case for a 'continuation of the partisan war' in Southern Carinthia (es 'setzte sich ... der Geist des Partisanenkrieges ungebrochen fort'). See 'Die Kärntner Grenze' section in August Walzl, *Die Bewältigung: Nachkriegsjahre in Kärnten und Friaul* (Klagenfurt, 1999), pp. 111—129.

suggest, it appears that tactical voting was very much at the core of this initial inclination. Siegfried Ogris alleged that the community had 'no say in the matter' when the 'Communist Slovene partisan' came to power: 'We did not want it, but either a Communist mayor with a [red] star or nothing. Because the *Yugo* still had power over our people. …. The *Yugos* still thought that the English would give them back Carinthia at some point'.[135]

Contradictory decisions on the part of the British made identifying a clear occupation policy direction increasingly difficult.[136] Yet some paradoxes were a combined product of economic and political expediency on the one hand, and a reflective utilitarianism on the other hand. Denazification reports and inter-agency correspondence suggest that the occupying authorities were deeply aware of local identity narratives and historical developments. Moreover, the British effectively used the territorial conflict to their advantage, even appearing to support a degree of an ethnic *Heimatideologie* to sustain political unity and make their subjects 'amenable' to Allied

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[135] Ogris, personal interview. Original, slightly longer, quote: 'Es war Folgendes: Wir haben nichts zu reden gehabt. Bürgermeister haben sie gewählt. Die Partisanen waren das erste Jahr, war in Windisch-Bleiberg ein kommunistischer Bürgermeister. Ein kommunistischer Slowene. Ein Partisan. Bürgermeister. Wir hab'ma nicht wollen, aber entweder Bürgermeister, kommunistisch mit Stern—oder nix. Weil noch immer die Yugo die Hand über uns gehabt haben, über unsere …. Die Yugos haben immer noch gedacht, die Engländer werden ihnen Kärnten noch zurückgeben'.

[136] The case for a 'growing confusion surrounding British policy' has also been convincingly argued by Robert Knight. See Knight, 'Denazification and Integration in the Austrian Province of Carinthia': 612.

rule.[137] As an intelligence report from late May 1945 revealed, the British were fully conscious of the political situation:

> The dominant and unifying factor is the fear of the Russians and Tito. This will likely transcend divergent tendencies for some time and make the presence of British forces very popular. …. Legitimism was, before the *Anschluss*, virtually non-existent. …. An early Nazi revival is unlikely. There are, however, factors which might lead to its emergence later, when Allied control is relaxed, and eventually removed. There is a strong possibility that the recollection of present Tito encroachments may lead to a recrudescence of the Pan-Germanism and the Marchland mentality. The present reaction to the Russian occupation, which is to blame it on the Nazi régime, may later give way to the belief that the Nazi attitude to "bolshevism" was justified. There can be little doubt that there will be an attempt on the part of some Nazis to retire to their farms to await the day when a new depression will provide the necessary economic basis for radical political developments.[138]

As early as June 1945, official Yugoslav complaints of British misconduct in the arrest of suspects began materialising. Adamant to prevent myths from proliferating, Colonel D. S. Jackling was quick to furnish a report that detailed and refuted Yugoslav allegations that members of the Slovene minority were being targeted and arrested by both the Allied military government and local police. Jackling proposed a course of 'positive counter-propaganda' that entailed, for instance, propagating: 'Looting and destruction by Yugoslavs and partisans before [their] withdrawal'. It had also been alleged that former National Socialists and SS men were being rehabilitated by the

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[137] During the later stages of the war, the British *Special Operations Executive* (SOE) had collaborated with the Slovene partisans, supplying foodstuffs, arms, and explosives. Resources were provided in exchange for Slovene partisan support in the SOE's Clowder Mission, which was one of the most significant attempts to disintegrate NS unity in the Austrian part of the Reich. See Pirker, 'British Subversive Politics towards Austria and Partisan Resistance in the Austrian-Slovene Borderland, 1938—45': 3, 17, 32.

[138] 6 SFSS, 'Current and Future Trends', 22 May 1945, Report No. 65F/17, TNA, FO 371/46610, p. 3.

British to carry out arrests—which included members of the Slovene National Liberation Committee—'in an extraordinary and brutal manner'.[139] Recorded statistics, however, seemed to contradict these assertions.

By 7 June, the Military Government officially had made 732 security arrests. All of those who had been apprehended were reportedly linked to the Nazi regime, save for thirty-six individuals whose on-the-spot arrests were a product of security offences violating Allied directives. Up to that point, only six Yugoslav nationals had been detained,[140] all of whom had been functionaries within the NS system.[141] In terms of Military Government arrests, a total of 134 people were taken into custody for ordinary crimes like theft, and a further 345 for less severe offences, typically relating to curfew or restricted movement contraventions. Austria's tarnished senior police personnel had either made a run for it or were dismissed from their posts by the occupiers. All others were carefully vetted by 'experienced British police officers'. *Pravda*'s allegations that the occupying power was taking Yugoslav civilians to undisclosed locations were likewise contested; these were supposedly escorted to the Austro-Slovenian frontier immediately after being questioned by the Field Security Police. A Resident Minister's report even suggested that journalists from *Pravda* and Yugoslav press agencies could

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[139] Colonel D.S. Jackling to Assistant Chief of Staff G-5, 'Subject: Slovene Minority in Carinthia', secret report, 11 June 1945, TNA, FO 371/46610, pp. 1—3.

[140] This figure does not include the thousands upon thousands of former collaborators that the British repatriated between 18 and 31 May 1945. The policy of handing them over to Soviet and Yugoslav forces resulted in mass executions. See Gregor J. Kranjc, *To Walk with the Devil: Slovene Collaboration and Axis Occupation, 1941—1945* (Toronto, 2013).

[141] By 31 May 1945, the British had forcefully repatriated to Yugoslavia 12,196 Croats, 8263 Slovenes, and 400 Montenegrins. See 'Repatriierung nach Jugoslawien' section in Stieber, *Nachkriegsflüchtlinge in Kärnten und der Steiermark*, pp. 138—146.

be invited to Carinthia to conduct their own fact-finding missions, a suggestion which the Chief of Staff at the Allied Force Headquarters had already welcomed. In the meantime, the course of action entailed delivering more counterpropaganda to the public.[142] Yet efforts proved futile, as allegations that some Nazi authorities were exercising their power in Carinthia kept cropping up. Carinthian delegates also made statements of this kind at an antifascist women's congress in Belgrade.[143]

The first few months following the fall of the Third Reich were marked by a fierce propaganda campaign. *Borba*, the official gazette of the Yugoslav Communist Party, commonly published articles in Belgrade, including one on 13 June 1945 entitled 'the Nazis are still exercising a reign of terror over our people in Slovene Carinthia'. Describing activities by various notorious Nazis, it claimed that while Slovene Domobranci and Croat Ustaša continued to hold out in the forests, the Austrian administration was still full of former Nazi party officials.[144] By that time in mid-June, however, the British had already embarked on a counter-propaganda course to Tito's, actively feeding it to the press. At the end of June 1945 the *Sunday Times* regurgitated the policy aims, reporting that the British Embassy in Belgrade denied the allegations 'that Slovenes were being victimised in the Austrian Province of Carinthia …. Claims that arrested Jugoslavs were taken to an unknown destination were absurd. … The local

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[142] Resident Minister's Office Central Mediterranean Caserta to Foreign Office, telegram, 16 June 1945, TNA, FO 371/46610.

[143] Ambassador in Belgrade Sir Ralph Stevenson to Foreign Office, telegram, 21 June 1945, TNA, FO 371/46610.

[144] Stevenson to Foreign Office, telegram, 13 June 1945, TNA, FO 371/46610.

police had been thoroughly "de-Nazified." …. The only Slovenes deported from Carinthia were some from Jugoslavia falsely claiming to belong to the locality'.[145]

Right from the start, symptoms of structural continuity were nurtured by the Yugoslav territorial claims. Motivated by an increasing conviction on the part of both the Carinthian provisional government and the British, signs of democratic regression were soon cultivated even by a number of antifascists and former partisans alike. They sought to mobilise Rightist elements in an attempt to rid the province of imminent and potentially existential threats to the Austro-Carinthian territories. The close association between antifascism and the partisan struggle meant that antifascism became almost synonymous with support for Yugoslav claims. The British did much to consolidate this notion.[146]

Even if one were to presume that *genuine* democracy figured as the occupier's primary objective, Carinthia's social, political, and economic postwar landscape sported greater roadblocks to democratisation than the other eight Allied-occupied provinces of Austria. Hellwig Valentin's grand narrative on Carinthia from 2009, rather fittingly entitled *Der Sonderfall* ('the special case'), asserts that in stark contrast to

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[145] 'British Denial to Yugoslavia', *Sunday Times*, 24 June 1945. On the postwar marginalisation of Slovene Carinthians, including those who had been deported and imprisoned in concentration camps, see Lisa Rettl, '60 Jahre Minderheitenpolitik in Kärnten/Koroška: Ein Streifzug', in Lisa Rettl and Werner Koroschitz (eds.), *"Heiss umfehdet, wild umstritten": Geschichtsmythen in Rot-Weiß-Rot* (Klagenfurt, 2005): 95—140.

[146] The 'inter-Allied tragedy', as Pirker suggests, was the British decision to strengthen Austrian national identity by promoting policies that favoured those who had hitherto considered themselves German: 'those who were ready and willing to put up anti-Nazi resistance according to the Moscow Declaration were precisely the ones who were suppressed by the British postwar occupation authorities on account of their divergent political aims'. See Pirker, 'British Subversive Politics towards Austria and Partisan Resistance in the Austrian-Slovene Borderland, 1938—45': 32—33.

Germany the denazification of Austria never amounted to a serious Allied concern, with Carinthian conditions prompting the British to act more reservedly still. According to Valentin, a greater reluctance to meddle more intensely in domestic affairs than elsewhere in Austria essentially stemmed from the imminent territorial crisis. Yugoslavia sought to legitimise its claim to southern parts of Carinthia by propagating the view that Carinthia operated as a Fascist stronghold. This inconvenient assessment was not one that the British necessarily rejected. Adamant nevertheless to prevent this view from proliferating, local and British actors alike pursued a comparatively shallow degree of denazification as a direct consequence.[147]

The partisan crisis remained prominent, but other deeply entrenched malaises inhibiting democratic efforts appeared in equal measures. Just as political decisions were based on an analysis of Southern Carinthia's ideological backdrop, economic expediency became a tool to rejuvenate the region despite growing British resource stresses. Economic considerations even motivated a British garrison commander to hand back a Carinthian weapons manufacturing industry to its previous owner, allowing production to restart in 1947. Ferlach's world renowned gunsmiths began profiting considerably. Their weapons were in high demand and went almost entirely to the Allies.[148] Support for this industry resulted in an unavoidable degree of 'renazification', or hampered the process of denazification at the very least. A report by the

[147] Valentin, *Der Sonderfall*, p. 348.

[148] Ferlach had been a main armaments centre for the Habsburg Empire, remained a key weapons industrial hub during interwar years, and supported the Third Reich's war effort during WWII.

Psychological Warfare Branch of the Eighth Army suggests that the British were not oblivious to this:

> Kärnten has always been considered as the Nazi Province of Austria.[149] Apart from geographic and ethnographic factors, one of the main causes for this state of affairs was the more or less complete nazification of the few big industries. The owners and directors of the large industrial establishments had always maintained close connections with the German "Industriebarone". It was their money and influence which helped the Austrian Nazis in the illegal period; it is still their money and influence which in many ways is slowing down the process of denazification. Their vehicles are probably used for transporting food and clothing to the hidden Nazis in the mountains;[150] their hunting boxes and mountain huts probably serve as shelters; their influence prevents people in many cases from giving away valuable information to the authorities.[151]

With the resumption of the postal service across Austria in July, the Allied letter tracking that began suggested how social perceptions and loyalties were relatively fluid, and British suspicions of Nazi influence were partially confirmed. Uncovered letters indicate that it was nevertheless difficult to define locals along clear ideological lines. One inhabitant's letter that was presented in an intelligence report read, 'The whole town of Wolfsberg is full of English. The female world is delighted and after two days girls who were BDM [Bund Deutscher Mädel; 'League of German Girls'] Führerinnen

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[149] In 1933, Carinthia boasted the highest relative number of NSDAP members of any Austrian province at 10,416, rising to around 19,000 by 1936, so that 1 in every 21 Carinthians was a member of the illegal Nazi party (versus 1 in 48 for Styria and 1 in 183 for Salzburg). After the war, some 13,333 members of the SS were registered in Carinthia. See Valentin, *Kärnten*, p. 70.

[150] Due in part to local sympathies, ad hoc SS groups were indeed able to hide out ('running loose') in certain parts of Carinthia and East Tyrol until the autumn of 1945. See Perry Biddiscombe, *Werwolf!: The History of the Nationalist Socialist Guerrilla Movement, 1944—1946* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 189—190.

[151] Psychological Warfare Branch Main HQ Eighth Army, 'Austria Report 8', 27 June 1945, TNA, FO 1007/398, in Gabriela Stieber (ed.), *Consolidated Intelligence Reports: Psychological Warfare Branch Military Government Kärnten Mai 1945 bis April 1946: Eine Quellenedition der britischen Besatzungszeit in Kärnten* (Klagenfurt, 2005), p. 65.

… in former times were seen walking with the English. About a fortnight ago I went with a girl into the mountains where we met two SS men, aged 19, who were candidates for the leaving examination of a secondary school. We gave them our whole picnic meals and patched their shirts'.[152]

Denazification also remained shallow in part because the occupiers wished to keep a low profile in order to maintain the relatively positive public perceptions that they enjoyed. The inhabitants of Southern Carinthia generally saw that their behaviour was excellent, preferred them to the Soviets, and did not expect the stern purge of Nazis that the Russians pursued. While the public complained about British conservatism and the requisitioning of all places of entertainment in town, the ban on travelling further than twenty kilometres was well received, even while the expectation had been fifty kilometres. These minor issues were nevertheless of little concern, as the occupiers discovered that groupings were still openly stating that Nazism had survived. Along with the general population, they held the view that an NS revival 'in two to three years' was probable in the light of the rising conflict with the Russians. Fearing this resurgence,

[152] HQ PWB British Units, 'Consolidated Intelligence Report 3', 8 August 1945, TNA, FO 1007/399, in Stieber (ed.), *Consolidated Intelligence Reports*, p. 115.

the British thus appeared to become more amenable to antidemocratic streams and expressed a greater degree of tolerance towards former Nazis.[153]

However aware the British were of promoting continuities with the old order, the combination of resource pressures, Yugoslav territorial claims, and absence of a strong Austrian identity in Southern Carinthia complicated the task of denazification and re-education. To the occupier's mind, a degree of countering antifascism may have been an expedient—albeit short-term—method serving the purpose of encouraging stability without demanding additional resources. Generally skipping the process of imposing self-critical reflection on their subjects, the British inadvertently enabled notions of personal victimhood to persevere more effortlessly.[154] The wartime framework as the chief point of reference in contemplating National Socialist manifestations like the Loiblpass subcamp could therefore go unchallenged long enough to prevent any serious reassessment from materialising.

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[153] The occupiers even noted that re-education was the very last stage in the process of denazification. Purges were more central than re-education to the British, and denazification thus effectively remained shallow. By June, almost three thousand political purges had been carried out. Schools remained closed, and purges in the field of education were as follows: four secondary school inspectors, nine secondary school teachers, thirty-six ordinary teachers, eleven grammar school masters, two professors of economy, six science masters, and two teachers of divinity were dismissed. The British estimated that a further four hundred replacements would have to be made, but these plans soon subsided in light of growing economic pressures. The British encouraged teaching along pre-Anschluss lines, and history effectively stopped short at 1933. They saw no use in encouraging the re-establishment of Slovene language schools or lessons. Collecting pre- and post-Anschluss history books, they briefly considered printing new books but eventually recommended that teachers lecture from pre-Anschluss books. See TNA, FO 371/46615; FO 371/46610.

[154] As Knight argues, 'So long as the formal conditions of democracy and the taboo on the *Anschluss* were observed, the occupation authorities saw no reason to change their laissez-faire stance'. See Knight, 'Denazification and Integration in the Austrian Province of Carinthia': 612.

III. THE AMERICAN ROAD TO PROSECUTION: KZ EBENSEE

CAPTURING SUSPECTS: AMERICAN AGENTS IN UPPER AUSTRIA

> After the Siegfried Line was breached and Nazi Germany began to fall apart, it was said that the hard core of Party leaders and their Waffen SS would hole up in a National Redoubt which they had made ready in the Austrian Alps and from there descend to prey like werewolves on the Allied occupation forces. This bad dream, of course, never came true, and later there was a good deal of scoffing at the "myth." But at the beginning of May in 1945 there was nothing mythical about either the Werewolves or the National Redoubt. As General Walter Bedell Smith said, "We had every reason to believe the Nazis intended to make their last stand among the crags." All of our intelligence pointed to the Alpine area east and south of Salzburg as the final fortress for the Goetterdaemmerung of the remaining Nazi fanatics. Reconnaissance photographs showed that they were installing bunkers and ammunition and supply depots in this mountain region.[1]

Before the pursuit of Nazi war criminals could begin in earnest, Allied units trickling into Austria between April 1945 and ahead of the German defeat had to be wary.[2] Parts of the Reich remained deeply infested with SS armed units.[3] Elsewhere expeditions to

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[1] Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6. Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff at SHAEF, negotiated the surrender agreement with the German High Command in early May 1945. See D. K. R. Crosswell, *Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith* (Lexington, KY, 2010).

[2] A consideration of potential reprisals against POWs prompted the Allies not to pursue Nazi war criminals before the war's end. See Mitchell G. Bard, *Forgotten Victims: The Abandonment of Americans in Hitler's Camps* (Boulder, 1994), p. 113.

[3] For a brief discussion on divergent scholarly views regarding 'Eisenhower's controversial decision to abandon Berlin as a military objective in favor of preventing German forces from gathering in the National Redoubt', see Haunschmied, Mills, and Witzany-Durda, *St. Georgen – Gusen – Mauthausen*, pp. 199—200. On the 'Alpine Fortress', considered to have been the 'mother of all redoubts', see Biddiscombe, *Werwolf!*, pp. 177—192.

hunt down war criminals were only just beginning.[4] Allied regiments following closely on the heels of retreating SS and *Wehrmacht* soldiers discovered and uncovered KZ sites as they went, and they often did so by pure chance. The Red Army had effected the first camp liberation. In late July 1944, they freed the remaining inmates at Majdanek, a notorious death camp near the Polish town of Lublin.[5] Collecting evidence and filming impressions at this and subsequently liberated sites meant that the outside world became increasingly aware of many hitherto unknown forms of abuse and extermination.[6] Yet even as Himmler's failed attempts to remove all traces of the killing sites gradually came to light, the British and Americans still had their suspicions that Soviet representations of the liberated camps were more propaganda than reality. In the case of Auschwitz, film scenes of the liberation had indeed been reconstructed after the

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[4] Although concise policies and plans of action were not conceived until May 1945, the Allies had clearly stated their intention to pursue war criminals in the 'Declaration on Atrocities' during the First Moscow Conference in October 1943: 'The United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union have received from many quarters evidence of atrocities, massacres and cold-blooded mass executions which are being perpetrated by the Hitlerite forces in many of the countries they have overrun and from which they are now being steadily expelled. Let those who have hitherto not imbrued their hands with innocent blood beware lest they join the ranks of the guilty, for most assuredly the three Allied Powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to the accusers in order that justice may be done'. See United Nations, *United Nations Documents, 1941—1945* (London, 1946), pp. 15—16. Also see Holger Lessing, *Der erste Dachauer Prozeß (1945/46)* (Baden-Baden, 1993), pp. 43—57.

[5] The discovery of Majdanek in July 1944 was followed by Auschwitz in January 1945, and Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück in April 1945. The remainder of the main camps were uncovered in May 1945. See Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, p. 31.

[6] After the liberation, the American Allies amassed one thousand feet of motion pictures relating to the Mauthausen complex through an official Signal Corps Team. See HQ Third US Army (Office of the Judge Advocate) to Commanding General (Twelfth Army Group), 'Subject: Report of Investigation of Alleged War Crime', 17 June 1945, Cohen Report, Pretrial Investigative Records, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, p. 9.

fact,[7] and the Allies also documented such re-enactments at other main sites like Mauthausen.[8] The reality of the aftermath nevertheless remained unchanged.

The Western Allies only shook off any lingering ambivalence when their respective armies began liberating camps for themselves, starting with the discovery of Natzweiler-Struthof by the French in November 1944.[9] The growing body of proof did much to strengthen the soldiers' resolve in tracing, capturing, and interrogating suspected war criminals. While uncertainties regarding the state of NS resistance in Austria did not obstruct the pace of criminal investigations to any great extent, the process of locating suspects before they could slip away required considerable ingenuity on the part of the Allied forces.[10]

Remote areas of Salzburg, Upper Austria, Carinthia, and Styria played host to some of the highest concentrations of fleeing National Socialists.[11] Robert Matteson, head of the *Counter Intelligence Corps* (CIC) detachment in the 319th Regiment of the Eightieth Infantry Division, likened the situation in the Salzkammergut region to a

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[7] Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps*, p. 30.

[8] Depictions of the liberation at Mauthausen, whether reconstructed or not, were installed in shop windows in order to confront the indigenous population across Austria with the reality of the camps. See Bertrand Perz, 'Prozesse zum KZ Mauthausen', in Ludwig Eiber and Robert Sigel (eds.), *Dachauer Prozesse: NS-Verbrechen vor amerikanischen Militärgerichten in Dachau 1945—48: Verfahren, Ergebnisse, Nachwirkungen* (Göttingen, 2007): 179.

[9] For an overview of the Western Allies' changing attitudes between July 1944 and April 1945, see Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London, 2013), pp. 78—85.

[10] On how a high number of war criminals evaded capture by being smuggled through South Tyrol via Austria, see Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice* (Oxford, 2011).

[11] Regarding the situation in Upper Austria leading up to the German defeat, see 'Oberösterreich: "Der letzte Hort des Nazismus" chapter in Rauchensteiner, *Der Krieg in Österreich*, pp. 341—354.

fortunate angling trip: 'It was like fishing in a stocked trout farm'.[12] Yet troops were by no means casting their lines at random. Allied headquarters would issue lists detailing the crimes and positions of suspects who fell into automatic arrest categories. These documents were arranged according to rank and importance, with the most serious offenders at the top of the list. The rank system came under revision in due course, especially as the Allies—including the French who began crossing the Reich's borders from the west—started amassing and sharing a swelling body of information on lower-level individuals.[13] And the British, 'who were pretty good on their intelligence service', proved particularly helpful to the American units in this respect;[14] perhaps in part because those who lingered in British areas of operation tended to be less decorated SS men.

Soon a more context-specific approach was adopted, and the chase for exalted Nazis was thus extended to others lower down the chain of command. Apart from being supplied with names, successes in locating war criminals generally came down to resourcefulness on the part of the troops and the intelligence officers on the ground.

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[12] Matteson, interview by Rhoda Lewin, 8 January 1987, Jewish Community Relations Council, Anti-Defamation League of Minnesota and the Dakotas, Holocaust Oral History Taping Project, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, Accession Number (AN) 1992.A.0126.38.

[13] Conceived by SHAEF within the background of Eisenhower's wish to foster international cooperation in tracing and prosecuting Nazi war criminals, the *Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects* (CROWCASS) operation formally started in March 1945 and mushroomed into forty book-length registries of suspects by the end of 1947. The first list was completed in May 1945, which amalgamated the blacklists that had already been drawn up by SHAEF and the *United Nations War Crimes Commission* (UNWCC). Though not without its problems—including administrative failures and its abuse by the Western Allies—CROWCASS has been touted as the 'Nazi Hunter's bible'. See Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and its Effects on the Cold War* (New York, 1988), pp. 66—79; Guy Walters, *Hunting Evil: How the Nazi War Criminals Escaped and the Hunt to Bring them to Justice* (London, 2010), pp. 80—85.

[14] Matteson, interview by Lewin, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, AN 1992.A.0126.38.

This quest amounted to a distinctly local affair. With little more than a list of names to go on, Allied task forces relied heavily on the native population to catch criminals before they could use false identities to vanish.[15] CIC detachments, accompanied by armed troops, would enter villages and establish local intelligence networks based on a so-called 'white list' of known anti-Nazis. Higher headquarters compiled this master list ahead of time, which in turn enabled units to contact relevant people and speedily grow their networks. Local Communists, tending to have reliable information on Nazi movements and whereabouts in real time, figured among the more useful of guides.[16] Around eighty per cent of high-level CIC arrests were the result of leads coming from resistance groups.[17]

An Austrian member of the Communist party who had fought in the Spanish Civil War against Franco ultimately led Matteson's detachment to the whereabouts of Ernst Kaltenbrunner,[18] the man who had headed the RSHA following Reinhard Heydrich's death in June 1942.[19] Geographically well situated in Altaussee, around

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[15] On how war criminals could obtain false papers in Italy and assume South Tyrolean identities after the war, see 'Fake Papers' section in Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run*, pp. 43—54.

[16] Both in terms of their mountaineering experience and reliable intelligence on the whereabouts of suspects on the run. For an account retracing some twelve escape routes used by both the Austrian partisan resistance and Nazis in the Salzkammergut, see Christian Topf, *Auf den Spuren der Partisanen: Zeitgeschichtliche Wanderungen im Salzkammergut* (Grünbach, 2006).

[17] Matteson, interview by Lewin, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, AN 1992.A.0126.38; Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6.

[18] See Peter R. Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich* (Princeton, 1984), who offers an insightful discussion on Kaltenbrunner's half-hearted attempt to escape by hiding out at the locally well-known Wildensee cabin near Altaussee. Wilhelm Höttl later suggested that Kaltenbrunner—convinced that the Western Allies would employ his experience in a future battle against Soviet Communism—merely sought to hide out for a few days (pp. 258—259).

[19] Matteson, interview by Lewin, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, AN 1992.A.0126.38.

forty kilometres south of Ebensee, Matteson caught some of the most notorious Nazis. The CIC officer's ability to swiftly adapt to local circumstances allowed him to successfully navigate the region, and to draw on geographic analogies with ease: 'Alt Aussee was for the Viennese what Lake Tahoe is for Californians'.[20]

The perilous quest to locate Kaltenbrunner began on 5 May 1945,[21] when Matteson, working closely with his interpreter Sidney Bruskin, interrogated the *Ortsgruppenleiter* of Vochdorf in the Gmunden district. Upon learning that Upper Austria's *Gauleiter* August Eigruber had passed through the market town en route to Gmunden, they decided to take up the chase despite having to breach protocol to do so:[22] 'Gmunden was beyond our prescribed area, but a Gauleiter was too tempting a quarry; there were only four in Austria, 42 in all the Greater Reich'.[23] At Gmunden the task force came across a police officer who informed them that Kaltenbrunner and Robert Ley, the head of the *German Labour Front* (DAF), had passed through a few days earlier.[24] The CIC detachment, aware that 'here was big game indeed', followed the clues into the heart of the National Redoubt in the Salzkammergut. Making their way to Bad Ischl along the Traunsee shore with a tank battalion, Matteson and Bruskin

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[20] Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6.

[21] For an alternative historical account on Matteson's pursuit of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, see Walters, *Hunting Evil*, pp. 26—34.

[22] On the capture and interrogation of Eigruber, see Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 83—85.

[23] Austria had seven *Reichsgaue*: Vienna, Niederdonau, Oberdonau, Styria, Carinthia, Salzburg, and Tyrol-Vorarlberg. See Towiah Friedman (ed.), *Die 8 Nazi-Gauleiter Hitlers in Österreich 1938—1945: Dokumenten-Sammlung* (Haifa, 2002).

[24] According to Walters, whose account does not mention Ley, Kaltenbrunner left his residence in Altaussee on 7 May, accompanied by five men. Apparently the group headed straight to a hunting lodge near the Wildensee Alm. See Walters, *Hunting Evil*, p. 29.

stumbled across 'a concrete manifestation of Kaltenbrunner's work, the concentration camp at Ebensee'.[25] Evidently the duo were the first to uncover the site:

> We found, again through the resistance people, that the concentration camp was four kilometers outside of this village. So we went out there, and it was surrounded by barbed wire and there were guard towers, but as we found out, the guards had all left about six or twelve hours before we got there. So the inmates were inside and there was a chain and a lock. We broke the lock and went in. They took me first to the hospital. And there on shelves, with rags over them, were huddled bodies that had lice on them, and they put out their hands for food, and we didn't have any food. We were just the interpreter and myself. And then they took me to the crematorium, which was close by, and there I remember the first sight was a room just piled high with bodies, that were stacked. They couldn't burn them fast enough. And out behind the crematorium was a chemical ditch into which they'd throw bodies that they didn't burn, so that they would decompose. And I then came out of this, and reported it back, and they sent men down[26]

Following the discovery of Ebensee, the hunt brought about a series of further unexpected experiences. At Bad Ischl, sixteen kilometres into the Redoubt, the detachment came across the home of the Austro-Hungarian composer Franz Léhar, whose music efforts Hitler had greatly admired. At this residence, which had also once been the summer retreat of Kaiser Franz Josef I, a member of the Freedom Movement pinpointed the location of Kaltenbrunner's wife in Strobl, some thirty kilometres southwest of Ebensee. Dressed as a *Wehrmacht* man, and in the company of a German

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[25] Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6. For a discussion on Kaltenbrunner regarding evacuations and the extermination of inmates during the final months of the Reich, see Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner*, pp. 250—252. Although there is no direct link between Ebensee and Kaltenbrunner, documents regarding his knowledge of and complicity in murders at KZ Mauthausen (camp visits, witnessing killings, giving orders, etc.) can be uncovered at NARA. For the location of available evidence, see Schmidt and Loehrer, *The Mauthausen Concentration Camp Complex*, pp. 60, 63, 71, 72, among others.

[26] Matteson, interview by Lewin, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, AN 1992.A.0126.38.

soldier who acted as an interpreter, the resistance member offered Matteson safe passage to the town. Matteson feared it might be a trap but accepted the proposal. What amounted to a calculated risk involving assuming the appearance of German military men turned out to be their wisest option: 'I was thankful for their Wehrmacht uniforms when we found the road clogged with remnants of General Sepp Dietrich's Sixth SS Panzer Army retreating before the Russians'. When they reached their destination, the visibly nervous mayor of Strobl gave away the position of an estate where Mrs Kaltenbrunner was staying at the time.[27]

The wife of Austria's 'little Himmler' suggested that Kaltenbrunner might be in the vicinity of Altaussee. She provided the Americans with a valuable description of his appearance; whereas the Reich's official photographer Heinrich Hoffmann had difficulties finding pictures of him, the Allied press continuously confused his position and ran the photographs of other officials. The CIC detachment spent some time establishing itself in Altaussee and 'sorted out the diverse social groups' in town, making a number of arrests in the process.[28] Among these was the chief designer of the V2 rocket enterprise Walter Riedel, who had personally chosen Ebensee as

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[27] Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6.

[28] At Villa Kerry, Kaltenbrunner's house located on the outskirts of Altaussee, Matteson discovered Wilhelm Waneck, Werner Göttsch, and Wilhelm Höttl, who were all keen to collaborate with the Americans. For Adolf Eichmann, Kaltenbrunner, and Höttl's movements and interactions in the Altaussee area towards the end of the war, see Walter, *Hunting Evil*, pp. 19—30. On how Höttl became a US-Soviet double agent and returned to Altaussee as the headmaster of a private school, see Norman J. W. Goda, 'The Nazi Peddler: Wilhelm Höttl and Allied Intelligence', in Richard Breitman, Norman J. W. Goda, Timothy Naftali, and Robert Wolfe (eds.), *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (Cambridge, 2005): 265—292.

Peenemünde's successor site during a visit to the region.[29] Altaussee turned out to be valuable for intelligence officers. And it later emerged, as Matteson noted, that Hitler had planned to abandon Berchtesgaden and set up his headquarters there 'to have a sort of Wagnerian last stand in the mountains, with rockets shooting down like in a Wagner opera, and the whole place was going to go up in flames'.[30] Instead of this bizarre scenario it was cooperation rather than NS resistance that led to the capture of a significant number of suspects.[31]

On 11 May, a forest ranger informed the Americans that he had spotted Kaltenbrunner's entourage at a cabin situated far up in the Totes Gebirge mountain range. Shortly before midnight, the designated squad assembled at its CIC headquarters. To the four ex-*Wehrmacht* soldiers accompanying the American ascent it was made abundantly clear that they would all be reduced to 'dead ducks' if any one of them stepped out of line. Loaded with hand grenades and rifles, this unlikely team reached the hut at five in the morning, just 'as day began to touch the sky'. Observing neither footprints in the snow nor smoke emanating from the chimney, Matteson approached the seemingly deserted cabin and knocked. Kaltenbrunner, disguised as a discharged *Wehrmacht* doctor, opened the door. Without further ado, Matteson handed him a note.

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[29] Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6. Others included Günther Altenburg, Erich Alt, Hjalmar-Johannes Mäe, Carlos Wetzell, and Bálint Hóman.

[30] Matteson, interview by Lewin, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, AN 1992.A.0126.38.

[31] See Richard Overy, *Interrogations: The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands, 1945* (London, 2001), whose collection of interrogations illustrates that the 'prisoners did all talk, sometimes at great length, and willingly. None sat in stony silence. When asked to sign sworn statements most did so without demur, though the occasional argument arose over mistranslation. The beaten enemy was neither defiant nor openly obstructive; the transcripts reveal a surprising degree of compliance alongside more devious strategies of misrepresentation and forgetfulness' (p. xix).

The written message came from Gisela von Westarp, Kaltenbrunner's mistress.[32] Whilst studying it carefully and repeatedly denying knowing its author, he caught a glimpse of the squad further downhill and bolted for his weapon. Matteson retreated, but the four men on the inside—Kaltenbrunner, his adjunct *Obersturmbannführer* Arthur Scheidler, and two common SS men—eventually surrendered. Shortly before noon the squad was back in Altaussee with their captives. When Scheidler's wife and Kaltenbrunner's mistress caught sight of them, the women's warm embraces forced the prisoner duo to abandon their concocted identities at last.[33]

Ingenious improvisations on the part of CIC officers such as Matteson greatly catalysed the process of capturing suspects and in turn helped the Allies piece together evidence for ensuing trials. While Matteson went on to arrest another 150 suspected war criminals who had sought refuge in the area, his most notorious captive, Kaltenbrunner, never ceased to deny his pivotal role in the concentration camp system. In July 1945, the later Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper took Kaltenbrunner to a

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[32] Matteson remembered Countess Gisela von Westarp in the following terms: 'A pretty blonde of twenty-two with blue eyes, vivacious and extremely intelligent, she had been working at Himmler's Berlin headquarters when Kaltenbrunner came from Vienna in early 1943 to take over the RSHA. On March 12, 1945, she bore him twins, Ursula and Wolfgang, in a cowshed in Alt Aussee. I still have a letter she wrote to her mother describing the event, declaring that she "almost deserved the Mother Cross," and pointing out that Mrs. Kaltenbrunner had taken twelve years to produce only three children. One of the twins' godfathers, Gisela told me proudly, was Hitler's personal physician, Dr. Karl Brandt'. On Kaltenbrunner's 'nonpolitical pastimes of his fraternity days, wine and women', see Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner,* p. 117.

[33] Matteson, 'The Last Days of Ernst Kaltenbrunner', NARA, RG 263, File Unit 2-11-6.

British interrogation centre outside of London for further questioning.[34] Not even an alleged torturing stint at these interrogations could generate any useful confessions.[35] Kaltenbrunner was finally tried at Nuremberg and hanged.[36]

Although this particular NS mastermind had not yielded the desired information on the Reich's extensive network of camps, some captured Nazis were more than eager to implicate themselves and their fellow KZ culprits. And Franz Ziereis, the very man who had overseen the entire Mauthausen cluster, even encouraged his spouse to help him pin the blame on the 'leaders in Berlin':

> My dear Wife, I was found by the Americans while you were out shopping …. [C]ome to Gusen with the children …. You may be subjected to an interview, and I ask you to tell the whole truth, that is, make a full statement concerning the conduct of the leaders in Berlin. Furthermore, tell these gentlemen of our joint decision to die so as to enable our children to lead a better life. When I was arrested, I lost my head. I laid my machine-gun down by the tree instead of using it …. I had been shot twice and could not move. I am now in an American hospital in Gusen camp. I have told them everything I know, so far as my condition has allowed. I have some more details to relate, especially about the treachery of certain Gentlemen in Berlin, including the Reichsführer. Please come and tell everybody here

[34] Presumably in his capacity as an intelligence officer investigating the circumstances surrounding Hitler's death. Trevor-Roper's interrogations of Hitler's personal staff acted as the foundation of his subsequent book—H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (New York, 1947)—wherein Kaltenbrunner, whom he mentions a dozen times, is described as a savage, unsound, sinister monster, and as 'the Austrian thug who controlled Himmler's central office' (p. 87). The book also hints at the interrogation: 'Kaltenbrunner was in south Germany at the end, and is therefore of little direct value for this subject; but he has been thoroughly interrogated, and his reports shed incidental light on many matters' (p. 244). For additional background, see Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: From the Liberation of Vienna to the Berlin Airlift* (London, 2008), p. 434.

[35] On allegations of torture by British, American, and French investigators, see Eric Stover, Victor Peskin, and Alexa Koenig, *Hiding in Plain Sight: The Pursuit of War Criminals from Nuremberg to the War on Terror* (Oakland, 2016), pp. 35—36.

[36] Matteson, interview by Lewin, USHMM, RG-50.156*0038, AN 1992.A.0126.38.

> how badly they treated us. Tell the gentlemen about the swinish conduct of Obergruppenführer Pohl. Your loving husband, Franz.[37]

On 24 May 1945, the former *Standartenführer* and Mauthausen commandant Franz Ziereis lay critically injured in a Gusen field hospital bed, composing this last letter to his wife. The previous day he had been found hiding out at a cottage less than a hundred kilometres south of Linz. Managing to evade capture longer than Kaltenbrunner by almost a fortnight, Ziereis spent some time observing the process of capitulation from a safe distance, along with a regiment of loyal SS men that he had formed shortly before abandoning the post of the camp commandant.[38] Ziereis looked on as the Americans disarmed six SS companies close to the eastern exit of Mauthausen: 'Rifles, bazookas etc. were thrown into the Danube and then the men marched in close formation to Mauthausen. I precisely watched all this through field glasses and saw how Hstuf [Hauptsturmführer Fritz] Seidler and Sturmbannfuehrer [Alois] Obermayr [Obermeier] surrendered to the Americans. No shots were fired by this battalion'.[39]

Upon being discovered, Ziereis attempted to flee and took a couple of bullets to his left upper arm and back in the process. As it became clear that his wounds were

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[37] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5.

[38] For an alternative account dealing with the commandant's capture and interrogation, including his incrimination of Kaltenbrunner, see Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 68—72.

[39] Ziereis, sworn statement, Gusen, 24 May 1945, trans. Werner Conn, Cohen Report, pp. 265—269, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 4. Both had been stationed at KZ Gusen. For Seidler, Gusen's last camp commandant, see Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 124, 178, 282, 313; Haunschmied, Mills, and Witzany-Durda, *St. Georgen – Gusen – Mauthausen*, pp. 123, 212, 220—224. Another source suggests that Seidler had been shot during a firefight on 6 May. See Ernst Klee, *Auschwitz: Täter, Gehilfen und Opfer und was aus ihnen wurde: Ein Personenlexikon* (Frankfurt, 2013), p. 374.

fatal, two American intelligence agents made haste in extracting and recording as much information as possible from their readily cooperating subject.[40] Ziereis certainly held the deepest and broadest knowledge of the Mauthausen complex. Having overseen it since 1939, he had been tasked with upholding discipline and managing the supply of prisoner and personnel rations.[41] Aside from boasting a notably high rank, his value lay in the fact that, unlike many fellow SS leaders, he willingly talked to the Americans.[42] Making little attempt to absolve himself of any guilt, the commandant nevertheless rationalised many a murderous decision by cloaking it in a logic of sorts. Taking part in shootings had thus been necessary, for example, since the *Volksdeutsche* SS 'shot too badly'.[43]

Taking over Mauthausen at the age of thirty-four, Ziereis adopted a front line approach and disciplinary style that became instantly influential. At Ebensee, for instance, he ensured the dismissal of those who hampered the course of economically motivated KZ programmes.[44] In early May 1944, Ziereis initiated the sacking of

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[40] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5.

[41] Gustav Kreindl (SS-Unterscharführer), sworn statement, Salzburg, 4 July 1945, trans. Henry Fleischmann, Deibel Report, pp. 319—320, *Cases Tried*, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 9a, p. 319.

[42] Bertrand Perz suggests that the confession-related documents are of little contemporary value as Ziereis had allegedly merely confirmed the authenticity of documents that were presented to him during the interrogation. As I would argue, however, it had a significant impact on Mauthausen investigations and should therefore not be disregarded. See Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 38—39, 273.

[43] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 2.

[44] Ziereis, Munich-born in 1905, was an uneducated man who had endured long periods of unemployment and had worked as a carpenter before his rise to SS prominence. Between 1924 and 1936 he served in the military, joining the SS as an *Obersturmführer* thereafter. Rather ironically, he was tasked with schooling SS men at Oranienburg. As Ziereis remarked, 'I owe my rapid rise to the fact that I often volunteered for front line service'. Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5.

Obersturmführer Hans Joachim Geiger by sending an official complaint to the SS-WVHA. Despite being the designated doctor, Geiger rarely entered the camp premises, resided in a hotel rather than taking up obligatory housing on site, and spent most days attending to civilian patients at his private practice. Defending his decision to neglect the assigned job, 'On 10 May 1944 he officially reported that he would rather that ten inmates die than one civilian' and claimed that *SS-Obersturmführer* Anton Bentele—one of the four former *Lagerkommandanten* (camp commanders) at Ebensee whom Ziereis had likewise dismissed—granted him permission to reside at a hotel.[45] Camp 'Zement' guarded by some 360 men at the time, was about to receive ten thousand inmates, which made medical negligence an unwelcome characteristic for a leadership that sought to increase forced labour output.[46]

The list of Geiger's 'unmilitary' conduct at a time of mounting resource concerns was long: aside from taking his wife to Mauthausen and allowing her to stay at secret project sites, he drove a car to Mauthausen without a permit rather than accompanying a sick prisoner transport destined for the main camp.[47] Whereas the inmates on a transport of this nature were almost certainly exterminated, Ziereis appeared concerned with duty, order, and military conduct first and foremost. At the

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[45] For an overview of Ebensee's *Lagerführer* (Georg Bachmaier, Anton Bentele, Otto Riemer, and Anton Ganz), and on Geiger at Ebensee and his sacking by Ziereis in May 1944, see Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 132—135, 293—295.

[46] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5.

[47] Ziereis to 'Chef des Amtes D III im SS-Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt Oranienburg', 'Betreff: Strafverfügung des SS-Ostuf. Geiger', official complaint, 11 May 1945, trans. Fleischmann, ETO Case 000-50-5-6, USA v Hans Joachim Georg Geiger et al., Prosecution Exhibits, p. 194—195, NARA, RG 549, Box 370, Folder 1, Exhibit 36.

later Mauthausen proceedings, Geiger received a twenty-year jail sentence for crimes committed during his two-month tenure at Ebensee. Among these: causing the death of three inmates via injections; sending sick prisoners to Mauthausen for extermination to ease the tension on the overcrowded dispensary; and kicking a sick prisoner who had fallen out of a truck destined for Mauthausen, calling him a 'lazy dog', and stepping on his neck until pus emerged from the eyes of the inmate—who lost consciousness and later died.[48] Yet Ziereis himself hardly adhered to KZ policy, professing: 'I was well aware that all beating of prisoners was forbidden by Berlin;[49] nevertheless, I myself have beaten them out of sheer sadism'. Furthermore, he admitted to having been personally responsible for the murder of hundreds of inmates, and to partaking in some of their executions.[50] And around four hundred prisoners were purportedly sent to the *Strafkompanie*[51] at his request, all of whom 'gradually died there'.[52]

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[48] R.C. Miller (War Crimes Branch) to US Army War Crimes Modification Board (European Command), Hans Joachim Geiger modification recommendation, 'Action of the Modification Board', Case Files, 1944—1949, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (JAG), NARA, RG 153, Box 20, Vol. 7.

[49] During an interrogation, the Loiblpass SS doctor Sigbert Ramsauer noted that only three forms of punishment were formally permitted by the RSHA: 1) Flogging, twenty-five strokes; 2) standing outside the barrack all night either in the nude or dressed; 3) solitary confinement. Exercising the first of these allegedly required a written permission from Berlin, which a commandant did not always request prior to implementing this form of punishment. See CIC Twentieth Field Security Section, 'Tactical Interrogation of Dr. Ramsauer, Sigbert', interrogation report, Wolfsberg, 22 August 1945, TNA, WO 310/142, p. 3.

[50] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, pp. 2, 10.

[51] Inmates assigned to a punishment commando (*Strafkompanie*) at the Mauthausen complex were typically subjected to harder labour, reduced rations, and heightened abuse. On the origins and basis of punishment company, see Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence* (Oxford, 2015), p. 162.

[52] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 2.

Unfortunately Ziereis' death in late May 1945 meant that the Americans had little time to conduct an effective interrogation that could shed light on offenders like Geiger stationed at camps other than Mauthausen. A product of this limitation were the resulting interrogation notes and quotes, which were compiled into a chaotic report for the *United Nations War Crimes Commission* (UNWCC).[53] A handful of poorly drafted versions of this document, all amounting to a dying declaration, would nevertheless be used as background information in preparation for the later Mauthausen proceedings at Dachau. Ziereis had a tendency to provide inaccurate figures and exaggerate facts. And one of the 'dying declaration' versions included some absurd statements that he supposedly made regarding the *Führer*: 'Adolf Hitler had to undergo a throat operation in October and being syphilitic he did not recover, as a result he later died'; 'In a training camp he had troops shoot at one another with live ammunition so that the crew would get used to it'.[54] While the former extract makes a conspiracy theory of Hitler's suicide in the Berlin bunker, the latter appears unverifiable at best.[55] For all their shortcomings, the revelations of Mauthausen's highest-ranking functionary undoubtedly provided

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[53] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5. For two insightful discussions on the merits and pitfalls of UNWCC (1943—1948), see Shlomo Aronson, 'Preparations for the Nuremberg Trial: The O.S.S., Charles Dwork, and the Holocaust', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12/2 (1998): 259—260; Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 12—14.

[54] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 4.

[55] Asking 'Was Hitler ill?', Richard J. Evans draws on compelling studies and sheds light on the problematic nature of postwar interrogations to put the discussion to rest, concluding that Hitler's physical and mental health was reasonable enough within the context of the time. See Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (London, 2015), pp. 142—163.

prosecutors with the first comprehensive overview of an extensive network of forced labour sites.[56]

Ziereis showed no restraint in describing the methods of extermination and actions of the Reich's leadership: 'I will throw the whole truth about all those betrayals and murders in their faces'.[57] Oswald Pohl in particular angered him. Ziereis noted that in February 1945 Pohl had ordered that upon imminent defeat 'all of the prisoners were to be driven into the woods to "pick flowers and buds"'.[58] His words would prove to have a bearing on the Mauthausen-related cases as well as the individual fates of some defendants. Despite having purportedly been 'the best of friends',[59] Ziereis related that Eduard Krebsbach, Mauthausen's chief SS doctor between July 1941 and August 1943—supposedly under orders of the WVHA Section D head *Gruppenführer* Richard Glücks—had initiated the construction of a gas chamber that closely resembled the camp's bathhouse.[60] A mobile gassing vehicle that ran between Gusen and Mauthausen followed suit.[61] Ziereis suggested that while he would regularly chauffeur this mobile unit to and fro, the chemist *Untersturmführer* Erich Wasicky conceived the vehicle and

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[56] For a similar interpretation on how the interrogation proved 'both important and misleading', see Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 71—72.

[57] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 5.

[58] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 2.

[59] Albert Tiefenbacher, witness interrogation, Salzburg, 7 December 1945, in 'Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal', Nuremberg, 14 November 1945—1 October 1946, Published at Nuremberg, Germany, 1949, Vol. XXXIII, p. 227.

[60] The bodies were burned in one of the three crematoria, the first of which was completed in the summer of 1940. For a comprehensive overview, see Bertrand Perz, Christian Dürr, Ralf Lechner, and Robert Vorberg, *Die Krematorien von Mauthausen: Katalog zur Ausstellung in der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen* (Vienna, 2008).

[61] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 1.

administered the carbon monoxide.[62] Krebsbach endorsed its use and paved the way for increasingly efficient forms of human liquidation.[63] As it later emerged—when a witness recalled one of Ziereis' deathbed revelations—Krebsbach had introduced and liberally doled out lethal injections to sick prisoners. Five further witnesses implicated Krebsbach in mass killings. This ultimately led to his guilty verdict at Dachau and subsequent hanging at Landsberg am Lech prison in May 1947.[64]

Remembering thirty-three of some forty-five sites that had been under his command,[65] Ziereis provided approximate inmate numbers for each. From among those that he could recall, he outlined the distribution of 76,540 prisoners—guarded by around 5000 *Volksdeutsche*. Following Gusen's three sites that together held up to 24,300 inmates,[66] as he purported, Ebensee and Mauthausen figured as the most populous camps at 12,000. The Loiblpass branch camps, he alleged, had a combined

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[62] For a brief overview of the implementation of mobile vehicles in general, and gassings at Mauthausen in particular, see Schmuel Spektor, 'Killings in the Gas Vans behind the Front': 52—72; Hans Maršálek, 'Mauthausen': 177—182; both in Eugen Kogon, Hermann Langbein, and Adalbert Rückerl (eds.), *A Documentary History of the Use of Poison Gas*, trans. Mary Scott and Caroline Lloyd-Morris (New Haven, 1993).

[63] Hans Maršálek, affidavit, 'Affidavit by Hans Maršálek concerning his interrogation of Franz Ziereis on 22 May 1945', 8 April 1946, in 'Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal', Vol. XXXIII, Document 3870-PS, p. 282.

[64] For an overview of the case regarding Krebsbach, see Case review with summary and recommendations, 17 April 1947, ETO Case 000-50-5, USA v Hans Altfuldisch et al., NARA, RG 549, Box 347, Folder 3.

[65] There had been closer to fifty camps in the course of Mauthausen's history.

[66] At the time of the liberation, the three Gusens together held closer to 20,000 inmates. Around 60,000 inmates in total had been incarcerated at Gusen I and II between 25 May 1940 and 5 May 1945, of whom an estimated 35,000 did not survive. Gusen III (26 December 1944—5 May 1945) had held 274 prisoners in total. Comparatively little research had been done on the Gusen sites. See Perz, 'Gusen I und II' and 'Gusen III', in Benz and Distel, *Der Ort des Terrors: Band 4*: 371—380, 380—382. For a comprehensive account of Gusen, see Stanisław Dobosiewicz, *Vernichtungslager Gusen* (Vienna, 2007).

total of around 3000.[67] In January 1946, Mauthausen Adjutant *Hauptsturmführer* Adolf Zutter testified to slightly lower prisoner numbers of between 68,000 and 70,000, who were guarded by some 7200 SS troops.[68] The two men provided rather rough guesses; more recent statistics tell a different story.

According to the last recorded statistics (*Lagerstandbuch*) from 4 May 1945, Ebensee held 16,469,[69] Mauthausen 17,232, Gusen 20,491, and the Mauthausen complex (across all sites) 82,032 inmates.[70] On 7 May, some 1119 prisoners were still at the Loiblpass south camp.[71] Due to the mass evacuations from the east, SS guard numbers across the Mauthausen complex swelled to around 10,000 by the end of March 1945.[72] The inmate population at Mauthausen itself had peaked at 21,759 on 7 March.[73]

In several instances, the numbers cited by Ziereis turned out to be inconsistent and misleading. According to his estimations, at Hartheim Castle, the 'euthanasia' institution some twenty kilometres west of Linz, two million inmates a year were gassed

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[67] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, pp. 3—4.

[68] WCI Team 6836 to Judge Advocate HQ USFA, 'Subject: "DAWES" and MAUTHAUSEN cases', investigation report, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 1, p. 3.

[69] With a total of 27,766 inmates having been incarcerated at Ebensee between 1943 and 1945. Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, p. 337—338.

[70] Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 125.

[71] Some inmates had been moved to Tržič. For statistics, see Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 112—115. Also see 'Daily Life at KZ Loiblpass: A French perspective' section in the next chapter for figures and sources, which also contains a statement corroborating Ziereis' claim that a total of 3000 prisoners had been incarcerated at the Loiblpass. The inmate population peaked at 1319 in mid-September 1944; typically, there were about 1000 inmates across both sites.

[72] Over twice as many guards as the Auschwitz complex contained. On 1 October 1941 there had been 11,135 inmates and 1018 SS men in the Mauthausen system. See Freund and Perz, 'Mauthausen – Stammlager', in Benz and Distel, *Der Ort des Terrors: Band 4*: 297.

[73] Of whom 2252 were women. See Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, p. 127.

on Glücks' orders; earlier he had cited one and a half million.[74] In reality, between 25,000 and 40,000 people had been murdered and burned at Hartheim since the killing machinery was set into motion on 6 June 1940.[75]

Yet Ziereis also revealed that these individuals were recorded as dying from 'natural causes' at Gusen's administrative section, where 'records of prisoners killed in this way were made out while they were still alive or in transit'.[76] Hartheim, he explained, had been intended primarily for the extermination of 'insane and incurable professional criminals',[77] headed by the psychiatrist Rudolf Lonauer and doctor Georg Renno.[78] After hours of relaying as much as his strength permitted, Ziereis grew too weak to continue and uttered his final words to the interrogators: 'Now I realise what a

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[74] Also see Simon Wiesenthal, *KZ Mauthausen: Bild und Wort* (Linz, 1946), wherein Wiesenthal refers to Ziereis' confession on a number of occasions, and also uses it to falsely claim that some four million people had been gassed at Hartheim. Yet Wiesenthal's postwar efforts regarding Hartheim, which he referred to as the 'school for murderess', ultimately led to the extradition of the Austrian Franz Stangl, who had served as a security officer at Hartheim and had acted as the commandant of the Sobibór and Treblinka death camps. Stangl was arrested in Brazil in 1967 and sentenced to life in prison in Düsseldorf in 1970, only to die of a heart attack a year later. See 'A Huge Mass of Rotten Flesh' chapter in Tom Segev, *Simon Wiesenthal: The Life and Legends* (London, 2010), pp. 196—212.

[75] Walter Kohl, *Die Pyramide von Hartheim: "Euthanasie" in Oberösterreich 1940—1945* (Grünbach, 1997), pp. 80, 423. Also includes a comprehensive statistical discussion (pp. 414—423), and details instances of so-called 'wild euthanasia' in the surrounding area.

[76] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, pp. 8, 2.

[77] Hartheim functioned within the 'T-4' programme—codenamed after its headquarters at Tiergartenstraße 4 in Berlin—and thus predominantly targeted handicapped Germans. See Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill, 1995) pp. 86—110; Suzanne E. Evans, *Hitler's Forgotten Victims: The Holocaust and the Disabled* (Stroud, 2007), pp. 39—85; Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, pp. 82—90; Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 187—188; Wachsmann, *KL*, pp. 243—257.

[78] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 2.

disaster has been brought on 80 million Germans by one stupid man, Hitler, and the results'.[79]

However blown out of proportion some figures might have been, the mere mention of lesser-known sites stimulated a wider scope of examination on the part of the investigators.[80] By mid-June, for instance, a more reliable witness on Hartheim had been located. In a sworn statement, a former Mauthausen inmate relayed the final efforts of the National Socialists to cover up the extermination programme at the castle by sending a truckload of twenty KZ prisoners to its location on 13 December 1944. Labouring for eight days straight, the assigned group pursued a regimented dismantling effort. Beyond being the last to see the slaughter institution in its original state, their detailed interaction therewith made them the leading authorities on a secretive project that might otherwise have gone unnoticed in the course of Mauthausen investigations.[81]

The first contraption that the group observed upon entering the premises was a factory smoke stack towering some twenty-six metres into the sky; it had remained hidden from the outside world by the high, enveloping castle walls. On the inside there had been a tiled room with six showers, deceivingly modelled to resemble a bathroom:

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[79] Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 11.

[80] For the official American Hartheim investigation, including forty exhibits, see Brigitte Kepplinger and Irene Leitner (eds.), *Dameron Report: Bericht des War Crimes Investigating Teams No. 6824 der U.S. Army vom 17.7.1945 über die Tötungsanstalt Hartheim* (Innsbruck, 2012).

[81] The local population's intimate knowledge of the killing centre would not likely have triggered an investigation. As Horwitz writes, 'Residents living nearby secured their windows at night to prevent the seepage into their homes of the odor of burning. Yet, though their lips were sealed, doors and windows shut tight, the traces of murder filled the air'. See 'The Castle' chapter in Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death*, pp. 55—82, which offers an exceptional overview of the community's awareness.

its iron door was sealed with rubber, a large sliding bolt acted as the lock, and a small spyhole enabled functionaries to watch the victims die. In a neighbouring chamber, the prisoners found the gas apparatus, gas containers, and gas meters. The next room had a table on which the group found an autopsy report. In the last room, as a survivor of this group later wrote in a sworn statement, they finally came upon a crematorium with two stoves:

> To the left of the entrance we found a heap of ashes with parts of human bones in about 60 of locally used garbage cans. There was also an electrical bone mill where the left over larger human bones were ground after the burning in the crematorium. In the garage of the castle we found clothes of children, women, and men in a quantity in four single horse wagons. In the garden, in a hole containing clinkers, we found a lot of tin numbers of prisoners from K.L. Mauthausen as well as remains of human bones. On the second floor were the apartments of the SS. The Kommandant was an SS doctor in the grade of Obersturmfuhrer …. A large hall contained reflector lamps, many beds on which were still traces of blood. This hall probably served the secret medical experiments. When I took a trunk with surgical instruments to a nearby living farmer, I noticed a tag on this trunk with the name of Dr. Benno. We took the smoke stack apart …. we removed the tiles from the walls and all the instruments which were used for murder …. The bricklayers restored the rooms to their former status and whitewashed the walls …. [An SS man said that] this arrangement worked for four years. The second time we went there on the 2nd of January 1945 and worked for 10 days to restore the castle to its former appearance …. They have now established a children's home here …. We were afraid the SS would liquidate us; i.e. murder us to keep the secret because they forbade us to speak about what we had seen and done here.[82]

The witness had rightfully been worried about his fate: whole *Sonderkommandos*—work units made up of chiefly Jewish KZ prisoners working in a crematorium—were

[82] Adam Golebski, 'The Secret of Castle Hartheim', sworn statement, 16 June 1945, trans. Jack R. Nowitz, Cohen Report, pp. 277—278, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Exhibit 213, pp. 1—2.

liquidated before the war's end 'so that they could not testify'.[83] What had started out as little more than a clue by Mauthausen's former commandant seemingly led investigators to an extraordinarily detailed inmate account on Hartheim. This did not however amount to an isolated occurrence. A great number of cooperative offenders managed to implicate National Socialists who had not yet made it onto UNWCC or CROWCASS lists, provide clues that helped investigators piece together cases, and further Allied understanding of camp structures as a whole.

High-ranking war criminals willing to reveal incriminating details were a rare catch, as most tended to place responsibility elsewhere and feign ignorance regarding KZ policy or crimes committed. The inflated numbers cited by Ziereis, for example, were in all likelihood a product of his contempt for the Reich leadership. Despite the objection to the validity of these figures on the part of the former inmate Maršálek, they were absorbed into various US war crimes reports and later regurgitated uncritically by prosecutors at Mauthausen proceedings. The word of the commandant was valuable to the investigators, especially since original KZ documents were hard to come by; at Glücks' request, Ziereis had destroyed as many documents as possible ('At the end of April I had already let the destruction begin because it would take a rather long time').[84]

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[83] Ziereis, sworn statement, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 3. On these 'special squads', see Gideon Greif, *"Wir weinten tränenlos...": Augenzeugenberichte des jüdischen "Sonderkommandos" in Auschwitz* (Frankfurt, 1999); Eric Friedler, Barbara Siebert, and Andreas Kilian, *Zeugen aus der Todeszone: Das jüdische Sonderkommando in Auschwitz* (Lüneburg, 2002). For insightful reflections on the value of surviving photographs taken by special squad members at Birkenau, see Dan Stone, 'The Sonderkommando Photographs', *Jewish Social Studies* 7/3 (2001): 132—148.

[84] Ibid., p. 1.

Major Eugene S. Cohen's report (henceforth referred to as 'Cohen Report'), furnished between 6 May and 15 June 1945, was key in setting the tone for the forthcoming Mauthausen camp trials at Dachau.[85] In line with Ziereis' statement, the 'summary of facts' section of the Cohen Report made reference to a death toll of between one point five and two million 'political prisoners' within the Mauthausen system,[86] a number overstated by a factor of up to twenty. In the same report, Cohen claimed that two million deaths could be counted from German records. In a subsequent US War Crimes Investigation Team report, Ziereis' outline of prisoner numbers surfaced again in full. More astoundingly, however, an inexplicable formula also materialised. As War Crimes Investigation Team 6836 stated, 'Liquidating the prisoner population and receiving new victim replacements was "assembly line" efficiency. If the turn-over occurred weekly, the yearly murder production approximated over 3,000,000, if monthly – 840,000'.[87] Again, the preserved statistics add up to a different number: between Mauthausen's inception and 4 May 1945 closer to 102,795 inmates died within the complex. The yearly death rate started at 3.5 per cent in 1938, peaked at 50.48 per cent in 1942, and plunged significantly thereafter—only to shoot up again

[85] For the most comprehensive overview of the 'Cohen Report' to date, see 'Eugene S. Cohen and the Findings of War Crimes Investigators at Mauthausen' section in Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 72—86.

[86] HQ Third US Army to Commanding General, 'Subject: Report of Investigation of Alleged War Crime', NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, p. 5.

[87] WCI Team 6836 to Judge Advocate HQ USFA, 'Subject: "DAWES" and MAUTHAUSEN cases', investigation report, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 1, p. 3.

to 44.24 per cent in 1945.[88] Although Team 6836's calculations and sources remain a mystery, the nature of erroneous findings nevertheless had the advantage of spurring on Mauthausen investigations.

Not only had the Allies failed to produce a coherent war crimes prosecution strategy before the war's end, investigators also had at first been primarily concerned with the murder of Anglo-American servicemen.[89] The so-called 'Dawes case', submitted in mid-January 1946, seems to have been particularly representative of the initial approach.[90] Yet what had begun as an investigation that prioritised a single case involving its own people swiftly became one concerned with the crimes committed

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[88] These statistics, based on Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, do not include unrecorded deaths, and do not take the period following 4 May 1945 into account. See Freund and Perz, 'Mauthausen – Stammlager': 315.

[89] On 24 February 1945, shortly before his death, President Roosevelt issued a directive that special teams be established in Europe for the investigation of war crimes committed against US soldiers. The British still favoured the 'firing squad solution' over potentially lengthy trials at the time. The judicial path was not set in stone until President Truman committed to it on 2 May. See Stover, Peskin, and Koenig, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, p. 29.

[90] The Dawes mission, initiated in September and October 1944, had involved flying six US Army and two Navy officers, six enlisted men, two Navy ratings, and five civilians to Slovakia. The operation's objective was to link up with partisans, collect intelligence, and evacuate Allied airmen and escaped Allied POWs. Shortly after partisan resistance collapsed towards the end of October, fifteen of the operatives were captured, along with a couple of British officers and a Czech defector. The prisoners, now including the AP war correspondent Joe Morton, were transferred to Mauthausen in January 1945. Berlin ordered Gestapo men to the camp for the purpose of extracting intelligence through extensive torture. Their execution order, signed by Kaltenbrunner, was received at the end of that month. Under the premise of being processed to ready the men for the imminent departure to a POW camp, they were ordered to sign a blank piece of paper and strip naked to have their picture taken. Once in the designated execution room, each victim was asked to turn their back to a fake camera. After being shot in the head, the members of the Dawes Team were promptly cremated. Investigators became privy to these details, even while their reliability was later questioned, through Hans Wilhelm Thost, a former RSHA 'Amt VI' employee who had been present throughout in his capacity as an interpreter. Thost furthermore claimed that he had often listened in on wire conversations between London and Washington, DC, and that the Germans had long before the outbreak of the war been spying on the British via prominent Irishmen on the ground; their task was to gather data on possible landing sites in Ireland. See WCI Team 6836 to Judge Advocate HQ USFA, 'Subject: "DAWES" and MAUTHAUSEN cases', investigation report, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 1, pp. 1—4.

against inmates of other nationalities—embracing around twenty-three in total.[91] The reasoning behind this shift appeared to be rooted in two factors. Firstly, the investigators soon came to the conclusion that the Mauthausen chain had been the most brutal of the former camps:[92] 'Everything bad that ever transpired in or out of any other concentration camp, and more, quantatively and qualitively, was practiced at Mauthausen and its subcamps'. And secondly, the new rationale stemmed from the impossibility of taking confessions at face value: 'Although suspects professed a willingness to co-operate in the punishment of the guilty, it was clear that they were hostile, biased, unwilling; concealing as much and revealing as little as their skill permitted'.

Evidently the issue of reliability required the Americans to cast a wider net and thus collect testimony from inmates who might be able to implicate suspects by means of evidence of other crimes. Hans Altfuldisch, Mauthausen's vice-*Schutzhaftlagerführer* ('second prison compound commander'), did his part in shifting the focus of the investigation. While he provided details regarding the fate of the Dawes Team and implicated SS men who had been present, Altfuldisch claimed that he had

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[91] See 'End of the Line for Spies—Mauthausen' chapter in Bard, *Forgotten Victims*, pp. 57—69, which provides an overview of other missions, including the 'Dupont' mission led by the OSS agent Jack Taylor, who was captured and sent to Mauthausen. Taylor survived and took it upon himself to collect as much testimony and evidence on Mauthausen atrocities as possible; not only was he was a key witness in the later Mauthausen trials at Dachau, the evidence he collected after the liberation also served as a basis of the prosecution's case.

[92] Per the first paragraph of this dissertation's introduction, the background in which the Mauthausen complex was uncovered also had a bearing on the view among some liberators and investigators that the Mauthausen complex had been the worst in the KZ empire. Beyond this, as Bridgman notes, the Allies generally proclaimed their respective camps to have been the most atrocious. See Bridgman, *The End of the Holocaust*, p. 87.

merely attended at Ziereis' request. To increase their yield of suspects at trial, as it dawned on investigators, a certain logic needed to be applied. Culpability necessitated collecting a rich body of probative evidence from witnesses, which the Americans justified 'on the theory that if these men are adamant or skillful in deflecting accusatory probative evidence in the "Dawes" case, although guilty of those murders, it would be proper to permit witnesses to tell us about other murders committed by these and other individuals at Mauthausen'.[93]

[93] WCI Team 6836 to Judge Advocate HQ USFA, 'Subject: "DAWES" and MAUTHAUSEN cases', investigation report, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 1, pp. 1—4.

COLLECTING EVIDENCE: ALL ROADS LEAD TO MAUTHAUSEN

The Americans in Upper Austria increasingly came to rely on KZ inmates, and on a much larger scale than their British counterparts in Carinthia ever would when they began looking into the Loiblpass quite some time later. This in turn brought victim groups to the forefront and made them the backbone of any and every camp investigation. Among the evidence that former prisoners provided the Allies with were written statements, journal records, and surviving camp records like the *Totenbücher* ('death books') that had been hidden from the SS at great personal risk. The International Committee of six worked closely with the investigators to secure the 'best' witnesses for the various camps and to provide support in preparing cases for trial.[94] Upon completion, the Cohen Report represented the most elaborate of the initial Mauthausen-related fact-finding missions; a laborious effort culminating in no fewer than 140 sworn statements.[95]

The wealth of evidence led Cohen to conclude that Mauthausen, evidently 'the basis of long term planning', was by far 'the worst and largest of all concentration camps uncovered by the Allied Nations'. Yet Ebensee and Gusen, 'its two most

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[94] HQ Third US Army to Commanding General, 'Subject: Report of Investigation of Alleged War Crime', NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, p. 6.

[95] As Jardim astutely summarises its values and limitations: 'Though the Cohen Report failed to set into proper perspective the crimes committed at Mauthausen, it nonetheless provided prosecutors with extensive eyewitness testimony and hard documentary evidence sufficient to indict dozens of suspects. To a large extent, the case that American prosecutors presented to the court at Dachau would mirror the findings of the Cohen Report, and reflect the misperceptions of its author'. See Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 85—86.

notorious and largest branches', also figured prominently in the investigation. Seeing that men such as Ziereis and Himmler were 'but the arch criminals', Cohen was determined to bring lower ranking-SS men from as many of the camps as possible to the dock at Dachau. To do so, he encouraged a legal blanket concept that viewed the SS as a guilty collective by default:

> However, although direct evidence is not established against all the members of the SS Guards in this disreputable Chain, the presumption should be that all of them are equally guilty of these mass murders and that the burden of proof is upon them to prove innocence. The SS organization was purely a voluntary one and since its purposes were obviously criminal, in violation of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, and the loss and right of humanity, any member recorded or accused in the Mauthausen Chain should be considered a perpetrator until he himself proves otherwise. It is the belief of the Investigator-Examiner that the theory of "Association des Malfaiteurs"[96] should be applied most stringently in a case as virulent and as atrocious as the Mauthausen setup[97]

Applying what would later be brought forward by the prosecution as the 'common design' approach ensured that lower-ranking suspects at lesser-known sites could face trial just the same. And evidence of occupying a position in the system would be proof

[96] According to the article 450-1 of the French Penal Code, an *Association de malfaiteurs* is a 'criminal association [that] consists of any group formed or any conspiracy established with a view to the preparation, marked by one or more material actions, of one or more felonies, or of one or more misdemeanours punished by at least five years' imprisonment'. See Bernard Bouloc, *Droit pénal général* (Paris, 2013); Juliet Okoth, *The Crime of Conspiracy in International Criminal Law* (The Hague, 2014), p. 66.

[97] HQ Third US Army to Commanding General, 'Subject: Report of Investigation of Alleged War Crime', NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, pp. 6—7.

enough to bring charges against an individual.[98] The foundation of this principle made it possible for camps other than Mauthausen to be extensively documented through recorded testimony. In practice, however, statements contained in the Cohen Report regarding the subcamps dealt chiefly with Gusen and Ebensee, for two main reasons. On the one hand, the Americans generally restricted their research to atrocities that had taken place within their territories of occupation. On the other hand, the presence of former inmates at Mauthausen and Ebensee following the war accelerated the process of collecting evidence, and investigators were thus not required to look further afield. The latter of these factors sheds light on the nature of the witnesses, explaining for instance why non-repatriable DPs provided the bulk of proof against defendants at trial.[99] These reasons may furthermore account for the fact that War Crimes Investigating Teams assigned to Ebensee, Steyr, Gusen, and Mauthausen were the speediest of the nineteen tasked with building cases against camp offenders in Austria.[100]

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[98] The notion of hierarchy became a secondary concern, and inmate functionaries therefore faced the prospect of being tried. Establishing proof of a conspiracy to commit war crimes was also not necessary; neither the specific point in time at which a functionary held a position nor a knowledge of crimes committed was considered a prerequisite for bringing charges. Also see Lessing, *Der erste Dachauer Prozeß (1945/46)*, p. 303—304.

[99] Securing witnesses within the background of swift repatriations became increasingly problematic. Yet the prosecution faced another dilemma that had already conditioned the early Dachau trials: 'In einigen Fällen dürfte die Entscheidung darüber, ob jemand anzuklagen war oder für die Anklagevertreter als Belastungszeuge aussagen durfte, sogar zweckgebunden gewesen sein: Manch einer schien trotz seiner Tätigkeit im KZ nur deswegen nicht angeklagt worden zu sein, weil er ansonsten den Anklagevertretern als wertvoller Zeuge verloren gegangen wäre'. See Lessing, *Der erste Dachauer Prozeß (1945/46)*, p. 307.

[100] Perz has argued that Mauthausen investigations did not come into full swing for some time after the liberation—a view that cannot be sustained in the light of the serious groundwork that American war crimes investigating teams completed within the first few days, weeks, and months of the postwar period. See Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, p. 44.

As the first and central site in Austria, Mauthausen inevitably remained the dominant subject of interest, and the comparatively sophisticated nature of its International Committee, with Hans Becker at the helm, further cemented its centrality. Given that Mauthausen had attracted occasional visits from the SS leadership, witnesses could incriminate common guards as well as the KZ masterminds in one and the same account. In a joint statement, Becker and two fellow inmates singled out dozens of personnel of varying ranks and illustrated just how much of a hub the main camp had been throughout its existence.[101]

Among those who would apparently convene at Mauthausen from time to time were Heinrich Himmler, Richard Glücks, Oswald Pohl, August Eigruber, Friedrich Rainer, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Vienna's *Gauleiter* Baldur von Schirach, Bulgaria's Prime Minister Bogdan Filov, and Slovakia's Interior Minister and Vice Chancellor Šaňo Mach. In what seemed like a morbid Third Reich leadership summit, the men would, as a part of a habitual programme, observe 'demonstrations of the slaughter methods which were gas, hanging, and shooting in the neck. Following this there was usually an eating and drinking party at the leader's home'. While in the meantime a great many inmates starved to death, the 'enjoyments offered to the guests were taken away from the already insufficient rations of the prisoners'. The remainder of the inmates' account mostly highlighted the methods of extermination and abuse of various

[101] For an overview of high-level visits to KZ Mauthausen, see 'Besichtigungen' section in Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 133—135.

Mauthausen SS men.[102] Beyond direct murder at the hand of an SS man, investigators learned that the phrase 'I don't want to see him tomorrow anymore' sufficed as a death sentence that would promptly be carried out by a subordinate. [103] Such evidence almost certainly added to Cohen's conviction that the legal principle of *Association de malfaiteurs* was wholly justified.[104]

Due to the centralised nature of the main camp, Mauthausen prisoners who had been assigned to clerkships were invaluable in advancing Allied understanding of broader organisational particulars. Those tasked with keeping the 'Mauthausen Camp Group' statistics up to date developed a global understanding of the complex and had access to a breadth of information that clerks at the branch camps were often not privy to. Two inmates who worked in succession—Ernst Martin from Innsbruck between 1941 and 1943, and Josef Ulbrecht thereafter—had managed the death records of a total of 171,856 prisoners between them. Their breakdown cited a total of 71,858 deaths. Based on sixteen surviving volumes, these figures represented the official records of the SS Camp Surgeon's Office at Mauthausen.[105] Yet the sum total could not reflect

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[102] Also see 'Torture and methods of Murder' chapter in Evelyn Le Chêne, *Mauthausen: The History of a Death Camp* (1971, London), pp. 72—85.

[103] Hans Becker, Edmund Krolkay, and Johan Kandrick, sworn statement, Mauthausen, 15 May 1945, trans. Nowitz, Cohen Report, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 2, p. 1.

[104] Drawing on the cases of five Spanish Kapos who had been convicted at the Mauthausen trials at Dachau in 1947, Rosa Alija-Fernández points to the limits of universal jurisdiction, arguing that insufficient attention had been paid to individual circumstances. See Rosa A. Alija-Fernández, 'Justice for No-Land's Men?: United States Military Trials against Spanish Kapos in Mauthausen and Universal Jurisdiction', in Kevin J. Heller and Gerry Simpson (eds.), *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials* (Oxford, 2013): 103—121.

[105] Ernst Martin and Josef Ulbrecht, sworn statements, Mauthausen, 14 May 1945, trans. Nowitz, Cohen Report, pp. 20—26, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 4.

unrecorded cases (like the thousands upon thousands of deaths that ceased to be registered in 1945), victims whose names were unknown, and former inmates who died after the liberation. Likening the camp system to 'a modern Dante's inferno', another survivor put the murder toll at 120,000 of a total 200,000 incarcerated individuals.[106] The more reliable numbers contained in the exhibit jointly prepared by the two former Mauthausen clerks have since been revised. Although the exact total across all sites will never be known, the most recent calculation points to a minimum of 102,795 deaths,[107] and thus comprising around half of all prisoners who passed through Mauthausen.[108]

While there is little purpose to capturing the extermination programme by quantifiable means, what remains certain is that across all camps there was a general upward trend in daily average death rates over time: 1.2 in 1939; 10.5 in 1940; 21.1 in 1941; 30.7 in 1942; 23.2 in 1943; 39.4 in 1944; and 208.6 in 1945.[109] The cynically-named *Nacht-und-Nebel-Erlass* ('Night and Fog decree'), issued in December 1941, further swelled the complex with resistance activists from France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, and Norway.[110] Denied the right to any correspondence, they

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[106] Vanherle, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 27, p. 1.

[107] See Freund and Perz, 'Mauthausen – Stammlager': 315. Also see Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, p. xii, who states that two hundred thousand individuals died, but does not cite any sources.

[108] Perz estimates that almost two hundred thousand inmates were imprisoned in Mauthausen between the summer of 1939 and May 1945. He puts the approximate death toll within the complex at one hundred thousand. See Bertrand Perz, 'Der Arbeitseinsatz im KZ Mauthausen', in Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann (eds.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur: Band II* (Frankfurt, 2002): 533.

[109] Martin and Ulbrecht, sworn statements, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 4.

[110] In mid-1944, some 5289 'Night and Fog' (NN) prisoners were incarcerated in penal institutions across the Reich. See Nikolaus Wachsmann, *Hitler's Prisons: Legal Terror in Nazi Germany* (New Haven, 2004), pp. 272—274. For NN prisoners within the KZ context, see 'NN-Transporte' section in Kogon, *Der SS-Staat*, pp. 262—265.

had been 'destined to a certain death'. An estimated ninety per cent of them perished, often 'led like beasts to the slaughter'. More generally, the sudden spike in death rates after 1943 reflected a perfection of killing techniques and the mushrooming of the complex in Austria as a result of the decentralisation of the war industry. In 1945, as a former prisoner clerk at Gusen's political bureau suggested, the entry-to-death ratio stood at 10:6, respectively: 'It is then that the Nazis seeing the war lost began to supress their slaves en masse'[111] and pursued the killing spree through 'a slow physical and moral death and a death of violence' of the individual with ever greater vigour.[112]

The majority of prisoners were starved to such an extent that they would go about searching for food after work, emptying out all the garbage cans in the process. So prevalent and all-encompassing was the hunger that some, as the former Mauthausen inmate Kurt Panay put it, 'went so far as to cut meat out of the dead people'.[113] Particularly the final months of the Mauthausen complex witnessed days on which up

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[111] Following the liberation, as Marc Buggeln points out, 'former concentration camp prisoners sought to make their experiences more comprehensible by means of comparisons'. For an overview of discussions dealing with the suitability of characterising inmates who performed forced labour as slaves, and on comparing it to forms of slavery in a global context, see Marc Buggeln, 'Were Concentration Camp Prisoners Slaves?: The Possibilities and Limits of Comparative History and Global Historical Perspectives', *International Review of Social History* 53/1 (April 2008): 101—129. For a similar contribution, whose author compellingly argues that a transnational approach in KZ research can offer only limited insight, see Nikolaus Wachsmann, 'The Nazi Concentration Camps in International Context: Comparisons and Connections', in Jan Rüger and Nikolaus Wachsmann (eds.), *Rewriting German History: New Perspectives on Modern Germany* (Basingstoke, 2015): 306—325.

[112] Martin and Ulbrecht, sworn statements, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 4.

[113] On cannibalism at Ebensee in particular, see Petsirilos Nissim and Lewis Jakob, sworn statement, Ebensee, 8 June 1945, Cohen Report, p. 239, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 188, p. 1. Also see Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 245—247.

to six hundred deaths were observed.[114] Not surprisingly, therefore, Panay postulated how 'Once the door closed on someone in these concentration camps his chances of getting out was 1 in 1000'.[115] When from mid-1944 onwards Red Cross packages began to be accepted, the SS and their 'stooges' would habitually intercept them, and seize items and food; the prisoner functionaries then openly distributed the content to 'their women' in the brothel.[116] Faced with piles of starved bodies, the SS would cynically remark that the prisoners had simply been too lazy to eat.[117]

To arrive at progressively high rates, countless methods of extermination beyond deliberate starvation were practised. 'The most common way to get rid of prisoners', Martin explained, was under the pretext of the phrase 'Shot while trying to escape'.[118] Declaring a murder as such provided the SS essentially with a licence to kill

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[114] Intentional murder alone (not including cases of disease or starvation) produced death rates in the three-figure range on several occasions. For a detailed overview of killings in the Mauthausen complex during its final months, see Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 318—321.

[115] Kurt Panay, sworn statement, Mauthausen, 9 May 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Cohen Report, pp. 74—75, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 20, p. 2. For an empirical study of survival rates at Ebensee, which also analyses contributing factors such as the nationality/categorisation and qualification of an inmate, see Florian Freund, 'Häftlingskategorien und Sterblichkeit in einem Außenlager des KZ Mauthausen', in Herbert, Orth, and Dieckmann (eds.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band II*: 874—886. From a national perspective, political prisoners from the Soviet Union—having a death rate of 53.72 per cent—were least likely to survive at Ebensee (p. 879).

[116] Which had also been true in the case of the brothel at KZ Buchenwald: 'Korruption aller Art bis zu Paketdiebstählen und dergleichen hat der Sonderbau genug ins Lager gebracht. Denn nicht nur die "Liebe" erzeugte das Verlangen, den Frauen im Sonderbau Geschenke zu machen, sondern auch die Möglichkeit, sich dadurch außerhalb der vorgeschriebenen Zeit Zutritt zum Bordell zu verschaffen und die gesetzte Frist von zwanzig Minuten zu verlängern'. See 'Bordelle im KL' section in Kogon, *Der SS-Staat*, pp. 213—215, an analysis that betrays a rampant postwar sexism: 'Die beiden SS-Aufseherinnen benahmen sich schlimmer als die Huren' (p. 215).

[117] Vanherle, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 27, p. 3.

[118] On how Himmler coined the euphemism 'Auf der Flucht erschossen' following the premeditated shooting of four Jewish inmates at Dachau on 12 April 1933 (a day after the SS assumed control), see Wachsmann, *KL*, pp. 54—56.

weak or 'especially hated' inmates: 'Despite the fact that many prisoners had more holes in them than a sieve, the official document only recorded two or three of the shootings'. Those who did not die after being shot were denied medical treatment; they either received a coup de grâce or were administered a lethal injection by an SS doctor.[119] When inmates breached even the most minor of regulations, this often prompted guards to apply the pretext of an attempted escape. At 10.30pm on 30 March 1945, for example, a French prisoner who had accidentally soiled his pants left his block to visit the sinks or toilet; leaving the blocks was prohibited at the time. Upon returning, the Slovak guard Georg Strassner asked him to approach, whereupon he shot the Frenchman straight in the heart.[120]

While surviving documents—particularly the death lists—were often deceptive, eyewitness accounts were not always reliable either. This was especially true of the SS and prisoner functionaries who feared prosecution by the Allies. In a later sworn statement, Bavarian-born Strassner, who had 'learned the painting trade', claimed to have been a *Blockälteste* (block chief)[121] for two months during his internment at Melk between January and April 1945, and admitted only to fulfilling his so-called duties: 'since unclean, hydrophobic, and thievish elements were present, I had to punish them with hard slaps, or, if they resisted, with hard punches', singling out Poles and

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[119] Martin, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 4, pp. 1—3.

[120] Pierre Amelot, Joseph Buisson, George Planet, and Hubert Michel, sworn statement, Mauthausen, 12 May 1945, trans. Nowitz, Cohen Report, p. 69, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 17, p. 1.

[121] The block chief, often referred to as 'block elder', was a prisoner functionary in charge of cleanliness and discipline, including the timely appearance of his barrack's inmates at roll call.

Ukrainians in particular. A command of the Russian, Polish, and Czech languages purportedly led to his ultimate prisoner promotion to Kapo. Strassner claimed to have spent the final two months of the Third Reich incarcerated at Ebensee.[122] Almost certainly a German convict, Strassner was likely not elevated to the position of an SS guard at Mauthausen, yet this amounted to a possibility nonetheless: Ziereis admitted to having drafted some 450 prisoners into the SS 'to give them a chance to redeem themselves, particularly in the fight against Russia'.[123] While little remains known about this particular man and his positions, broadly speaking there were three types of prisoners:

> First the so-called prominent prisoners [inmate functionaries] who through special brutalities and ambitions alone before had gained special rights. …. For such men it was not hard to get a watch, a ring, a baby carriage or a pair of boots. …. It is only natural and clear that these men were hated by the other prisoners … and that there are so many lynch justifications [in the wake of the liberation] ….. The second kind of prisoners were so-called technicians. While they were sometimes recruited from the first group, these technicians were in no exposed position. There were specialists who took care of the maintenance of the camp, as an example, electricians, doctors, druggists [pharmacists], cooks, and lived a pretty good life. …. [Thus] prisoners of these two groups were able to endure their long stay in concentration camps and upon their release looked fine.[124] While the first two groups only made up 5% of these prisoners, the balance belonged to the third group, the other group that were given six to twelve months in which

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[122] Georg Strassner, sworn statement, Salzburg, 25 July 1945, trans. Leonard Feiler, Cohen Report, p. 260, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Supplement Exhibit 5a, 6a. Strassner claimed to have been an orphan for seven years and a Communist Youth member until 1934, fleeing to Czechoslovakia in 1936 to avoid 'joining the NSDAP', where he allegedly lived until being arrested by Sudeten-German Nazis in 1938 and sent to Dachau in October 1938, to Mauthausen in August 1944, to Melk in January 1945, and finally to Ebensee until the dissolution of the camp.

[123] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 1.

[124] On how economic motivations increasingly brought the professional qualification of an inmate to the forefront and eroded racial considerations to some extent, see Falk Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft: Widerstand, Selbstbehauptung und Vernichtung im Konzentrationslager* (Hamburg, 1978), p. 130; Freund, 'Häftlingskategorien und Sterblichkeit in einem Außenlager des KZ Mauthausen': 882—884.

> to die. These were the true workers, these were the people who were killed by the hundreds as they fled …. Officially in all concentration camps it is called "death while escaping",[125] although actually it was self inflicted shooting. … [Those who] eventually knew they must die often make a break through the sentries to get out of their misery.[126]

Far from always being a product of a voluntary death by an individual broken in spirit, on a number of occasions the Mauthausen SS orchestrated a preordained 'mass flight' that saw Kapos drive up to fifty carefully selected inmates into a chain of guards who thereupon mowed their victims down with machineguns.[127] False reports of prisoners dying of disease, when these had been murdered, were frequent as well. And other routine methods of murder that were not unique to Mauthausen included: suicide by drowning, electricity, and hanging; a slow death in 'baths of fire'—gas chambers filled with Zyklon B;[128] death by injection to the heart; torn apart by dogs; and shooting in the back of the neck. Doctors sometimes turned the human skin of their dead subjects

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[125] The actual phrase was 'auf der Flucht erschossen' ('shot while trying to escape').

[126] Panay, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 20, p. 1.

[127] This became common practice across the KZ empire, such as in the *Sonderkommando* (SK) at Auschwitz. See Zenon Rozanski, *Caps Off…: A Report about the Punishment Company (SK) of the KZ Auschwitz*, trans. Christine C. Schnusenberg (Eugene, OR, 2012), pp. 10—11, first published in 1948.

[128] For comprehensive overviews of gassings in Austria, see Hans Maršálek, *Die Vergasungsaktionen im Konzentrationslager Mauthausen: Gaskammer, Gaswagen, Vergasungsanstalt Hartheim, Tarnnamen: Dokumentation* (Vienna, 1988); Pierre S. Choumoff, *Nationalsozialistische Massentötung durch Giftgas auf Österreichischem Gebiet 1940—1945* (Vienna, 2000).

into souvenirs like book covers and 'sent them to their wives'[129] or tried to impress prominent Nazis with them.[130]

The actions and inactions of SS camp doctors contributed considerably to high inmate death rates. Backbreaking labour, diseases left untreated, and systematic starvation figured among the most common methods of elimination. The camp clerks had such an impressive overview of the system that they were able to list the names and specific details of particularly brutal SS doctors. Josef Ulbrecht singled out the station doctors at Ebensee (Willi Jobst)[131] and the Loiblpass (Sigbert Ramsauer),[132] and even noted that Ramsauer had been a relentless 'dope addict'.[133] At the end of the war, a Greek inmate—who had been transported from Auschwitz to Ebensee on 1 October 1944—claimed that he could account for merely 350 survivors of an initial fifty-five

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[129] Two well-known examples include the 'shrunken head of Buchenwald' (the head of a hanged Polish inmate) and the treated, tattoo-covered skin of an inmate—preserved for Ilse Koch, whose husband, executed by the SS in April 1945, had been the commandant of Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Majdanek. The exhibits were included in the Nuremberg Trial. See Lawrence Douglas, 'The Shrunken Head of Buchenwald: Icons of Atrocity at Nuremberg', *Representations* 63 (1998): 39—64.

[130] Martin, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 4, pp. 1—3.

[131] Jobst assumed his position after Geiger's sacking by Ziereis in May 1944. See 'SS-Ärzte und Sanitätsdienstgrade' in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 293—297.

[132] August Walzl, on the other hand, has recently singled out Sigbert Ramsauer in the more traditional Carinthian sense of the term, downplaying him as a 'German' camp doctor who paid the price (imprisonment) for killing some severely injured inmates. See Walzl, *Zwangsarbeit in Kärnten*, p. 60.

[133] Ulbrecht, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 4, p. 1.

thousand fellow nationals. In large part, 'The doctors managed that';[134] most Greek Jews had been gassed at Auschwitz.[135]

As the Allies gained ground and the Reich began shrinking like a deflating balloon being pierced from all sides, inmates from camps such as Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Dachau were evacuated to Mauthausen and a number of its subcamps 'by the thousands and [often] without previous announcement'. These transports and so-called death marches led to staggering death rates.[136] Each transport produced an average of between six and eight hundred dead prisoners, not including 'those who were tossed overboard during the trip'. Around eight days before the German capitulation, as Ziereis relayed, 'a transport of 4800 prisoners came from Dachau of whom only 180 survived. The rest were shot while trying to escape, starved to death or fled, because the prisoners did not have provisions for a single day'.[137] For the SS in the area, who

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[134] Gorgas Poulos, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. Ferencz, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 15.

[135] Of 53,789 Greek Jews transported to Auschwitz, only 12,757 or 23.7 per cent were registered; the others were immediately gassed. While 54 of around 1200 Greeks perished in the Neuengamme subcamps, at Ebensee alone some 118 of around 400 Greeks died (a mortality rate of almost 30 per cent). A total of 266 were repatriated from Ebensee in June 1945. By October 1945 around 12,000 Greek DPs had already been repatriated from Austria and Germany, with only 2000 still requiring repatriation. See Albert Menasche, *Birkenau (Auschwitz II): Memoirs of an Eye-Witness: How 72,000 Greek Jews Perished*, trans. Isaac Saltiel (New York, 1947); Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, p. 252; Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, p. 137; Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 161, 444; Proudfoot, 'The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria': 48.

[136] Historians have estimated that in total between 200,000 and 350,000 inmates died in the course of all evacuations. See Daniel Blatman, 'Rückzug, Evakuierungen und Todesmärsche', in Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors: Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band 1: Die Organisation des Terrors* (Munich, 2005): 300. For the Mauthausen complex, see 'Evakuierungsmärsche' chapter in Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 349—356, which nevertheless falsely states that the Loiblpass' inmates were evacuated at the end of April. Also see 'Mauthausen as the terminus of evacuation' chapter in Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, pp. 185—191.

[137] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77, p. 2.

sought to occupy their positions for as long as possible, Ebensee offered the last option for retreat.[138] Even Ziereis had his luggage—containing mainly rifles and field glasses—moved there towards the end.

Whole forced labour departments were relocated to Ebensee. Among these: Redl-Zipf's printing plant, operated by around 150 Jews, 'all lithographers' tasked with the production of counterfeit money including dollars, pounds, and francs.[139] 'But unfortunately this money was used by the traitors for their flight', claimed Ziereis, who had allegedly seen 150 boxes (one metre in length and half a metre in both height and depth) filled with forged currencies. In the event that the Allies drew dangerously close to Ebensee, the SS had the order to kill all the Jews in a side valley.[140] The testimony of Jewish inmates and seized documents soon corroborated the rumblings of vast RSHA-directed counterfeiting operations. In January 1944, Jewish bank clerks, engravers, bookbinders, and printers were selected at KZ Sachsenhausen to falsify

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[138] Conversely, evacuations tended to dissolve prisoner hierarchies. Inmates who had managed to rise the ranks as functionaries at other camps typically lost their positions and privileges when they arrived at the sites to which they had been evacuated. See Regina Fritz, 'Everyday Life and Survival at Mauthausen during the Final Stages of War: The Hungarian Jews', *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 29/3 (2015): 235—236.

[139] In mid-April 1945, 147 inmates of Sachsenhausen's 'Kommando Bernhard' arrived at Redl-Zipf to produce counterfeit currency; this never got under way. The 'Kommando Bernhard' inmates were evacuated to Ebensee on 2 May; the others followed suit the next day. Those who survived were liberated at Ebensee. See Freund, 'Redl Zipf ("Schlier")': 416—420.

[140] Ziereis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 77., pp. 2—3.

British pounds and official foreign documents. A year later operations were moved into Austria but discontinued in April 1945.[141]

Survivors relayed how—in order to conceal the enterprise—sick prisoners were killed on the spot. The rapid advance of the Americans, however, 'prevented the execution of the personnel at Ebensee'. A US intelligence summary stated that of the 130,518,175 printed Pounds, fifty million were discarded due to quality issues. In the hopes of wreaking havoc, plans to drop the faulty batch over England had allegedly been devised. And apparently RSHA agents had taken off to Tyrol with around twenty million pounds. Shortly after the war the Americans came across material evidence of the expansive counterfeiting business; a CIC detachment uncovered forged South American and European passports, wax impressions of diplomatic seals, US social security cards, wire meshes for the US Department of State seal, and British currency, as well as other counterfeiting material.[142]

In due time it became clear to the Americans that for a great many individuals who had been imprisoned by the National Socialists or had overseen the camps the road leading to Mauthausen ultimately ended in Ebensee. Being the final stop for so many surviving evacuees and SS men, it was one of the last remaining camps. And with the

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[141] For the experiences of an inmate who had been a part of 'Kommando Bernhard' and witnessed the liberation at Ebensee, see Adolf Burger, *The Devil's Workshop: A Memoir of the Nazi Counterfeiting Operation* (Barnsley, 2009), or see the Oscar-winning film 'The Counterfeiters' or 'Die Fälscher' (2007), based on the German edition of the book from 1997.

[142] HQ Twelfth Army, 'Extract of Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 43', intelligence report, June 1945, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 5, p. 849.

arrival of inmates from all walks of the former KZ empire, Ebensee also briefly became one of the most heterogeneous camps ever to have existed.

POSTWAR REPORTS ON EBENSEE: RECONSTRUCTING CAMP LIFE

After a mere few months into the Allied occupation, the Americans presented two reports detailing wartime conditions and crimes committed at Ebensee. First, the Cohen Report, which, although not limited to Ebensee, included ten exhibits prepared by its former inmates. Second, the American Investigator-Examiner Charles B. Deibel's report (henceforth referred to as 'Deibel Report'), an investigation that centred exclusively on Ebensee. Deibel had spearheaded Investigating Team 6833 since it came into being with a Third Army order on 30 April 1945.[143] Tasked with collecting evidence on the inhuman treatment of Allied nationals, the Team's activities were rooted in articles 23b and 24 of the Hague Convention IV from 18 October 1907. This legitimised the investigation of all matters concerning the treacherous killing or wounding of Allied nationals and made permissible the use of deception and other measures to obtain information on the hostile nation.[144] Investigators collected evidence with such efficiency that a comprehensive representation of what had transpired at this subcamp emerged long before the list of suspected war criminals to stand trial could be finalised. In piecing together the reports, a relatively coherent

[143] On 24 February 1945, General Patton had tasked Cohen and Deibel to direct future Mauthausen-related war crimes investigations. See Freund, 'Der Dachauer Mauthausen Prozess': 43—44.

[144] Charles B. Deibel (Investigator-Examiner, War Crimes Investigating Team 6833) to Commanding General Third US Army, 'Subject: Report of Investigation of Alleged War Crimes', investigation report, 2 August 1945, Deibel Report, pp. 281—285, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, p. 1.

picture of everyday life at Ebensee rapidly materialises; a view of the camp that would come to form the basis and reflect the outcome of the trial. [145]

Camp Ebensee's inception was marked by the arrival of its initial personnel of sixty-three inmates on 18 November 1943. Most of them had been recruited from Redl-Zipf, a subcamp fifty kilometres northwest of Ebensee where in October prisoners had begun working on armaments production in the Zipf brewery's bombproof beer cellars.[146] Thirty individuals from the Wiener Neustadt outpost followed suit. Logistical building matters were in the hand of *Obergruppenführer* and General of the *Waffen-SS* Hans Kammler,[147] who headed the Reich's KZ construction engineering.[148] Obtaining professional workers did not prove challenging; over a dozen construction companies had been involved in the project from the outset. Among the specialists were contract civilian workers and a technical emergency corps (*Technische Nothilfe*).[149] And the vast reserve of inmates contained in the Mauthausen complex likewise facilitated rapid

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[145] The Mauthausen trials at Dachau comprised 61 cases and a total of 299 defendants, all of whom were tried between 1946 and 1947. Regarding the verdicts of the defendants: 21 were acquitted; 46 received sentences of up to five years, 33 between six and ten years, 26 between eleven and twenty years, and 57 between twenty-one years and life in prison; and 116 were sentenced to death. Not all of the death sentences were executed, and between March 1950 and November 1951 almost all of those still serving their sentences were released on parole. See Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee*, p. 126.

[146] KZ Redl-Zipf, codenamed 'Schlier', emerged as a rocket armaments project in the autumn of 1943, chiefly as a response to the aerial attacks on KZ Wiener Neustadt in August and October of that year. The exact date of its inception has not been verified, but most sources suggest 30 September or 1 October 1943. See Freund, 'Redl Zipf ("Schlier")': 416—420.

[147] For Kammler, see Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, pp. 140—164, and on his growing significance ('the hour of the engineer'), see pp. 202—270.

[148] Drahomír Bárta, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Cohen Report, pp. 100-105, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 1. Although Vincent Bernot also signed the statement, it appears that it was provided by Bárta.

[149] Before being transferred to Ebensee, Drahomír Bárta had been employed as a forced labourer at Redl-Zipf (1 October—18 November 1943). See Bárta, *Tagebuch aus dem KZ Ebensee*, pp. 40—43.

camp construction and expansion. The first major transport, totalling 418 prisoners, arrived a day later. Most of these were Polish, Russian, and Yugoslav nationals. Given the relatively fluid nature of prisoner movements within the network of camps, fifty of the arrivals were immediately transferred back to Redl-Zipf and two sick inmates were sent to Mauthausen.[150] Those who remained were tasked with building the KZ from scratch.[151]

No road had yet been constructed and the grounds of the future camp were occupied entirely by a dense forest. Over one hundred men were charged with working exclusively on building the infrastructure and lugging the machinery to its designated location. Others worked in the stone quarry, unloaded machinery and barracks, and paved the road. Inmates were divided into squads of ten, each supervised by an SS commando leader (*Kommandoführer*).[152] The reveille sounded at five in the morning and work commenced an hour later. After an hour of recess at noon, the workday typically ended at six. This amounted to at least eleven hours of hard labour, no matter the conditions; snow and rain were a common occurrence in the Salzkammergut and during the winter months temperatures could plummet to fifteen degrees below freezing.

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[150] The inmate population rose to 511 by the end of December 1943. For monthly figures, see Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, p. 34. Also see Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee*, p. 38, and 'Häftlingstransporte nach Ebensee' section (pp. 150—152); For a complete list of transports to and out of Ebensee, see Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 457—460.

[151] Henry Poly-Defkis, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. Nowitz, Cohen Report, pp. 107—109, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 33, p. 1.

[152] Commando leaders, also referred to as work service leaders, were brutal SS men who accompanied and oversaw inmate labour details. For the most detailed overview of forced labour employment in the Mauthausen complex, see 'Arbeitseinsatz' chapter in Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 87—108.

Snow began settling in November, reaching depths of a metre and a half. Inmates had to trudge through it wearing nothing but wooden shoes and linen clothing to which the snow stuck like glue.[153] Moreover, no exceptions to the institutionalised order were made: 'One had to stand for hours in winter without shoes at the roll call or in order to receive bread. Those who could not stand that, hanged themselves.[154] There were 3 of them, whom I knew'.[155] The first winter had been exceptionally unforgiving. At the very least, initial rations, though always insufficient, still somewhat resembled food. A portion would include around 250 grams of bread and cabbage or carrot soup. With each new prisoner arrival, 'the food situation became worse and worse'.[156]

The SS did not offer inmates the illusion that everyday life would improve: 'prisoners had to work without respite, they had to keep moving constantly. The slightest pause led to brutal consequences from the capos[157] and the SS. The rhythm of work was accelerated and if a prisoner tried to slow down the rhythm, he would be violently punished'. On 24 December 1943, the original arrivals were handed a piece of soap and afforded their first warm bath, lasting sixty seconds ('no doubt in

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[153] Poly-Defkis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 33, p. 1; Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, pp. 1—2.

[154] Genuine suicide, however rare, was dealt with in the same bureaucratic manner as any other 'unnatural death': the 'SS-Gerichtsführer' reported the incident to Mauthausen, both verbally and in writing. The written report had to be accompanied by a sketch of the scene, record of interrogation, and brief statement by the camp doctor. See 'Selbstmorde' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 339—341, which also includes a copy of a sketch.

[155] Pakalnis Romualdas, sworn statement, Salzburg, 9 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, pp. 444—446, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 8a, p. 3.

[156] Poly-Defkis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 33, p. 1; Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, pp. 1—2.

[157] Kapos were commonly misspelt as 'capos'.

celebration of Christmas'). All throughout this period the camp existed without medical care. Between fifteen and twenty deceased inmates had already been transported to Mauthausen, along with up to sixty who had already been on the cusp of death. And a prisoner physician, dispatched from Mauthausen on Christmas, proved fairly inconsequential; he came bearing neither medicine nor medical equipment.[158]

By 7 January 1944, three barracks stood completed, and five hundred inmates filled these. Thenceforth transports kept rolling in with ever-greater frequency, in part due to the expansion of the camp, and in part because sick or dead prisoners were replaced without delay.[159] Another substantial transport, comprising four hundred inmates from Mauthausen, reached Ebensee in January 1944. Upon arrival, the prisoners were beaten with a cat o' nine tails and moved into their temporary housing facilities in the cellar of a textile factory. Their basic rights were at once curbed, and performing 'bodily functions' at night was strictly prohibited; one SS guard quickly picked up the habit of stabbing prisoners late at night. Losing no time, the next morning the SS sent the new arrivals directly to the stone quarry. Kapos and SS men supervised their work, often beating to death those who fell to the ground from exhaustion; the work 'could not be done by a normal free man, but still less by us prisoners, who had already become emaciated by years of staying in the camps'. Inmates whose lack of strength prevented them from making it to work altogether were sometimes torn to

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[158] Poly-Defkis, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 33, p. 1.

[159] Ibid., p. 2.

pieces by a notorious camp dog known to the inmates as 'Lord'. Mining accidents were also common, with falling rocks claiming up to five lives at a time.[160]

As the crematorium had not yet been built, the bodies of the dead were sent to Mauthausen in intervals of a few days.[161] Most prisoners had 'some reserve of strength' when they came to Ebensee, and in the first couple of months the number of recorded deaths did not exceed twenty. Yet exhaustion and deteriorating conditions inevitably gave way to ever-higher death rates over time (see Figure A3). In mid-January 1944, the camp gradually came into its own: eight prisoner blocks, the kitchen, and three SS barracks were now complete; the electric barbed wire fences were up and running; and watchtowers kitted out with machine guns were visible from all angles. With the rudimentary characteristics of a KZ in operation, all inmates were permanently moved into the camp. The same was true of the SS camp administration, which included a camp commander (*Lagerkommandant*),[162] report leaders (*Rapportführer*),[163] and block

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[160] Jan Szubinski, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. William J. Koen, Cohen Report, pp. 50—51, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 8, p. 1.

[161] Until 25 July 1944, some 559 dead inmates were transported to Mauthausen to be cremated. According to the *Lagerstandbuch*, 7029 inmates were cremated at Ebensee thereafter and until 4 May 1945. See Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, p. 53.

[162] For accounts dealing with camp commandants, see Tom Segev, *Soldiers of Evil: The Commandants of the Nazi Concentration Camps*, trans. Haim Watzman (London, 1990); Karin Orth, 'Die Kommandanten der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager', in Herbert, Orth, and Dieckmann (eds.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Band II*: 755—786. Based on thirty-six camp commanders, Segev found that his subjects had undergone a 'process of inner hardening'. In her contribution, Orth focuses on the KZ Stutthof camp commander Paul Werner Hoppe.

[163] Report leaders, mostly veteran SS men with long KZ careers, were chief in managing the inmates. They held roll calls, compiled inmate lists, and dispatched work details. *Rapportführer* also generally directed the extent of brutalities inflicted upon individuals or groups of inmates. Although suitably qualified to be camp commanders, their notoriously brutal methods had the effect that they rarely rose above the rank of an *Unterscharführer*. See Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps*, p. 225.

leaders (*Blockführer*).[164] During working hours, an SS detail leader, one SS guard for every five to ten prisoners, and a Kapo together oversaw a single commando. Bigger working parties received SS police reinforcements, who were also known to revel in brutality.[165]

In the earliest phase of Ebensee's existence, *Hauptsturmführer* Georg Bachmaier, Ziereis' deputy and Mauthausen's *Schutzhaftlagerführer*,[166] temporarily served as camp commander. Bachmaier was known to have been directly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of inmates at Mauthausen. His short tenure at Ebensee prevented him from rolling out his murderous methods in full, but on his watch 'the self administration of the prisoners was put in the hands of professional criminals'. That is to say, Bachmaier also encouraged the SS to delegate mistreatment and murder.[167] This gave rise to prisoner functionaries who willingly exercised their power over the other prisoners: 'They beat and killed on the orders of the SS …. And to prove that they

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[164] Block leaders were in charge of the barracks and provided the report leader with the number of inmates who had been present at roll call and the number who were sick at the infirmary—figures which were given to them by the *Blockälteste* and prepared by the *Blockschreiber*. While a commander and report leader tended to delegate abuse and murder, a block leader maltreated prisoners directly or colluded with Kapos in the ill-treatment and killing of inmates. Part of their job was also to guard work details. See 'Die Blockführer' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 136—138; 'Block Leaders' section in Dillon, *Dachau and the SS*, pp. 125—134.

[165] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 2.

[166] 'Report leader' or 'protective custody leader'. Georg Bachmaier, often recorded as 'Bachmayer' or 'Bachmeier', was responsible for roll call and discipline at Mauthausen. He killed himself in May 1945, along with his wife and children.

[167] See 'Häftlingsselbstverwaltung' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 147—149.

were honest about their intentions to serve the SS and to be liked better by them they killed on their own accord'.[168]

A vast majority of the Kapos were German and Polish criminals, with a few Spaniards who 'unfortunately, and in general, acted no better than the others'.[169] Apart from a tiny minority, they were notoriously ruthless. 'There were also good capos, but very few', as a former inmate from Lithuania who had been incarcerated for four years relayed.[170] Another witness put it in similar terms: 'If there were at the Ebensee Camp any good Kapos they could be counted on the fingers of one hand; most of them were murderers who killed a man for the modest amount of 20 cigarettes'.[171] Like at other camps, therefore, the system at Ebensee functioned on a self-administrative basis of institutionalised prisoner hierarchies. The so-called camp elders or senior camp prisoners (*Lagerälteste*) were the highest-ranking inmates.[172] Arriving with the first transport from Mauthausen, the German political prisoner Magnus Keller occupied this position from start to finish.[173] Evidently 'too intelligent' to commit to any of the brutalities expected of someone in his position, Keller solved this dilemma by

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[168] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 3.

[169] Jean Biondi, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. Koen, Cohen Report, pp. 63—68, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, p. 1.

[170] Romualdas, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 8a, p. 1.

[171] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, p. 5.

[172] As Wachsmann notes, 'At the top of the hierarchy stood the camp elder (often with two deputies), who supervised the other Kapos and reported to the SS, acting as the main conduit between oppressors and oppressed'. A degree of institutionalised self-governance had already proved effective in its incipient form during the pre-war period. See Wachsmann, *KL*, pp. 122—124.

[173] Magnus Keller had also been *Lagerältester* at Mauthausen and Redl-Zipf. Pike has suggested that Keller, known as 'King Kong', had been the most infamous prisoner functionary in Mauthausen's history. See Freund, 'Redl Zipf ("Schlier")': 417; Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, p. 61.

appointing Lorenz Dähler as an additional camp elder.[174] Often under the influence of alcohol, Dähler 'organized regular massacres' while Keller allegedly focused on his side business of trafficking in gold and precious stones. The gold was sourced from the teeth of dead inmates before their bodies were cremated.[175]

Blockälteste held the second-highest prisoner rank. These functionaries governed the inmate barracks, and every block elder was appointed on the recommendation of the camp elders Keller and Dähler.[176] Each barrack housed a block elder. The later head of block number one, known to prisoners as Ludwig, was among the worst. On 1 January 1945, Ludwig assembled his inmates, made them strip naked, and sent the group to the shower room at the other end of the camp. As they scurried along, through a metre and half of snow, Ludwig administered heavy blows and shouted 'Happy New Year'. For minor 'offences', such as a poorly made bed, he would dole out between twenty-five and fifty strokes with a rubber hose. On certain mornings, Ludwig enjoyed watching the gymnastic exercises he made prisoners perform before work. Drained of energy after having been denied essential sleep and rest, some died within days as a direct result.[177]

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[174] For Keller and Magnus, see 'Die Lagerältesten' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 168—172, which also includes an inmate's drawings of both men.

[175] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, pp. 2, 6.

[176] For an overview of the block elders at Ebensee, see 'Blockälteste' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 172—176.

[177] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, pp. 2—3.

A readiness to use violence against fellow inmates often led to promotions within the prisoner hierarchy. Aping the brutality of individuals like Dähler, the block elder of barrack nineteen, known as Karl, was 'repaid for his zeal' and elevated to the camp elder position at the Gunskirchen (Wels I) subcamp, located some fifty kilometres northwest of Ebensee.[178] Ultimately, the upper echelons of the Kapo world were reserved for the most violent or cynical prisoners. Fierce competition motivated ever-greater cruelties on the part of those who wished to remain in their position or rise up in the ranks. Block elders for instance employed brutal assistants whose unfettered ambitions had to be kept in check; typically no older than eighteen, these helpers were keen on 'beating without mercy men who could be their fathers'. The block elder supposedly used the boys for sodomy and pimped them out to the SS for this purpose.[179]

The second of the four Ebensee commandants, Anton Bentele, did not stay in his post any longer than his predecessor. He eventually got sacked when Ziereis learned of his insatiable thirst for arbitrary murder—a claim that appears to be supported by an abrupt spike in total recorded deaths in March 1944 (see Figure A3). Bentele had denied prisoners their bread rations for an entire week towards the end of February. Beyond his knack for brutality, he was known for sensational rhetoric. Inmates were made to listen to statements that sought to rob them of the little morale that they might have still

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[178] Although Gunskirchen had been a fairly small Mauthausen outpost, the death marches brought up to twenty thousand Hungarian Jews to the camp in April 1945. It was liberated by the Americans on 5 May. See Florian Freund, 'Gunskirchen (Wels I)', in Benz and Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors: Band 4*: 368—370. Not to be confused with Wels II, which existed only very briefly; from 25 March and until its inmates were evacuated to Ebensee on 13 April 1945.

[179] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, pp. 2—3.

had. Bentele would often bellow that nobody should be under the illusion that Germany would be defeated, and 'even if they should lose the war at one time and the Russians should be standing 50 kilometers from Ebensee', he would continue, 'none of you will ever leave this concentration camp alive', and tersely add, 'I will have you all shot'.[180]

Obersturmführer Otto Riemer, a notorious drunkard and lover of the ladies, took over as the third in this line of succession. Matters rapidly deteriorated under his command, as evidenced by steeply rising death rates that would not be exceeded again until December 1944. Riemer delighted in watching the tormenting and beating of inmates. Allegedly he ordered the sentinels to shoot prisoners on a daily basis. Compliant guardsmen were typically rewarded with smokes and furloughs. As a result, a record amount of 'shot while trying to escape' reports were dispatched to Mauthausen under his sadistic SS tutelage. A daily average of three inmates were condemned to death in this way between April and May 1944, with total recorded fatalities reaching 148 and 209 during these months, respectively.[181] Death certificates that inmates were able to preserve could substantiate these statistics. Riemer would be promptly relieved of his duties for making a sport of killing inmates, and for a most cruel episode on 23 May in particular.[182]

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[180] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 3.

[181] According to Freund's most recent calculations, 143 inmates died in April 1944. See 'Namentlich bekannte und unbekannte Tote des KZ Ebensee in absoluten Zahlen nach Sterbemonat' graph in Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, p. 337.

[182] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, pp. 3—4.

At nine o'clock in the evening the commandant and a young SS man, both drunk beyond reason, stumbled into the camp and began shooting indiscriminately at a *Kommando* that happened to be returning from work at that moment. Eight of those marching within the five columns of inmates died on the spot; a few others succumbed to their wounds by the break of dawn. Despite the fact that killings of this nature were strictly prohibited and breached KZ policy protocol,[183] 'nobody ever said anything about it'. As per the norm, letters explaining away the incident were dispatched to Mauthausen. The reasons provided on this occasion included suicides by hanging and electricity, and death by exhaustion. 'It would take a long time to state all the items and hundreds of cases', wrote a witness who wished to nevertheless recount a few murders that he had 'seen with my own eyes'. A week prior to Riemer's drunken massacre, the Italian inmate Danielo Veronesi succeeded in escaping.[184] On 15 May, after he had spent a couple of days on the run, a search party of police and SS men managed to locate and recapture Veronesi some fifteen kilometres from the camp. Brief questioning and torturing stints followed, whereafter the SS dog 'Lord' spent a good hour reducing the Italian to bloody pulp. Veronesi's desperate pleas to Riemer fell on deaf ears. His corpse was subsequently hurled into the electric fence and photographed. Finally, a report on his 'suicide by electricity' was sent to Mauthausen.[185]

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[183] Although not opposed to abuse in general, 'unnecessary torture' that 'breached decorum and caused disorder' officially had been forbidden since October 1933, and disobedience on the part of SS men was taken more seriously after 1937. See 'The Janus Face of Punishment' in Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 104—108.

[184] Sometimes also recorded as 'Danilo'. Other inmate accounts of this incident are quoted in 'Der Mord an Danilo Veronesi' in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 354—356.

[185] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31.

The fourth and final Ebensee commandant, *Hauptsturmführer* Anton Ganz, arrived at the end of May 1944 and remained in this post until the camp's dissolution.[186] In his former life, he had allegedly worked as a nightclub bouncer, making his tendency to give short shrift to most issues slightly more comprehensible. Yet Ganz liked to showcase hangings. Guilty of 'attempted escape', fourteen inmates were executed between 20 September 1944 and 25 April 1945. Ganz scheduled hangings during the evening roll call: 'the prisoners were grouped on the big square, the first rows seated, the next on their knees, and the last standing, while the Commandant, a cigarette in his mouth, had the punishment inflicted by the nearest friends of the victim'. And he also found joy in repeatedly assuring inmates that none of them would leave his camp alive. A Parisian inmate pointed out that Ganz intended to keep his promise: 'the night before the arrival of our liberators he had decided to have us closed up in tunnel No. 3,[187] previously excavated in the course of the week. Our resolute attitude, and above all, a

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[186] Ganz managed to evade capture after the war. For a long time, he was believed to have been shot by his comrades in the Tyrolean Alps—but had in fact lived in Austria until 1949, whereafter he moved to Freiburg with his wife and two sons. After being recognised by a Czech survivor, Ganz was arrested in Stuttgart on 14 November 1967 and tried in Ludwigsburg in December 1967. Circumstances regarding a Spanish witness enabled him to be freed on bail. Ganz's trial was postponed until 1972. A German court in Memmingen ultimately sentenced him to life in prison for his role as commandant at Ebensee. Released on medical grounds (cancer), allegedly Ganz died in his home on 25 July 1973. See Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, pp. 290—291. According to Freund, Ganz died in prison. Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee*, pp. 131—132.

[187] There exist a number of different versions regarding this incident. For a brief account by an inmate who had been incarcerated at Ebensee since its inception, see Johannes Kurth, trial transcript, Dachau, 12 September 1947, *Cases Tried*, RG 549, Box 415, Case 000-50-5-33, p. 197. Franz Ziereis recalled the general extermination orders on his death bed: 'In pursuance of an order issued by Reichsminister Himmler, I was required to call all the prisoners in accordance with instructions drawn up by Obergruppenführer Dr. Kaltenbrunner. The prisoners were to be put in a tunnel, the doors of which were to be closed with stones and cement, and the whole [tunnel] was to be blown up with dynamite'. However, Ziereis only mentioned Gusen I and II, and not Ebensee. See Ziereis, dying confession, NARA, RG 549, Box 336, Folder 6, p. 1.

certain wavering among the soldiers dressed in SS [uniforms] … made him – at the point of death [at the last moment] renounce his project'.[188]

The terror regime under Ganz proved to be the worst. Considered by survivors to have been somewhat of a knucklehead with no formal education, he apparently sought to mask these shortcomings in extraordinary brutality. Ganz's utilitarian leanings shone through. 'A prisoner in his eyes was nothing but a working slave', something he would openly state. Each labourer was to be squeezed dry and harvested, 'used up to his last days and last drop of blood'. Prisoners recalled the commander's black-and-white view of his subjects: 'In a concentration camp we either have living ones or dead ones, the sick have to die'. By this logic, those who had been admitted to the infirmary due to illness were required to work at least a few hours a day. An inconsiderate demeanour made Ganz universally unpopular at Ebensee; even the SS came to despise him in due course.[189]

At first, the push for efficiency appeared to have reduced overall deaths; seventeen fatalities were recorded in July 1944. Yet Ebensee soon bore the brunt of Germany's deteriorating military fortunes, which sparked a more aggressive armaments

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[188] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, pp. 1—2.

[189] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 4.

push and soon led to the evacuation of camps in the east.[190] Over one thousand civilian Polish volunteers from Warsaw arrived at Ebensee in September. All of them had been tricked into thinking that they would be employed as contract workers in Germany.[191] Around ninety per cent of them apparently died of exhaustion and starvation over the course of the following months. Shortly thereafter, an even larger transport of Hungarian Jews, who had been rounded up in Hungary ahead of the Soviet arrival, reached Ebensee;[192] many more were sent to Auschwitz. Again, as an inmate estimated, only around ten per cent lived to see the liberation by the Third US Army on 6 May 1945. An additional transport of two thousand Jewish inmates was sent to Ebensee in the wake of Auschwitz's evacuation.[193] Upon the arrival of these evacuees, Ganz is claimed to have demanded that at least half of them were to be annihilated within the fortnight. 'The saddest thing', an inmate professed, was that this order 'gave us the sad

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[190] Blatman has viewed the evacuations in three phases: 'Die erste Phase begann im April 1944, als das Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt (WVHA) beschloss, wegen des Vorrückens der Roten Armee die Häftlinge der Konzentrationslager in den baltischen Ländern und in der Region von Lublin zu evakuieren; einige Lager wurden zudem im September 1944 auf Anweisung Oswald Pohls evakuiert. Die zweite Phase setzte im Januar 1945 ein mit der Räumung des KZ Auschwitz und der anderen großen Lager in Polen, Groß-Rosen und Stutthof. Die dritte und letzte Phase begann Anfang April 1945 mit den Evakuierungen der KZ auf deutschem Boden, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Neuengamme und anderen'. See Blatman, 'Rückzug, Evakuierungen und Todesmärsche': 297—298.

[191] While most Poles had been transported to German and Austrian camps by force, 'Some came voluntarily, deceived by Nazi promises of a rosy life'. See Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 201.

[192] Approximately 1500 Hungarian Jews were sent to Ebensee via Mauthausen in the summer of 1944. Owing to a smaller number arriving with subsequent transports, they made up around 15 per cent of the inmate population by the autumn of 1944, and 13.8 per cent on 3 May 1945. A total of 1849 Hungarian Jews died at Ebensee. Until the evacuation of the camps from the east, most Jews at Ebensee were Hungarian (95.8 per cent in 1944). See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 150—151, 156—157, 164.

[193] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 5. The 1999 inmates were evacuated from Auschwitz on 18 January 1944, registered at Mauthausen, and sent to Ebensee. The journey lasted eleven days. See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 151. One of the worst evacuations, comprising 2059 Jewish inmates from Wolfsberg/Włodarz (a subcamp of Groß-Rosen), arrived at Ebensee on 3 March 1945 (pp. 152—155).

privilege of making sure that it was not an empty threat'. For half a month, blocks 25 and 26, wherein the Jewish inmates lived, produced hundreds of corpses destined for the crematorium.[194] Death rates increased exponentially from late 1944 onwards. Soon there were 'piles of bodies lying in front of the crematorium' and 'prisoners died in the streets of the camp'. While bigger commandos brought back dead inmates on trucks, prisoners of smaller commandos would return with deceased comrades heaved over their shoulders.[195]

The existence of a camp infirmary was a consolation to nobody: 'The people who were sick were afraid to go to the hospital. He who had some brain left does [would] not go there'.[196] One of the inmates transferred to Ebensee from Auschwitz via Mauthausen arrived on 29 January 1945 and began working a fortnight later as an inmate medic in the *Revier* (as the prisoners' infirmary was referred to).[197] 'Overall hygiene: It is difficult to use that word', he noted, and recalled how they washed 'without soap and towels', doing so 'while the SS swore, hollered and struck you with a rubber hose', and how prisoners, growing tired of this abuse, 'never went to wash up [themselves] at all'. Assigned to the sterilisation and operation room, the inmate witnessed rapidly deteriorating conditions at first hand. For the sake of efficiency, the crematorium had been set up next to the *Revier*. Ebensee's chief physician,

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[194] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, p. 2.

[195] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 5.

[196] Romualdas, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 8a, p. 3.

[197] For an overview of the camp infirmary at Ebensee, see Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 293—299.

Hauptsturmführer Willi Jobst, presided over the hospital administration, aided by his SS medical helpers *Unterscharführer* Gustav Kreindl and *Rottenführer* Andreas Schilling. While all of them were later tried at Dachau, during the war, as the inmate medic recounted, they were 'our masters, our gods'.[198] Between the two SS helpers, Schilling had reportedly been the more unforgiving one, treating inmates 'the same way as Dr. Jobst did'. Kreindl had, as another former inmate alleged, not done anything incriminating and 'other prisoners, too, did not say anything against him, because it was not allowed to speak about the treatment'.[199]

In his own deposition, Kreindl named a surviving inmate—an Italian who had allegedly invited him to spend some time at his summer residence—willing to vouch for his fair treatment. Kreindl implicated Schilling by highlighting his brutality and claimed that in the final days of the camp inmates had confided in him how 'if they could get hold of him they would slice his stomach open while he was still alive'. Jobst fared no better in his memory. The SS doctor encouraged Kapo brutalities, on occasion even scolding the hospital Kapo Otto Niedrig for carrying out disciplinary duties with insufficient vigour. 'Otto, it seems to me you're too soft', Jobst would say.[200] A later report by Kreindl, submitted almost three weeks after the initial statement, suggests that the SS medic had abandoned his initial strategy: he began contradicting earlier statements, claiming for instance that 'in the prisoners' hospital of Ebensee there were,

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[198] Jan Bendler, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Cohen Report, pp. 161-163, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 71, pp. 1—2.

[199] Romualdas, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 8a, p. 2.

[200] Kreindl, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 9a.

as far as I know, no inhuman methods of treatment, as they may have occurred in other camps'.[201]

Kreindl's new defensive strategy might have been prompted by testimony submitted a week after the SS medic's original statement. An inmate testified to Kreindl's ferocious nature, his beatings, and the lethal injection orders he allegedly gave 'to the Obercapo of the hospital, Otto and the chief of barrack, Beck', adding that Otto Niedrig and Beck Oswald had been killed by inmates in the wake of the Americans' discovery of the camp. Additionally, the witness accused Jobst of sending sick inmates to Block 23 to be killed.[202] As a German Kapo—who had since 1934 experienced ten camps—remembered, Kreindl similarly used this barrack to get rid of prisoners. Yet he added other forms of ill-treatment and corruption to the growing list of offences:

> Once the medic, Kreindl happened to be present and forbade (my) entering the hospital and told me if I should come into the hospital as a patient, I will get (administered) the Benzin [petrol] needle. I often saw how ill comrades were beaten by Kreindl, [and] Schilling …. When in February 1945, I collapsed … Otto stole my gold wrist watch and my wallet with money. I saw my watch 3 days later with the medic, Kreindl. When I told him that that was my watch, he had me thrown out by the hospital-capo, Otto. In winter 1945, Kreindl also made the prisoners of the hospital block 23 lie naked in chloride of lime on the floor. There, according to the testimony of prisoners, who worked in the hospital, 96 prisoners died. So it went day

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[201] Kreindl, written report, Salzburg, 23 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, pp. 327—332, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 10a, p. 5. This report by Kreindl suggests that the SS medic had changed his tone. No longer implicating any individuals, Kreindl also began relativizing camp conditions. Further claims included: 'Food was good and sufficient'; a third of patients were admitted as a result of 'accidents at work'; the number of inmates who died was not high; Mauthausen did not increase food rations when transports from the east began arriving in early 1945 and thenceforth 'the efforts of the physicians were in vain, as even medicine could no longer help'; lethal injections were not given and 'a deliberate killing never occurred'; 'Nobody was to be afraid of going to the hospital'; 'I scarcely believe that an inmate would betray another inmate'.

[202] Adam Renefort, sworn statement, Salzburg, 12 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, p. 458—459, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 11a, p. 1.

> after day. I myself have seen that Kreindl, in winter 1945, ordered the severely sick prisoners … to dig ditches for air protection[203]

Melk's physician Josef Sora, whose subcamp had been evacuated to Mauthausen and Ebensee in mid-April 1945,[204] provided evidence that challenged the basis of the German Kapo's statement on the air raid shelters; at some point in May 1945, Sora had learned that the blame for this crime was being put on Kreindl. Seeking to set the record straight, Sora remembered Jobst having confessed: 'I took these people who are weak, and the sick ones, out in the snow and had them digging ditches for an air-raid shelter, then they will die more quickly!'[205] The contradictory evidence on the matter of responsibility constituted one of the first instances of the 'hearsay versus fact' scenario that investigators had to face. Whether or not both were responsible, an inconsistency between statements might just as well have been the product of a settling of scores among functionaries. In the very least, the statements reveal that a steadily growing, strategic alignment of the accused—manifest in those supporting and those incriminating one other—could be observed in July 1945.[206]

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[203] Hans Baumast, sworn statement, Bad Ischl, 27 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, p. 465—467, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 13a, pp. 2—3.

[204] Between 11 and 15 April 1945, a total of 7401 prisoners were transported to Mauthausen and Ebensee (by train, boat, and on foot). An estimated 30 prisoners, deemed too sick to travel, were murdered by the SS shortly before Melk's dissolution, and at least 36 died en route to Mauthausen or Ebensee. In total, 4801 inmates died at Melk. Like at a number of other sites with underground facilities, there had been plans to blow up the inmates in the tunnels. See Bertrand Perz, 'Melk', in Benz and Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors: Band 4*: 407. For a comprehensive history of Melk, see Perz, *Projekt Quarz*.

[205] Josef Sora, sworn statement, Bad Ischl, 24 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, p. 469—472, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 14a, p. 3.

[206] Yet unlike during the trials before IMT and the subsequent ones at the US Nuremberg Military Tribunals (NMT), hearsay evidence at the American Mauthausen trials became admissible. See Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, pp. 5—6, 38, 126, 137.

Deception could not be discounted as a motivating factor, especially since the SS knew that they might benefit from having surviving inmates as witnesses in potential future war crimes trials. In Kreindl's case, evidence in this respect was thin, but he nevertheless had managed to keep up the appearance of a 'quiet, polite SS-man' outside of the infirmary; 'his beastly nature and his "ingenuity" only awakened in his hospital'.[207] Strategy among former inmates could likewise not be dispelled. Evidence against Kreindl did not surface until July 1945. Thenceforth, incriminating statements materialised regularly, and increasingly honed in on the SS medic. The most detailed condemnation came on 29 July. Kreindl apparently had come under the influence of the brutal Kapos Paul Friedl and Otto Niedrig after arriving at Ebensee in June 1944. He was further accused of installing the infamous Block 23 and tasking the German block elder Helmut Elfert[208] with accelerating the death of inmates in this barrack. Apparently a ruthless anti-Semite, Kreindl saw to it that Jews would receive less food and medicine. 'In my opinion', as a witness wrote, 'he is guilty, if not directly, then indirectly, for the deaths of many hundreds of sick and healthy persons. He was the right hand of Jobst, who, of course, knew all and gave the general orders'.[209] Rather unwittingly, the survivor had provided a case-specific definition and an argument in favour of the 'common design' charge that would later successfully be applied by the prosecution.

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[207] Anton Lorentzen, sworn statement, Ebensee, 27 July 1945, trans. [n/a], Deibel Report, p. 461—462, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 12a, p. 2.

[208] Or 'Helmuth Elfer'. See 'Häftlingspersonal im Krankenrevier' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement,* pp. 297—299.

[209] Henryk Sokol, sworn statement, Ebensee, 29 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, p. 474—475, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 15a, pp. 1—2.

The picture that emerged of the hospital SS was one that depicted men who went far beyond the role of 'dutiful' soldiers, and even KZ policy. Some appeared to derive great pleasure from the toil of inmates. One of the inmate medics at the *Revier* frequently observed just how unmoved Jobst appeared to have been as he 'inspected with a big smile on his face the rows of sick, and with the same smile, looked at the bodies beaten to death, shot, hanged or otherwise removed by "natural" death'. Although the medic could not remember Jobst laying a hand on inmates, he had witnessed the SS paramedics beat inmates or reject and chase away sick individuals whom they disliked. Towards the end of the Reich, Jobst decided to accept all inmate requests, which swelled *Revier* intakes and took the number of patients admitted up to two thousand.[210]

Sick and weak inmates received lethal petrol injections from Jobst,[211] often as a result of policies that hastened the physical demise of prisoners. Inmates were compelled to stand during inspection, but those too weak to comply received strokes from Jobst. Those diagnosed with dysentery would receive 'his prescription' of three days without food.[212] Jewish patients were always singled out, segregated from other inmates in a separate block, and denied necessary operations. Kapos and Oberkapos

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[210] Bendler, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 71, pp. 1—2.

[211] As petrol had been used to facilitate the subsequent burning of a corpse, the postwar use of needles by relief workers (to administer hydrolysates) apparently prompted 'violent physical resistance' on the part of former inmates. See Ben Shephard, 'The Medical Relief Effort at Belsen', *Holocaust Studies* 12/1—2 (2006): 42—43.

[212] Romualdas, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 8a, p. 2.

stood on the other end of the prisoner hierarchy spectrum, and even within the infirmary itself inmate doctors or medics had to be wary:

> The SS found among the prisoners men who worked with them and carried out their orders. These were bandits, murderers, etc., who called themselves "professional prisoners." They were marked with a green triangle whereas the political prisoners carried the same sign in red.[213] The Obercapo of these in the hospital beat, killed and murdered people as a sport …. The prisoner doctor had no power …. If he got an order to send the sick to work, he had to do it or he became a victim of the "green" murders.[214]

New evacuation transports from nearby camps—including Melk, St. Valentin, Wels, Leibnitz, and Redl-Zipf—raised the total prisoner population to eighteen thousand, of whom a third were seriously ill. By mid-March 1945, the camp became altogether unsustainable. Sick prisoners unable to walk to the *Revier* were now no longer admitted. And inside the infirmary itself, up to five people occupied the same bed.[215] At this point inmates had become so emaciated that many begged to be put out of their misery. These cases were commonly admitted to the cynically named *Schonungsblock* ('Protection

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[213] Whereas most prisoner functionaries tended to be brutal (or had become brutal) German inmates with a criminal record—and while all German prisoners with a criminal record wore a green triangle—most of these 'green' individuals were not in fact prisoner functionaries. As Wachsmann astutely points out, 'The picture of the "criminal greens" has long been shaped by these testimonies of political prisoners. But it requires correction. Even in the late 1930s, the vast majority of so-called professional criminals were property offenders, not violent felons …. Finally, although the tensions between some "red" and "green" prisoners were real, they did not arise from the latter group's alleged brutality, but simply from competition for scarce resources, a struggle that would escalate during the war'. See 'The Green Triangle' section in Wachsmann, *KL*, pp. pp. 144—147.

[214] Bendler, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 71, p. 2. On the development of KZ inmate categories, and for an overview of the coloured triangles and acronyms that were attached to prisoner uniforms, see Annette Eberle, 'Häftlingskategorien und Kennzeichnungen', in Benz and Distel (eds.), *Der Ort des Terrors: Band 1*: 91—109; 'Classes and Classifications' chapter in Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, pp. 117—129.

[215] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 5.

Block') where, far from being afforded a safe haven for recuperating, inmates received neither food nor care.[216] Instead, they were left to die. Jobst would sign off on a death certificate that usually bore the diagnosis 'acute weakness' or 'weakness of the heart and body'. The outpatient ward soon mirrored a 'death parlor'. The crematorium could burn no more than eighty bodies a day. Backlogs thus became unavoidable: the room eventually filled up with corpses and at one point some two thousand bodies had accumulated at the crematorium. Since the Americans were approaching, a crew of thirty men—receiving special rations—worked in two shifts to burry the bodies in mass graves. One grave was filled with 1200 and the other with 800 corpses.[217]

Before food rations were reduced to such an extent that starvation became but a question of time, 'food was bad and the rations not enough to live or die'.[218] From March 1945 onwards, six working inmates had to share a single daily ration: half a litre of unsweetened coffee in the morning; three quarters of a litre of soup containing some potato peels and fat; and one loaf of bread weighing 1350 grams, which 'was worse

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[216] Towards the end, there had been up to three such *Schonungsblocks*, with one being in the infirmary. The two 'death barracks' (blocks 23 and 26) also became known as 'Protection Blocks'. To prevent the spread of disease, a number of dead and dying inmates from these blocks were put in mass graves. At least twenty-five Hungarian Jews (who were still alive) were pulled out of the graves and hidden in the infirmary barracks. A former inmate estimated that one thousand living inmates died in mass graves. See 'Die "Schonungsblocks"' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 313—318.

[217] Bendler, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 71, p. 2.

[218] Ibid., p. 1.

than the famous KK bread[219] of the other war'.[220] For the sick, the same daily ration had to suffice for nine. All this also spurred on violence among inmates, some of whom would gang up on individuals for a few crumbs. Others started scouring the grounds for grass, leaves, and coal as food substitutes. Isolated cases of cannibalism soon emerged. On 26 April, inmates came across 'a dead Hungarian Jew with half of his buttocks cut away'.[221]

In Block 26, where the Hungarian had been discovered, people were being systematically starved. Bodies lay piled up in the corner of the room with no partition separating them from those who slept there, and it would often take days for the dead to be removed. When inmates charged with taking the deceased to the crematorium discovered that the body of the Hungarian Jew was missing, they reported it right away—for fear of potential repercussions—to the block elder, who in turn informed the SS. To calm the prisoner's nerves, rations were increased for a day and a separate partition was erected. All this was hardly a consolation for the inmates of Block 26, which came to be known as the 'death barrack'. Here the starving camp dogs would be set on both dead and dying inmates: 'Four young boys, under 20, and three old men

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[219] The KK bread—short for *Kleie und Kartoffeln* (bran and potatoes)—was introduced during WWI and typically comprised potato flour, sawdust, and sometimes bovine blood. French POWs, who referred to it as 'pain KK', often made use of its combustibility instead of ingesting it. See Loïc Delafaite, *Französische Kriegsgefangene in Deutschland 1914—1918: Zwischen Feindschaft und Freundschaft* (Hamburg, 2014), p. 43.

[220] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, p. 5.

[221] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 5.

were eaten up in this way while lying helplessly sick. The dogs were almost as large as small horses'.[222]

The situation was indeed so dire in this particular barrack that one inmate allegedly carried out a desperate yet somewhat ingenious plan to gain an extra morning ration. Dragging a dead prisoner into his bed and placing the corpse in an upright position created the illusion that the man was still alive, and so he was given a ration. All the while, the SS terror continued unabated. A Russian prisoner who had 'knitted' a pair of gloves from whatever material he could find, an act that the SS classified as 'sabotage', was hanged a few days before the Americans arrived. This was not an isolated incident.[223] Aside from such executions, however, a chief difficulty in pinning murders on certain SS men stemmed from the fact that many prisoners who had received fatal blows would die some time later in the infirmary. By no means had deaths resulting from violence been replaced by starvation or exhaustion towards the end. Rather, they kept working in tandem with one another.

Keeping up the illusion of 'business as usual' had the effect of sustaining brutality until Ebensee's dissolution. Particularly ruthless Kapos could thus emerge towards the end just the same, and not least because many had become seasoned concentration camp criminals boasting a career in violence that often spanned numerous camps. Between February and early May 1945, the German convict Horst Gönnemann

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[222] Petsirilos Nissim and Lewis Jakob, sworn statement, Ebensee, 8 June 1945, Cohen Report, p. 239, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 188, p. 1.

[223] Bárta, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, pp. 5—6.

oversaw Block 5. Once the owner of a lumber business in the German town of Iserlohn, he had been arrested on account of embezzlement in 1942. After a short stint in various prisons, Gönnemann purportedly spent the remainder of the war in the camps of Mauthausen, Linz III, Gunskirchen (Wels I), and, finally, Ebensee.[224] At Ebensee alone, his relatively short reign led to the death of no less than forty inmates. Most of Gönnemann's victims died in the infirmary as a result of his mistreatment, but on one occasion he went as far as torturing a Slovak inmate to death. Known to have denied inmates their limited privileges, Gönnemann liberally confiscated cigarettes and food parcels. During working shifts he would force prisoners with high fevers to continue labouring, having the effect that 'workers were carried back dead by their friends in the evening'.[225]

Chance had it that after the war Gönnemann would be identified and apprehended in Salzburg. During an interrogation at the district jail, Investigator-Examiner Charles Deibel prompted the former Kapo to recount the story of his eventual capture. Sporting a fever on the day of the Americans' arrival, Gönnemann had stayed in bed for a few hours before slipping away undetected and heading in the direction of Bad Ischl: 'A Pole came and said: "Come on, we will go, too."' Plans to immediately return home to Westphalia were thwarted by his infected arm. Heeding the advice of a local farmer in Ischl, Gönnemann sought medical attention and took a week to

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[224] Horst Gönnemann, sworn statement (interrogation), Salzburg, 9 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, pp. 432—437, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 5, pp. 1—2.

[225] Andreas Canko, sworn statement, Salzburg, 7 July 1945, trans. Fleischmann, Deibel Report, p. 439, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 6a.

recuperate, he then went to Salzburg with a Red Cross nurse whom he had become friendly with in the course of his hospitalisation, and stayed for a while in the nurse's lodgings. One Saturday, after having seen an optometrist, he and the nurse happened to be waiting for the same transport as a bunch of 'people who had a conversation on concentration camps'. One of the men turned to Gönnemann and asked whether they had perhaps met at Wels: 'Then a man with a stick came up to me and struck me with it on the head, and people were saying: "That is a Gestapo."' Gönnemann took flight with blood gushing from his head. A man on a bike caught him up and urged him to return. Ignoring the pursuer, he sought refuge in the cellar of a nearby house, where he remained until American soldiers arrived at the scene.[226]

Despite expressing a willingness to cooperate during his subsequent interrogation in the district jail, Gönnemann offered only guarded answers. Asked whether he had ever been in charge of prisoners, he wavered initially and then professed: 'No—that is to say—now I have to be careful …. They called me auxiliary Kapo'.[227] The Investigator-Examiner wanted to know whether he had also been an 'auxiliary Kapo' at Ebensee. 'No, it was like this', Gönnemann explained, 'I was a good worker, was good in drilling; I could understand Polish and Czech, too. Then I was told:

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[226] Gönnemann, sworn statement (interrogation), NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 5, pp. 4—6.

[227] While the SS used Kapos as 'auxiliaries of terror'—to borrow Wachsmann's expression—the term 'auxiliary Kapo' officially did not exist and was likely used by Gönnemann in an attempt to diminish his complicity. See Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 124.

You take a little bit [of] care of the rest'.[228] Although fending off any questions regarding the ill-treatment of inmates, it appeared that his defence gradually fell apart. Gönnemann admitted to having received a weekly allowance of a half dozen cigarettes 'and sometimes a cigar' from the SS—a typical Kapo-SS transaction that would almost certainly not have been afforded to a regular inmate.[229] Moreover, he claimed that while people were beaten, death had always been the product of starvation. Towards the end of the interrogation, three witnesses were brought in for identification, one by one. Each time, Gönnemann denied knowing the man presented to him in the interview room.[230] Yet these three men were not the only witnesses to implicate the Kapo; the Deibel Report provided incriminating evidence from a handful of former inmates.

The commandos overseen by Gönnemann and Sepp Bachmann worked in close proximity to each other. According to a Lithuanian witness, both men were comparably relentless towards their subjects. As one of twenty prisoners—half of whom were

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[228] Gönnemann, sworn statement (interrogation), NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 5, pp. 2—5.

[229] Such transactions had long been common practice: 'The first step to building up a Kapo class at Mauthausen had come in the very first weeks of the Anschluss: every prison and penitentiary in Austria was emptied of its criminals, those with suspended sentences were placed under arrest, and all were sent to Dachau, and from there, later in 1938, to the camp at Mauthausen. It was these holders of the Green triangle, "the founding members" as they grotesquely called themselves, who became the first Kapos and enjoyed all the privileges pertaining to club membership: alcohol, tobacco, free access to the "Puff" (the camp brothel officially known as the Sonderbau), and the right to steal with impunity the rations and clothing of the inmates'. See Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, p. 60.

[230] Gönnemann, sworn statement (interrogation), NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 5, pp. 3—5.

Jewish—he was part of the 'Siemens-Schuckert' commando.[231] The Kapo Bachmann oversaw the group and beat at least two inmates to death. Beyond implicating these two functionaries, the sworn statement also provided investigators with valuable detail regarding the deteriorating camp conditions across the KZ empire. This former inmate had refused to join the German Army in 1941 and would until the war's end be a part of the Reich's forced labour effort, starting with an *Organisation Todt* (OT) project along France's Atlantic coast.[232] Aerial attacks caused him and his comrades to be sent to Dachau for two months, before being transported to Mauthausen in May 1944: 'At Mauthausen I saw a great difference compared with Dachau'. After another two months he arrived at Ebensee, a camp that he perceived to have been worse still.[233]

Many of those who had not been functionaries within the system put their survival down to more than sheer luck. The French inmate Robert Simon relayed how individuals without friends were condemned. Before arriving at Ebensee in March 1944, Simon had spent a year at Mauthausen, giving him ample time to forge important connections. 'We were "graduates" of Mauthausen, and also communists', which made him and his comrades the bearers of a 'double title', as he explained. Having been in the system for years, they already knew a great number of the 'international bandits'

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[231] Part of the smaller commandos labouring outside of the camp, which chiefly were employed in tasks like preparing concrete components for the tunnels, the Siemens-Schuckert group had a prisoner strength of thirty on 29 March 1945. As the labour-intensity of a squad generally also determined the 'class' of an inmate, most of those assigned to these smaller work squads stood at the bottom of the prisoner hierarchy. See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 267.

[232] On OT projects in France, see Fabian Lemmes, 'Arbeiten für den Besatzer: Lockung und Zwang bei der Organisation Todt in Frankreich und Italien 1940—1945', in Dieter Pohl and Tanja Sebta (eds.), *Zwangsarbeit in Hitlers Europa: Besatzung – Arbeit – Folgen* (Berlin, 2013): 83—104.

[233] Romualdas, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, Exhibit 8a, p. 2.

(functionaries) from Mauthausen, many of whom had been sent to Ebensee earlier: 'we had many times applauded the departure of international bandits, because these departures alleviated progressively the criminal atmosphere of the camp. For I leave you to imagine our disappointment and our uneasiness when we discovered all the bandits here'. The last line of Simon's sworn statement seemingly reflects the Cohen Report's recommendation that all defendants should be tried by the *Association de malfaiteurs* principle, challenging them 'to disprove any one of the crimes of which we accuse them'.[234] Some had already been dealt a more direct verdict through 'lynch justice', which removed a number of functionaries in the wake of the liberation.[235] On the day of the Americans' arrival, for example, fellow inmates killed a German 'gypsy' known as Hartmann. Apparently he had been responsible for around three deaths a day. 'In conclusion', a former inmate wrote, 'Everything was foreseen, organized to the smallest detail, for slowly bringing on death …. Civilized people must learn the lesson of these horrible atrocities. History itself will put the German people and the leaders in the place which their barbaric methods have earned for them'.[236]

The finished Mauthausen-related reports were testament to the sheer speed at which war crimes investigating teams in Upper Austria worked. Moreover, the concentrated efforts of Team 6833, focusing exclusively on Ebensee, ensured that the

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[234] Robert Simon, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, trans. Koen, Cohen Report, pp. 164—165, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 72, pp. 1—2.

[235] An inmate claimed that around fifty-two prisoner functionaries were killed at Ebensee. See 'Lynchjustiz' section in Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, pp. 419—422.

[236] Biondi, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 16, pp. 5—6.

site would not be overlooked in the later war crimes trials at Dachau.[237] Under the leadership of Charles Deibel, the Team's nine investigators had been given a month to identify and question relevant Ebensee witnesses and suspects. The Deibel Report managed to present evidence against eight men accused of being involved in the cruel and inhuman treatment of Allied nationals at Ebensee, five of whom had not yet been located by early August, including the SS chief physician Jobst, the prisoner functionary Bachmann, and the SS paramedic Schilling. After being presented with Deibel's findings, the Staff Judge Advocate saw that further investigations—presumably to collect evidence against other Ebensee functionaries—were warranted. In the meantime, wanted reports were furnished to track down the missing men. Regarding the accused in custody, Deibel recommended that these men be brought to trial 'at the earliest possible date in view of the fact that most of the witnesses are displaced persons and may not be available indefinitely'.[238]

Perhaps unwittingly, Deibel had pointed to a catch-22 situation that would soon plague some of the Mauthausen cases: increasing pressures on resources made repatriation a growing necessity; coordinating and keeping track of witnesses became increasingly difficult upon their departure. While repatriation threatened to come at the

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[237] Yet the decision to try Mauthausen defendants at Dachau—and thus in Germany rather than in Austria—inadvertently fuelled the myth of Austrian non-complicity. The Austrian media, mobilising this fact, misrepresented Mauthausen as a German (and fundamentally un-Austrian) complex. For a brief discussion and an overview of the judicial actions on the part of the Americans at Dachau and the Austrians through People's Courts, see Perz, *Die KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen*, pp. 42—46.

[238] Deibel to Commanding General, investigation report, NARA, RG 549, Box 335, Folder 2, pp. 1, 5.

expense of future prosecution proceedings,[239] a third factor both resolved and complicated this problem. The 'common design' principle would ensure both that proving individual guilt became secondary and that the Mauthausen trials turned out to be anything but 'free and fair'.

[239] Keeping track of and securing non-repatriable survivors as witnesses for the prosecution was far easier. In March 1946, three Poles and four Jews were summoned to Dachau to act as witnesses against a number of Mauthausen defendants standing trial. See Team 313, 'Narrative Report', Ebensee, 30 March 1946, ARMS, Series 0527, Box 0139, File S-1494-0000-0329, Folder US/N/4.

IV. THE BRITISH ROAD TO PROSECUTION: KZ LOIBLPASS

AN ANGLO-FRENCH ALLIANCE IN PURSUIT OF DR RAMSAUER

At the time when US war crimes investigating teams were submitting their respective reports and CIC officers were in the midst of capturing or tracing Ebensee suspects to stand trial, the British were still in the process of establishing order in Southern Carinthia. This comparatively sluggish progress in war crimes investigations was rooted in three central factors. Firstly, the British lacked the personnel and, as a result, they encountered far greater difficulties in tracking down suspects. Secondly, and as discussed in the earlier chapter on 'Local Wartime Perspectives on the Loiblpass', the British Army had to juggle various problems associated with territorial claims to the region. Allied expediency came at the expense of investigations, overshadowing these to a considerable degree. And thirdly, a lack of administrative continuity and decisiveness on the part of the War Office produced a seemingly senseless amount of red tape which threatened to bury investigations on multiple occasions.[1] The authority concerned with war crimes switched hands four times in the course of just under three

[1] Not surprisingly, these problems were part of a larger trend: 'Allied war crimes teams faced, albeit to varying degrees, three significant challenges in the postwar years: a shortage of personnel and resources, administrative, and, after initial enthusiasm, flagging political support from their governments'. See Stover, Peskin, and Koenig, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, p. 34, who also provide background on why the British government soon abandoned the war crimes trials effort.

years.[2] This hampered progress and efficiency since every new administration had to begin the process of collecting or analysing evidence anew. Administrative and regional hindrances notwithstanding, from the outset former inmates facilitated the capture and incrimination of suspected war criminals with a considerable degree of fortitude, just as others did elsewhere across the defeated Reich. KZ prisoners alone countered the factors that threatened to unsettle investigations time and time again. Without their involvement, former Loiblpass functionaries would likely have evaded eventual prosecution.

In late May 1945, the French Army lieutenant and former inmate Louis Balsan initiated the extended run-up to future Loibl investigations. Armed with official camp documents, Balsan paid a first visit to C. J. Dawson, a British Captain of the *Special Investigation Branch*'s (SIB) Seventy-Seventh Section in the Eighth Army. After carefully studying a dossier containing the list of murdered inmates, Dawson singled out the native Carinthian Sigbert Ramsauer, Loibl camp's last chief physician, and made inquiries into his whereabouts.[3] Balsan and Dawson soon learned that the SS rank of *Hauptsturmführer* had guaranteed Ramsauer a spot on the automatic arrest list and

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[2] Up to January 1946, *General Headquarters Central Mediterranean Force* (CMF) was charged with jointly investigating war crimes in Austria, Italy, Greece, and North Africa. Thereafter, a War Crimes Investigation Section—moved from Italy to Austria—came under the control of the *Assistant Director Judge Advocate General* (ADJAG) *British Troops in Austria* (BTA). In June 1947, the *War Crimes Group South East Europe* (WCG SEE) was conceived and came under the control of the *Military Deputy, Judge Advocate General* in London. This group continued its operations until March 1948, when the bulk of its activities were transferred to the *War Crimes Group North West Europe* (WCG NWE).

[3] For an alternative account on the circumstances leading to Ramsauer's arrest, see 'Die Verhaftung' chapter in Rettl and Pirker, *"Ich war mit Freuden dabei"*, pp. 195—204. Also see 'Festnahme von Dr. Ramsauer' section in Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 433—436.

efforts to apprehend him were already under way. Officers had in fact already visited Ramsauer's parents in Klagenfurt. They believed that their son might be in Eisentratten, around one hundred kilometres northwest of the capital.[4] Leaving nothing to fate, Balsan decided to personally take up the hunt for Ramsauer and other culprits. Balsan's chief value lay in his ability to facilitate later investigations, act as an intermediary between various actors in the wake of the German defeat, and provide rare insight into the early postwar probing of Loiblpass-related crimes. After the Gestapo had arrested him in 1942 for acting as an 'enemy agent' for the British government,[5] Balsan had been sent to Mauthausen and later on to the Loiblpass, where he had spent two years.[6]

A few days after making contact with the Eighth Army, Balsan started actively working with the British. He would often socialise with the officers and even taught a couple of them water skiing. On 19 May, First Lieutenant Ellis helped him locate the former inmate and camp clerk Karl Weber. Now working at a local farm near the Wörthersee, Weber recounted the story of how the SS leadership had departed from the south camp on the morning of 8 May. The camp commandant *Hauptsturmführer* Jakob

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[4] Louis Balsan, diary entry, 18 May 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection. Excerpts from this diary (trans. Katharina Wegan) were made available to me by Peter Pirker. The original has been preserved by Balsan's family in Paris.

[5] Born in Paris on 10 November 1911, Balsan had been an officer in the French Army ('intelligent, gebildet und körperlich wesentlich stärker als die anderen'). As a member of the secret British spy ring 'Cartwright'—tasked with locating airfields in the northeast of France from which aerial attacks against the UK were being launched—Balsan was arrested by the Gestapo on 10 October 1942. Before being sent to Mauthausen on 22 April 1943, he was imprisoned for six months in Fresnes (just south of Paris) and Compiègne (northeast of France). See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, p. 123.

[6] Balsan to Major Thomas Peter Anthony Davies (British War Crimes Liaison Officer in Baden-Baden), correspondence, 2 April 1947, Records of war crimes and criminals (both alleged and proved) 1939-1945, TNA, WO 309/1363.

Winkler had left on foot and Ramsauer had ensured safe passage by acquiring a motorbike. Having last seen the SS doctor in Unterloibl, Weber believed that he had been killed at the Drau Bridge—presumably by Tito partisans.[7]

That same day, however, Balsan got wind of the location where Tito's men were holding twenty-five SS functionaries from the Loiblpass camp, including Ramsauer.[8] The majority of them were low-ranking SS men who had been arrested in the Valley of Roses when elements of the Fourth Yugoslav Army had liberated the guarded convoy of approximately one thousand inmates who were being evacuated from the Loiblpass.[9] Many soon returned home, but around two hundred former inmates[10] had enlisted in the *Brigade Liberté*[11] as part of the Yugoslav Army.[12] They now wore Tito uniforms. Among those guarding the SS men were some of the young Frenchman's fellow Loibl deportees. Yet when Dawson, Balsan, and three British policemen arrived at the scene

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[7] The last 'civil war' battles between Nazi collaborators and partisans were fought in the area between the River Drau and Karawanks. See, Rulitz, *Die Tragödie von Bleiburg und Viktring*, p. 81.

[8] Balsan, diary entry, 19 May 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection.

[9] For a detailed account of the (self-)liberation, see Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 417—421. Also see Zausnig, *Der Loibl-Tunnel*, pp. 129—130; Gstettner, 'Die Legende von der Selbstbefreiung Kärntens': 90, 105.

[10] Most sources suggest that of the 539 freed French inmates, some 122—rather than 200—'Gaullists and Communists' joined *Brigade Liberté.* Furthermore, the liberated inmates also formed a company named 'Stary', comprising 75 Poles, 20 Russians, 4 Czechs, 2 Spaniards, a Slovak and a Hungarian, among others. See 'Aufstellung und Demobilisation der Brigaden Liberté und Stary' section in Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, p. 417—425.

[11] For a recently-published account on the Loiblpass' postwar resistance group, see Christian Tessier and Daphné Dedet, *Du Loibl-Pass à la Brigade Liberté* (Châtel-Guyon, 2015).

[12] Captain C. J. Dawson (DAPM, 77 Section, SIB, Eighth Army) to Deputy Provost Marshal (Rear HQ, Eighth Army), 'Subject: Report on SS Arbeitslager Loibl-Pass', 13 June 1945, 'Loibl Pass Case (No. 2 Case)', TNA, WO 310/142.

the next day, the 'Tito-Frenchmen' explained that Ramsauer had managed to escape.[13] This was fortunate for him as Tito had agreed to withdraw his troops by 21 May and the remaining twenty-four SS men were taken to Yugoslavia shortly thereafter, where many were put to death.

Determined to continue their search, the group decided to make their way to Eisentratten. There they came across a young girl who offered to guide them to the possible whereabouts of Ramsauer. After around two hours of hiking and scouting, hopeful that they were closing in on their prey, the team discovered his wife at a hotel in Gmünd. Mrs Ramsauer conversed with Dawson for a few hours in remarkably good English; she had lived in England for a year in her mid-twenties. Even if she had known where he was, there was no way that Mrs Ramsauer would reveal anything. Throughout, she defended her husband, claimed that he had treated inmates well, and asserted that he had been coerced into functioning as an SS doctor. To her mind, it was regrettable that the Nazis had deceived the people about the fortunes of a war that they would have liked to have won. At one point, and without being prompted, Mrs Ramsauer inadvertently revealed more than she cared to admit: looking Balsan straight in the eye, she declared that her husband had never administered any lethal injections of sorts.[14]

Although the unlikely adventure did not bring the men closer to tracking down their suspect, Balsan continued to put his time in Carinthia to good use by heightening British awareness of Loiblpass war crimes. On two occasions he led British officers up

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[13] Balsan, diary entry, 19 May 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection.

[14] Balsan, diary entry, 20 May 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection.

to the former camp. During the second trip, however, they came across hostile, heavily armed Yugoslav soldiers who denied them passage through the tunnel to visit the south camp.[15] A drawback of being denied access was that investigators could not gain access to Slovene locals who had witnessed, or who as contract workers had managed to preserve documents of, crimes committed in and around the tunnel.

On 25 May, *Field Security Section* (FSS) officers occupying the hotel in Gmünd—possibly as a direct result of Balsan and Dawson's earlier fact-finding mission—learned that Ramsauer was at a nearby mountain hideout and arrested him.[16] In an attempt to locate his wife, Ramsauer had made the mistake of giving away his location. Between 29 and 30 May, the Anglo-French duo could finally interrogate Ramsauer. All attempts to extract confessions and get him to implicate Winkler, the camp commandant, failed. Time and again he insisted on merely having fulfilled his duty as a doctor. When Balsan alluded to thirty-four deaths,[17] Ramsauer slashed the figure by two thirds. And when Ramsauer claimed that he needed medical attention and relayed how the prison food was of insufficient quality, Dawson and Balsan suggested that if that were indeed the case he would finally get some sense of the suffering that inmates had to endure. They nevertheless agreed to collect some of his personal belongings. The Anglo-French duo also reassured him that his wife and children were

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[15] Balsan, diary entries, 24 and 26 May 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection.

[16] Eighty-Eighth Field Security Section (FSS), Sigbert Ramsauer Security Arrest Report (No. 88/2/45), 25 May 1945, TNA, WO 310/142.

[17] The most recent estimate puts the inmate death toll at thirty-nine. For a complete list of the names of the inmates who died at the Loiblpass, including brief biographical details, see Gstettner, 'Die KZ-Opfer vom Loiblpass': 366—371.

well, and that his SS rank made certain that he would be tried at some point.[18] Surprisingly, nobody had yet mentioned the possibility of a Loiblpass trial. Judging from Balsan's account, it appears that he thought anyone on the automatic arrest list would ultimately be tried.

A week into June, Balsan embarked on his return journey to France in an old Opel Olympia that one of his new British friends had made available. In the course of his short mission to implicate and locate Loiblpass offenders, Balsan might not have traced as many functionaries as he would have liked. However, the information that he delivered led to the arrest of two of the twelve SS men who later stood trial in Klagenfurt—Ramsauer and Friedrich Porschel. His work had only just begun. In the span of a month he managed to nurture an extensive British Army network and complete the necessary groundwork that enabled him to resume these efforts in the capacity of a French Army lieutenant from home. Balsan also left his SIB friends with a Loiblpass report implicating various individuals from among the SS, Kapos, and contract civilian workers.[19] Dawson circulated this document to the Deputy Provost Marshal on 13 June.

The first two statements taken into evidence—presumably as a result of Balsan's continued efforts—were recorded in Paris and Marseille in July and September 1945. Since both of the witnesses providing testimony had been assigned to

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[18] Balsan, diary entries, 29 and 30 May 1945, Balsan Private Archive Collection.

[19] The report is not contained in the files, nor could I locate it elsewhere; only Dawson's description of the said document is available.

the camp infirmary, Ramsauer became the subject of further allegations. Apart from holding the SS doctor responsible for five murders between March and August 1944, Joseph Krupowicz accused him of selling camp medicine in Klagenfurt, refusing to admit a partisan who 'had a bullet lodged in his penis', extracting gold crowns from the teeth of deceased inmates, and sending prisoners back to Mauthausen despite knowing that they would likely be killed there. In one particular case, Ramsauer allegedly ordered the shooting of a Russian inmate and requested that the prisoner—still exhibiting signs of life—be stripped naked and taken to the south camp's open-air crematory for incineration.[20] Krupowicz took note of Ramsauer's change of heart a few months before the German capitulation,[21] claiming that he could be observed 'protesting faintly' against the ill-treatment of inmates.[22] For all intents and purposes this amounted to a theatrical performance to be retold in a world after Hitler; Ramsauer cast his infirmary patients as the audience, himself as the tragic hero with a saviour complex, and the camp commandant in the role of the villain ignoring his pleas.

Down south in Marseille, Michel Gasior reinforced his fellow inmate's version of events and furthermore detailed Ramsauer's unwillingness to listen to his 'daily

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[20] According to Tišler, a similar open-air crematory was completed at the north camp in November 1943 (until then all those who died at the north camp were transported to the south camp for cremation). See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, p. 177.

[21] Such behaviour shifts on the part of functionaries were widespread in early 1945. The Allies also dropped flyers over various camps, as in the case of Ebensee on 23 April 1945. These leaflets warned functionaries that—regardless of their rank—they would be made accountable for the ill-treatment of prisoners. For a copy of an American flyer, see Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 405.

[22] Dr Joseph Krupowicz, written statement, Paris, 1 July 1945, trans. H. Poellinger, 'Killing and ill-treatment of Allied nationals interned at the working camp of Loibl Pass, Austria, June 1943—May 1945', TNA, WO 311/364.

warnings' or to intervene on any level; even patients sporting a forty-degree fever had to attend work at the tunnel. Gasior and Krupowicz, who had both worked as inmate medics in the south camp prisoners' infirmary, were also denied access to medicine, making it impossible to treat patients with bacterial infections such as diphtheria and typhus. Sometimes Ramsauer refused to operate on seriously ill inmates and prohibited others from doing so in his stead. Once he 'knew quite well that the patient was done for', he would finally go ahead with the procedure. An inmate beyond the point of return—often as a consequence of a botched operation that had come too late—would receive a petrol injection in the heart. Ramsauer also tended to drink heavily on the job, and he thus failed to administer anaesthetics properly. The SS paramedic Otto Kleingünther[23] who 'possessed a greater skill in giving heart injections' would then come to his rescue.[24]

In August 1945, Ramsauer finally underwent an official interrogation at POW Camp 373 in Wolfsberg, around sixty kilometres northeast of Klagenfurt. Like so many who had gone before him, Ramsauer put the blame on the leadership in Berlin and functionaries at sites other than the Loiblpass. Relativizing his role and camp conditions in general appeared to be his approach to dodging prosecution. The compressed nature of press reports, he suggested, made the camps appear worse than they were.

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[23] In an unavoidably imperfect trial system, defendants whose camp careers spanned various camps would typically be tried for the crimes they had committed at only one of these sites. Such was the case of Otto Kleingünther. He was later sentenced to life in prison at Dachau for his crimes as an SS paramedic at the main camp of Mauthausen. Kleingünther was released on parole in 1955. See NARA, RG 549, Boxes 74, pp. 392, 393.

[24] Michel Gasior, written statement, Marseille, 14 September 1845 [1945], trans. Poellinger, TNA, WO 311/364.

Continuing in this vein, he contended that punishments at the Loiblpass were infrequent, as the inmates 'were all willing and harmless types'. Ramsauer lied about almost everything pertaining to the infirmary, claiming that 250 operations had been carried out successfully and at no human cost. He did his utmost to protect the former camp commandant's reputation and revealed little more than the fact that Winkler had received orders to shoot all the inmates if the Allies came too close. Although partisans had in fact liberated the majority of prisoners, he decided on a more self-serving story, namely that he and Winkler had handed everyone over to the Red Cross.[25] Rather tellingly, the report noted, 'subject does not know whether [it was] the International or other Red Cross'.[26] Asked what he thought about the camps, he replied tersely: 'Man gewöhnt sich daran' ('One gets used to it'). Ramsauer made the Loiblpass sound like a summer camp. Ultimately, he fared no better in interviews than he had as a drunken doctor operating at an altitude of one thousand metres. Ramsauer's interrogation report concluded,

> The conditions in the Camp were better than any other camp, because the labor of the inmates was needed, and also the proximity of Tito's Troops made the guards move more carefully due to many escapes from work parties. The food was good, and as much as a heavy worker in the German Industry would get, less certain luxury items, sugar, and real butter. The inmates themselves liked the camp and preferred it to any other Concentration Camp. …. Subject [Ramsauer] is an adventurer, who joined the SS because of the nice uniform and the respect he got from civilians and local authorities. He firmly believed and still believes in the Nazi doctrines

[25] Theresienstadt was the only camp to be handed over to the Red Cross by the SS ('Transfer Liberation'). See Bridgman, *The End of the Holocaust*, p. 11.

[26] Ramsauer also bore a duelling scar on the left side of his chin—a traditional souvenir for any fraternity man—but his SS days in Prague, Warsaw, and at various camps seemed to have left no scars whatsoever.

> and would be an ideal member for any Nazi underground movement. A severe detention without further interrogation is recommended.[27]

Ultimately, the tactical interrogation of Ramsauer, a common FSS procedure, was conducted irrespective of any activities on the part of former inmates or SIB's seventy-seventh section in the Eighth Army. Even while events and enquiries made between May and August 1945 might have heightened awareness among British officers in and around Klagenfurt, they fell short of sparking a comprehensive war crimes investigation on the Loiblpass. Aside from the problem that these early beginnings revolved around but one individual, the interrogation of Ramsauer itself exposed that those questioning him knew nothing of the crimes that he had committed as an SS doctor. This provided an early indication of the lack of continuity in and cooperation among the administrative bodies charged with denazification in Southern Carinthia. Against the background of such shortcomings, it is not altogether astonishing that it would take at least until early 1946 for officials to begin entertaining the idea of investigating Loiblpass war crimes.

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[27] CIC Twentieth FSS, 'Tactical Interrogation of Dr. Ramsauer, Sigbert', Wolfsberg, 22 August 1945, TNA, WO 310/142, pp. 1—4.

CORPORAL FINCH INVESTIGATES THE ENGINEERS

The first official wave of enquiry into Loiblpass-related atrocities began on 10 September 1945. Britain's *Military Government Kärnten* (MGK) charged the *Special Investigation Branch* (SIB) with looking into the Vienna-based firm *Hoch- und Tiefbaugesellschaft Universale AG* (henceforth referred to as 'Universale') and its role in alleged war crimes at the Loiblpass.[28] Remnants of wartime infighting among company employees appear to have been at the root of this examination: the foreman Julius Schummi launched an official complaint against Viktor Kamper, his former superior at the tunnel. Accused of having mistreated prisoners,[29] the British arrested Kamper on 10 August. Balsan's report probably played a supporting role in this episode; it had been making the rounds after Dawson asked for its dissemination through British channels in mid-June. A unique feature of Balsan's report was that it implicated Universale's contract engineers[30] in three respects: bringing on the death of deportees by neglecting safety precautions; inciting violence by encouraging Kapos to beat inmates; and pressuring prisoners into stealing from the camp under the threat of

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[28] Corporal C. J. Finch (DAPM, 'B' Section, SIB CM Police, Central Mediterranean Force), 'Subject: Alleged War Crime', 15 December 1945, Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142.

[29] For a discussion on the relationship between contract workers and inmates at concentration camps, see 'Close Encounters' section in Wachsmann, *KL*, 485—488.

[30] By September 1943, the Loiblpass had employed 666 contract workers: 496 Slovenes; 75 Croats; 25 employees and 22 workers from Germany or Austria; 22 Italians; 16 French; 3 Greeks; 3 Poles; 2 Ukrainians; and two workers whose nationality remains unknown. The majority of them were compulsory but not KZ labourers. See 'Die Rekrutierung der Zivilarbeiter' in Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 39—43.

reporting them for other offences.[31] Regardless of what had initiated the investigation into Universale's employees, Corporal C. T. Finch[32] collected six statements in Carinthia between late November and early December 1945.

Finch's first interview took him to Pulst, around twenty kilometres north of Klagenfurt. Schummi, who was now the town's mayor, alleged that Kamper, in his capacity as the so-called *Schießmeister* ('tunnel master'), had kicked and beaten prisoners at work. Within the tunnel hierarchy, the Kapos were under his control, and he in turn was accountable to the chief supervisor Kamper. Schummi had also witnessed SS men shoot four prisoners and Kapos ill-treat inmates under their command.[33] Jakob Huber, who had worked alongside his friend Schummi for over a year, provided a similar account. To Huber's mind the camp commandant and Kamper were not only good friends, they were also equally responsible for Loiblpass atrocities.[34]

Almost four months after the arrest, and half way through Finch's investigations, the interrogation officer Captain Hunt finally disclosed that Schummi's official complaint had caused him to be incarcerated for all this time. Kamper, wanting to get the record straight, promptly sent the British Military Court an energetic rebuttal of events. He argued that these fabricated accusations were a smokescreen intended to

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[31] Dawson to Deputy Provost Marshal, 'Report on SS Arbeitslager Loibl-Pass', TNA, WO 310/142.

[32] The SIB officer putting together the Universale report (henceforth referred to as 'Finch Report').

[33] Julius Schummi, written statement, Pulst, 22 November 1945, trans. Sergeant Schwelm, Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142.

[34] Jakob Huber, written statement, Glödnitz, 24 November 1945, trans. Schwelm, Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142.

disguise a blatant attempt to settle old scores. Huber had allegedly been relieved of his duties for failing to comply with basic safety standards like posting firewatchers ahead of controlled explosions in the tunnel. Due to his carelessness, Huber had on three separate occasions only narrowly avoided killing workers. Apparently Schummi had been comparably careless in performing these explosions. Kamper contended that Schummi, for fear of being sacked as well, switched firms shortly after the incident.[35] Beyond denying any complicity in abusing inmates, Kamper applied the same method of deflecting guilt as Sigbert Ramsauer had during a tactical interrogation at Wolfsberg:

> I saw some of the Kapos ill-treating prisoners who were under their command. They beat them with their hands. I spoke to them, and asked them why they were doing things like that, and received the answer that is was none of my concern. On several occasions I was informed by Gruber, Moritz and Schweiger [fellow Universale employees] that S.S. Guards had shot prisoners. On one occasion, I remember one S.S. man, whose name I cannot remember, coming to the machine house where I was, and asking for some oil. When I asked what he wanted the oil for, he replied that he had to burn a prisoner [presumably at the south camp's makeshift, open-air crematory]. I remarked that it must be terrible to burn somebody, whereupon he replied that he had done it several times.[36]

Two Universale employees, both still working for the firm at the time, submitted statements corroborating Kamper's alleged innocence. The former deputy chief engineer at the construction site, Richard Fill, had purportedly never witnessed the 'tunnel master' resorting to violence. Once again, it was only the Kapos and SS men

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[35] Viktor Kamper to British Military Court, Spittal an der Drau, 28 November 1945, Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142.

[36] Kamper, written statement, Spittal an der Drau, 29 November 1945, trans. SIB interpreter [name illegible], Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142.

who were blamed.[37] Yet Fill had already taken a pre-emptive measure in the hopes of protecting the firm's reputation; presumably he had known that an investigation was under way for quite some time. In mid-October he sent Balsan a calculating letter steeped in self-admiration. 'Many former prisoners', Fill wrote, 'clearly recognised that thanks to our efforts at the construction site the poor fortune of labouring prisoners was alleviated to some degree'. Among the acts of easing the forced labourers' toil cited by Fill were the provision of additional food at the financial expense of the firm, the dismissal of Loiblpass' first and notoriously brutal camp commandant Julius Ludolph,[38] and the prevention of the departure of a prisoner transport to Mauthausen in in the autumn of 1944. 'We never agreed with the cruel methods of the SS and their accomplices', Fill maintained. He concluded that in their own way the contract workers had done their duty as Austrians in offering resistance to these methods.[39]

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[37] Dr. Ing. Richard Fill, written statement, Klagenfurt, 30 November 1945, trans. Corporal H. Royce, Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142. For the other employee's statement, see Rupert Breitfuss, written statement, Klagenfurt, 30 November 1945, trans. Royce, TNA, WO 311/364.

[38] *Obersturmführer* Julius Ludolph acted as the last commandant of Melk, a subcamp of Mauthausen. He was later sentenced to death at the Mauthausen trials in Dachau and executed at Landsberg prison in 1947.

[39] Fill to Balsan, correspondence, Klagenfurt, 14 October 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection. Original quote: 'Viele ehemalige Häftlinge, die beim Bau des Loibltunnels eingesetzt wurden, haben ohne Vorbehalt anerkannt, dass dank unserer Bemühungen das Schicksal der auf der Baustelle eingesetzten Häftlinge in mancher Hinsicht erträglicher wurde. Unsere Bemühungen wurden von Erfolg gekrönt, wenn es darum ging, Nahrungsmittelzuschläge für die Häftlinge zu besorgen, entgegen der Meinung der Lagerleitung von Mauthausen: die zusätzlichen Kosten gingen zur Gänze auf unsere Rechnung. Desgleichen ist es uns gelungen, den ersten Lagerführer Ludolf [Ludolph], der auf der Baustelle besonders brutal mit den Häftlingen umging, zu versetzen. …. Im Herbst 1944 ist es mir gelungen, den Rücktransport von Häftlingen nach Mauthausen zu verhindern … so ist es uns tatsächlich gelungen, alle Häftlinge auf der Baustelle bis zum Tag der endgültigen Befreiung zu behalten. …. Wir waren niemals mit den grausamen Methoden der SS und ihren Komplizen einverstanden und haben unsere mit dem Österreicher gemeinsame Pflicht getan, wenn wir auf unsere Weise diesen Methoden Widerstand geleistet haben'.

Balsan only received the letter a couple of months later but lost no time in making his position clear. In his reply, Balsan accepted that fellow inmates had always reported that Universale employees generally treated them in a decent and humane manner. Yet doing their upmost to improve the wellbeing of slave labourers in the tunnel, he argued, was also a means to an end; without this support the venture would have failed. Writing from the perspective of someone born into an established French industrial family, Balsan thought it inconceivable that a firm based in France, America, or England would have used slave labourers, or stood idly by during events ranging from torturing stints to outright murder. After presenting his reasons, Balsan explicitly stated that he would under no circumstances be endorsing a report on the 'good conduct' of Universale's personnel. He finished the letter with a reminder of how Nazi terror had extended far beyond the confines of the camp: 'Of the men who were treated like criminals in this valley along the Yugoslav border, most had been arrested for no other reason than to terrorise the inhabitants of the occupied lands'.[40]

In early December 1945, Finch took one final statement into evidence, this time from the former prisoner clerk Karl Weber, whom Dawson and Balsan had questioned in the course of their hunt for Ramsauer in late May and subsequently helped secure a position as chief reporter at *Carinthia News*. Weber relayed how he had never heard any of the inmates working at the tunnel speak ill of Kamper. Rather, 'Kamper shared

[40] Balsan to Fill, correspondence, Paris, 14 October 1945, in Balsan Private Archive Collection. Original quote: 'Von den Männern, die in diesem Tal zur jugoslawischen Grenze wie Kriminelle behandelt wurden, wurden die meisten grundlos verhaftet, um die Bevölkerung der besetzten Länder zu terrorisieren'.

out bread and cigarettes among them'.[41] When Finch finally submitted his report in mid-December, it was clear that the investigation into Kamper would soon be rejected.

The Finch Report seemed to be yet another mundane examination in an increasingly long line of disappointing endeavours. As the firm sought to protect its employees in order to avoid getting embroiled in war crimes investigations, working under the auspices of Universale during the Third Reich turned out to work in Kamper's favour. Moreover, it appears wholly feasible that Huber and Schummi accused Kamper as an act of revenge. The Finch Report also failed to encourage any further investigation into the possible war crimes committed by Loiblpass functionaries. Finch nevertheless managed to move the focus back onto the SS leadership by concluding that based on 'the information received and statements obtained' the persons responsible were the camp commandant Jakob Winkler as well as the *Oberscharführer* duo Walter Brietzke and Paul Gruschwitz.[42] Whereas the British occupiers would not take charge for some time, the persistent engagement of former French inmates ensured that an investigation into Loiblpass suspects would eventually emerge.

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[41] Karl Weber, written statement, Klagenfurt, 4 December 1945, trans. Schwelm, Finch Report, TNA, WO 310/142.

[42] Finch, 'Alleged War Crime', TNA, WO 310/142.

BRITISH AMBIVALENCE: TO TRY OR NOT TO TRY?

The Finch Report was left untouched until DJAG brought Loiblpass-related investigations back to life in early 1946. It is unclear as to why preliminary findings lay dormant for some months; presumably CMF lost sight of the matter altogether. When DJAG revisited the report in February, it entered into correspondence with its predecessors to obtain and piece together the fragmented discoveries from earlier examinations. The drawback of administrative discontinuities became at once obvious. As evidenced by an information request, the DJAG investigators' knowledge of the former subcamp was remarkably basic: 'It appears that certain construction works at the Loibl Pass Tunnel were carried out by the firm "Universale" of Vienna. For this purpose they used political and criminal prisoners, some of the criminal prisoners were acting in a supervisory capacity over political prisoners'.[43] Whereas DJAG began tracing six suspects straight away, it took the British some time to make progress. On the one hand, the road leading up to the pass was still covered in snow in late February, making it impossible to reach the north camp at the time.[44] On the other hand, the case had been referred to the French, and the War Crimes Section in ADJAG's office decided to put investigations on hold until it received a response.[45]

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[43] Deputy Judge Advocate General (DJAG) to CMF, correspondence, 'Subject: – Ill-treatment of Political Prisoners – Loibl Pass Tunnel Camp', 13 February 1946, TNA, WO 310/142.

[44] JAG Branch, HQ British Troops in Austria (BTA) to DJAG, 'Subject: – Ill-treatment of Political Prisoners – Loibl Pass Tunnel Camp', 27 February 1946, TNA, WO 310/142.

[45] IC War Crimes Section, ADJAG's Office, BTA to DJAG's Office, GHQ CMF, 'Subject: – Ill-treatment of Political Prisoners – Loibl Pass Tunnel Camp', 5 March 1946, TNA, WO 310/142.

After a month of further indecisiveness and inaction, the office of the *Deputy Attorney General* (DAG) came to the conclusion that investigations would inevitably have to be conducted by the British. The French War Crimes Mission was both otherwise engaged at the time and, as DAG put it, 'believed not to be allowed' into Carinthia at any rate. It therefore advised DJAG to proceed: 'Loibl Pass is in the British Zone, investigations of this particular incident involving Allied Nationals should continue to be your responsibility'.[46] ADJAG began tracing suspects and requesting their transfer to the 'War Criminals Cage' at Britain's POW Camp 373 in Wolfsberg. Yet it was not until early May 1946 that the office finally confirmed its decision to complete the task in full. In the hopes of tracking down some fifteen suspects, the British widely circulated a list of names. This rapidly became a laborious pursuit that entailed sending off information requests to POW camps in Italy and Germany. Where a last location of functionaries could be pinpointed, these were derived from older records that typically dated back to late 1945. Initial documents served as point of departure, but suspect descriptions were vague at best, ranging from 'looks like a Spaniard' in one case to 'sickly look on his face' in another. Other notable mentions included: 'crooked nose', 'born in the Baltic States – ugly', 'nearly bald', 'false teeth', 'womanish face', and 'bald, ugly, always smokes a pipe'. A few months later, the JAG Branch in Klagenfurt sent London an extended list comprising twenty-nine suspects,

[46] Deputy Attorney General (DAG) to DJAG, correspondence, 21 March 1946, TNA, WO 310/142.

whom they asked to be registered with the *United Nations War Crimes Commission* (UNWCC). The location of thirteen suspects remained entirely unknown.[47]

Responses denoting that there was 'no trace' of the named suspects in question came flooding in from British, French, and American internment prisons in the various zones of occupation. Balsan again took matters in his own hands. Loiblpass camp documents in hand, he visited the *British Military Mission to France* (BMF) in June 1946. Balsan provided useful tracing support by informing the Mission that some of the suspects in question were now in the hands of the French Military Police at Innsbruck. Rather than involving the Frenchman directly, however, BMF opted to collaborate with the French authorities through bureaucratic channels.[48] Little progress in the way of tracing former functionaries and inmates could be observed in the following months. British investigators were fortunate that at least Ramsauer was still in custody, owing in large part to the bad impression that he had made on his interrogator a year earlier. Winkler on the other hand was thought to be somewhere in the French zone. 'The great difficulty', as a JAG Captain put it rather lightly, 'is the rounding up of many German and Austrian witnesses and accused who are distributed throughout various POW camps'.[49]

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[47] HQ BTA to BAOR (British Army of the Rhine); USFA; Commandement en Chef Francais en Autriche; CMF; and JAG, BTA, 'Subject: War Crimes', circulation of list containing fifteen Loiblpass suspects to be traced, 23 May 1946, TNA, WO 309/2074; JAG, HQ BTA to JAG in London, 'Subject: SS Arbeitslager Loibl Pass', 20 October 1946, TNA, WO 311/364.

[48] BMF to HQ BAOR, 'Subject: Statements on SS Arbeitslager Loibl-Pass at Mauthausen', 22 June 1946, TNA, WO 309/2074.

[49] JAG Branch, HQ BTA, CMF to JAG Branch, HQ BAOR, correspondence, 1 August 1946, TNA, WO 309/286.

In its quest to locate suspects, DJAG had inadvertently created a lot of administrative red tape. With so many channels of communication now in play, Loiblpass-related exchanges were rife with policy contradictions, with some offices habitually depending on out-dated information. In early August, HQ BTA's JAG branch let the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) know that it had no intention of prosecuting former camp functionaries: 'The whole affair of Loibl Pass is being investigated by us prior to handing over to the French Authorities for trial'.[50] Two months later BMF informed BAOR that the French, now holding two suspects, 'are willing to hand them over to us for trial'.[51] Captain Butcher of BAOR's War Crimes Section eventually grew weary of this extensive administrative cross-pollination, and he thus took it upon himself to seal off his JAG branch channel of communication once and for all. After establishing that his section had 'no information on this case' and noting that 'DJAG HQ British Troops in Austria are dealing with the whole Loibl-Pass case', Captain Butcher urged his colleagues at the Political Section to 'be good enough therefore' to forward all available information to the JAG branches in Austria and London.[52] Somewhere along the way, and with no trial in sight, the Americans must have identified this bureaucratic paralysis. With their own evidence already to hand, the US authorities took a leading role and proposed taking the whole investigation over:

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[50] Ibid.

[51] BMF to HQ BAOR, 'Subject: Registration of War Criminals', 30 September 1946, TNA, WO 309/2074.

[52] Captain Butcher (JAG Branch, War Crimes Section, HQ BAOR) to 'A(PS4)' Branch, HQ BAOR, 'Subject: S.S. Arbeitslager Loibl-Pass at Mauthausen', 5 October 1946, TNA, WO 309/2074.

> Information is desired as to whether your Government contemplates trying personnel connected with the above entitled camp for atrocities …. Inasmuch as this camp was a branch of Mauthausen Concentration Camp and could be tried in connection with this case, it is felt that if your Government does not desire to try the case that such available evidence you may have in connection therewith be turned over to this Branch. …. Should your government desire to try this case, this Branch will be glad to turn over what evidence we may have to you. In this connection we are informed that a list of perpetrators therein presently in custody at Dachau, has been turned over to Headquarters United States Forces in Austria for transmittal to the British Government.[53]

Regardless of whether the Americans were simply offering their assistance in an openly friendly manner or hoping to take over, the British did not take them up on the offer. Ultimately the US authorities were right to submit an information request. There had for some time been no indication that a military trial led by JAG would ever happen. As evidenced in policy correspondence, the British began winding down war crimes investigations a year into the Allied occupation of Austria; doing so even before camp functionaries were officially earmarked for prosecution. A few months after CMF handed over operations, the Deputy Attorney General sent DJAG a seven-point memorandum that outlined issues and potential solutions on war crimes investigations. The document recommended that war crimes committed against British nationals should be prioritised; new cases were to be put to one side in the meantime. Acknowledging that this was 'not altogether a satisfactory policy', the document concluded that three resource-related issues lay at the root of this reasoning: the steadily

[53] Colonel William C. Bausch, AC, Chief, Trial Branch (for the Deputy Theater Judge Advocate for War Crimes) to British Liaison Detachment, Deputy Theater Judge Advocate's Officer, War Crimes Group, APO 178 US Army, 'Loibl Pass Tunnel Camp', 28 December 1946, TNA, WO 309/2074. The Commanding Officer (OC) of the British Liaison Detachment forwarded this letter to A(PS4) at HQ BAOR on 4 January 1947 for consideration and action.

growing shortage of investigators; a reduction of boots on the ground threatened to 'throw more "donkey work" on the investigators'; and a large portion of cases already investigated could not proceed to the trial stage due to the enduring difficulty in producing courts. BTA, DJAG, and the *Allied Commission for Austria* (ACA) discussed the latter of these points in depth.[54] The War Office representatives eventually decided that in atrocity cases involving a proportion of Allied nationals, the countries concerned would be offered the opportunity to pursue the matter in question. Alternatively, ACA would be directed to take the matter into its own hands. Despite insisting on 'the impossibility of adhering to a fixed policy', they concluded that 'all cases involving Allied Nationals must be a military responsibility for investigation and trial, unless the accused are handed over to the Governments of the victims' countries'.[55]

As the majority of Loiblpass deportees were French nationals, there had always been a distinct possibility that the case would land in the lap of the French authorities, and a British policy of ambivalence made this scenario all the more probable. Balsan nevertheless kept the British solidly informed. With his help, BTA's JAG branch had since October 1946 been making some headway. And after the Yugoslav State War Crimes Commission finally granted a team the permission to visit the south camp,[56]

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[54] DAG, CMF to DJAG, 'Subject: War Crimes Policy', memorandum, 5 April 1946, TNA, WO 310/142, pp. 1—2.

[55] Ibid.

[56] DJAG to Yugoslav State War Crimes Commission in Belgrade, 'Subject: War Crimes', 7 October 1946, TNA, WO 310/142.

BTA could also begin to understand the camp better as a whole. Investigators were again starting from scratch, but at least their facts had become more concise over time. 'The object of this camp', as they reported, 'was to build a tunnel under the Karawanken Mountains to remedy the difficulty of climbing over the mountains'. Balsan had also provided the aforementioned list of twenty-nine suspects, which included specific charges of murder and ill treatment. Nine of these men were now at Wolfsberg. Captain Roy R. Cooke, who had been working on the case for a half year, kept in touch with Balsan and invited him to 'come to Austria for the final interrogations before handing the case over to the French'.[57]

The on-going assumption that the French might eventually try the Loiblpass suspects complicated administrative matters. As a direct result, the office of JAG in London evidently encouraged its colleagues in Klagenfurt to play the waiting game. It explicitly rejected Cooke's request to register suspects with UNWCC and contended that the French would have to do so instead. The response also stated that 'unless the British Authorities are going to try those accused as war criminals' Balsan ought to take the lead ('You will doubtless therefore arrange for such action as may be necessary by the French Authorities when Lieutenant Balsan calls upon you').[58] Even after JAG admitted how 'it is now thought probable that the French authorities will decline to accept this case when it is offered to them', Colonel A. C. Halse in London ordered

[57] Major Roy R. Cooke (JAG Branch, HQ BTA, CMF) to JAG London, 'Subject: SS-Arbeitslager Loibl Pass', 20 October 1946, TNA, WO 309/286.

[58] JAG London to ADJAG, 'Subject: SS-Arbeitslager Loibl Pass', 26 October 1946, TNA, WO 309/286.

ADJAG to await the French decision before taking action: 'If they do refuse, the evidence should be collected and the case prepared with a view to trial by a British Military Court'.[59] This policy of restraint likely had to do with British understaffing. In one case, a suspect could not be interrogated 'because of the shortage of staff' at BMF.[60] By the time it emerged that they were pursuing a false lead—and that their suspect 'was never at Karawanken … never in Yugoslavia'—much time and effort had been wasted.[61] These were precisely the kind of scenarios that JAG had hoped to avoid.

The month of February marked the beginning of a more concentrated effort to move the case forward. JAG in Klagenfurt had undoubtedly grown tired of both awaiting a French verdict and contending with the wait-and-see policy directives from across the channel. Two weeks into February, Major Cooke informed JAG in London that his office would be taking decisive action: 'As this trial will involve French, Norwegian, Polish, Czechoslovakian and Austrian witnesses it was decided in conjunction with Lt Balsan the best place for the trial to be held will be in Carinthia under British Auspices with a French Officer attached to the Court. …. We are hoping that this case will be ready for trial in early summer'. Whereas the trial would not start until early September and all but one witness would turn out be French, Major Cooke

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[59] Colonel A.C. Halse, JAG London to ADJAG, HQ BTA, 'Subject: SS Arbeitslager Loibl Pass', 16 December 1946, TNA, WO 311/364.

[60] BMF to JAG's Branch, War Crimes Section, HQ BAOR, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Case', 31 October 1946, TNA, WO 309/286.

[61] HQ BAOR to DJAG, WCS, 'Subject: War Crimes Case: Loibl Pass', 21 January 1947, TNA, WO 309/286; WO 309/1076.

had already managed to concentrate ten suspects at Wolfsberg.[62] Writing from London, Lieutenant Barratt expressed his support for the decision to include a French officer. As the duration of war crimes had become an issue of debate at the ministerial level, Barratt also encouraged him to expedite investigations.[63]

Just as the issue appeared to have been settled, Barratt back-pedalled, questioning 'whether this case ought not to be handed over to the United States Authorities because it forms the direct sequence to another case which they have tried [at Dachau], and because if we retain it for trial in BTA there will probably be delays and difficulties'.[64] A British Liaison Detachment officer in Augsburg concurred, and provided Barratt with an overview of how the Americans had been trying suspects: 'The Loibl Pass Lager, from the American angle, is part of a case which deals with a network of Camps which were subsidiaries of Mauthausen. As some of the accused served and committed crimes in several of those subsidiary camps the case has not been divided on a Camp basis, but deals with the crimes in any or all of them'.[65] The JAG Branch in Klagenfurt rushed out a telegram to give their own opinion. It provided a full-fledged list of reasons as to why there was 'no point in US trial', and added that

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[62] Cooke to JAG London, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Arbeits-Lager', 13 February 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

[63] Lieutenant-Colonel G. Barratt (JAG London) to Cooke, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Arbeits-Lager', 5 March 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

[64] Barratt to Allied Control Commission (ACC) British Liaison (c/o War Crimes Group, APO 178, US Army), 'Loibl Pass Arbeits Lager', 11 March 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

[65] British Liaison Detachment (Deputy Theater Judge Advocate's Office, War Crimes Group, APO 178, US Army), 18 March 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

the 'French think as myself'.[66] On 28 March Barratt changed his mind one last time and decided in favour of a British-led trial:

> I appreciate the United States authorities' feelings about this case since it forms part of the network of camps which were subsidiaries of Mauthausen. After careful consideration it has, however, been decided that we ought to retain the Loibl Pass Case for trial in B.T.A. I have recently obtained further information from B.T.A. about the case, from which it appears that while there were no British or American victims many of the accused were inhabitants of Carinthia and 4 out of 5 of the accused against whom there is a possible capital charge are held by us. The Camp Commandant is held by the French but his extradition to B.T.A. has been arranged.[67]

The growing likelihood that the French would eventually hand over the former camp commandant Jakob Winkler to the British might have been what added weight to the decision. A Winkler-related development had run parallel to the Anglo-American debate over trial ownership. At the request of the British, the French had begun questioning him in late February 1947. At first, *Service de Recherche des Criminels de Guerre* interrogators could extract precious little information from their German subject in Baden-Baden. Winkler limited his narrative to brief biographical details and an outright denial of crimes. Born in Zweibrücken, he had left school at thirteen for a career in his parent's gardening business, a trade that later earned him the nickname 'le jardinier' (the gardener) among Loiblpass inmates. During the First World War he had been wounded five times in the course of military campaigns in France, Russia, Serbia, and Romania. He had joined the NSDAP in 1926 and abandoned the gardening trade

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[66] 'JAG VW BTA' to 'Troopers for JUDVOCATE', telegram, 14 March 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

[67] Barratt to Officer Commanding (British Liaison Detachment in Augsburg), correspondence, 28 March 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

to take up employment in a psychiatric hospital ('Heil- und Pflegeanstalt') in 1934. Winkler's KZ career began in 1939. After being drafted into the police reserve at Dachau, he was transferred to Mauthausen that same year. Reaching the ranks of an *Untersturm-* and *Kompanieführer* Winkler was in charge of training SS-recruits, some of whom went on to become camp guards. Given his position at the time, he was not allowed to enter the camp premises.[68] During an interrogation, Winkler used this fact to claim that he knew nothing of any cruel episodes at Mauthausen; he claimed to have known only that prisoners had been assigned to work commandos.

Moving on to the case at hand ('Zur Sache'), Winkler revealed that he had left Mauthausen to take up his post as the Loiblpass commandant on 1 August 1943, and proceeded to include a few pertinent details on the camp. 'My camp', he noted, 'held around 1300 prisoners in the summer of 1944', guarded by some 170 SS men and 50 police officers.[69] Winkler swiftly moved on to falsely describe the humane treatment of inmates at his camp. While 'the guards did not treat the prisoners poorly', he himself had 'strictly forbidden the beating of people'. In this account Winkler still asserted that the inmates had not been left wanting and came just short of taking on the role of a liberator: 'On 7.5.1945 I dissolved the camp. I simply sent the people on their way. I

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[68] Entering the camp premises was restricted to those who held the position of either a camp commandant, report leader, SS medic, or block leader. See Freund, *Arbeitslager Zement*, p. 136.

[69] In August 1944, there were 150 SS men at the Loiblpass. The inmate population peaked at 1300. The number of policemen guarding the twin camp tended to oscillate between 100 and 140, and fluctuations generally reflected the size of the inmate and foreign worker populations as well as the extent of partisan activities in the area. See 'Kompanieliste', list of SS men, Loiblpass, 4 August 1944, in '2.1.2.5 Sammlung, Mauthausen Süd, Kärnten', Archiv der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen (AMM), Sig. B/27—28; Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 114, 79.

gave every prisoner 2 loafs of bread and 1 can of meat, more I could not do. I myself was captured by English troops on 12.5.[19]45'.[70] Yet on 4 March 1947, Winkler suddenly became valuable to the British. A marked change of heart[71] prompted him to make a full confession.[72] As the first SS man to be deposed in connection with the Loiblpass case, he also went down as the first to sign his own death warrant. And unlike Ramsauer who had been more than economical with the truth half a year earlier, Winkler now neither evaded responsibility nor feigned ignorance:

> During this time [as camp commandant] I was responsible for everything that happened in this camp. In particular I was responsible for the fact that internees were forced to work under very poor circumstances, in that the work was much too severe in proportion to the food that internees received as well as that clothing was insufficient in relation to the cold temperatures during this time of year. I was responsible for the fact that internees were beaten when they did not meet the desired work performance. I was

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[70] Jakob Winkler, 'Procès Verbal No 291', minutes, Service de Recherche des Criminels de Guerre, Baden-Baden, 28 September 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363. Original quote: 'Von Grausamkeiten in Mauthausen weiss ich nichts. Das Betreten des Lagers war uns verboten. .... Mein Lager hat im Sommer 1944 etwa 1300 Häftlinge umfasst. Die Bewachung bestand aus 170 SS-Männern und 50 Polizeiangehörigen. .... Die Häftlinge wurden durch die Wachmannschaft nicht schlecht behandelt. Ich selbst hatte streng verboten, dass die Leute geschlagen werden. .... Die Verpflegung der Häftlinge war gut. Am 7.5.1945 habe ich das Lager aufgelöst. Ich schickte die Leute einfach weg. Ich gab jedem Häftling 2 Laib Brot und 1 Dose Fleisch, mehr konnte ich nicht tun. Ich selbst bin am 12.5.45 bei Klagenfurt durch englische Truppen gefangen genommen worden'.

[71] Winkler's sudden change of heart later motivated the office of the British War Crimes Liaison to depose the witnesses present at the time in order to make sure that 'no pressure was brought to bear upon Winkler to force him to in any way to sign the deposition'. See depositions of Priscilla van der Straten Waillet on 23 April 1947, and Gerda Wendelborn and Davies on 25 April 1947, in TNA, WO 309/1363.

[72] The former inmate Charles Garnier later recalled the reasons for the confession in the following terms: 'On 4 March, 1947, while assisting in the investigation of the present case, I obtained a statement from the accused Winkler, in the presence of two British officers, Major Davies and Capt. Kaiser. The statement was obtained in the Hotel "Badischer Hof" in Baden-Baden. …. The interrogation of Winkler in Baden-Baden lasted from 4.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m. …. After dinner, i.e. from about 9 p.m. until 11.30 p.m. we continued the interrogation. Winkler was in prison clothing, had handcuffs on his hands during his interrogation, and seemed to be in good health. …. I said to him: "Do you remember that you beat me?", and he said "Yes". Winkler was not handcuffed when he signed the statement. …. When the interrogation first started, Winkler was not very willing to talk, until Major Davies said to him that he was a German officer whose duty it was to tell the truth'. See Charles Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 326—328, 331.

> responsible for the fact that people died in my camp as a result of overexertion and exhaustion. …. I am furthermore responsible for the fact that internees were sent to Mauthausen to be killed there. …. (Should I be sentenced to death on account of being responsible for happenings in my camp, I would rather that I be shot as a soldier than hanged).[73]

A day following the deposition, Major T. P. A. Davies, a British War Crimes Liaison working in the French zone of occupation in Germany, put an end to British indecisiveness over prosecuting Loiblpass suspects, or so he thought. 'Please let me know whether there is any way to extradite Winkler', Davies wrote in a letter to the French director of war crimes research, and proceeded in his best French to convey, 'the authorities have decided that the case will be tried by the British authorities'.[74] Of course he could not have anticipated the discussion over a possible American take-over that would briefly arise a week later. On 2 April—a few days after Barrett had decided on a British-led military court case—Balsan followed up on the state of Loibl trial preparations. He informed Davies of a visit to HQ BTA in Klagenfurt three months

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[73] Winkler, 'Deposition on oath', Baden-Baden, 4 March 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363. Original quote: 'Waehrend dieser Zeit [als Kommandant auf dem Loiblpass] war ich verantwortlich fuer alles, was in diesem Lager geschah. Insbesondere war ich dafuer verantwortlich, dass die Internierten gezwungen waren, unter sehr schlechten Bedingungen zu arbeiten, d.h. dass die Arbeit viel zu schwer war im Verhaeltnis zu der Ernaehrung, die die Internierten bekamen, sowie zu der unzureichenden Bekleidung bei der kalten Temperatur dieser Jahreszeit. Ich war verantwortlich dafuer, dass die Internierten geschlagen wurden, wenn sie nicht die gewuenschten Arbeitsleistungen vollbrachten. Ich war verantwortlich dafuer, dass Menschen durch Ueberanstrengung und Erschoepfung starben in meinem Lager. .... Ich bin ferner verantwortlich dafuer, dass Internierte nach Mauthausen geschickt wurden um dort umgebracht zu werden. .... Sollte ich zum Tode verurteilt werden aufgrund meiner Verantwortung fuer die Geschehnisse in meinem Lager, so moechte ich lieber als Soldat erschossen werden als gehaengt)'.

[74] Davies to British War Crimes Liaison to le Directeur de Recherches des Crimes de Guerre, correspondence, 5 March 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363. Original quote: 'Veuillez me faire savoir s'il y a moyen de faire extradit Winkler, Jakob; les autorites ayant decide que le cas devait etre juge par les autorites britanniques' [Je vous prie de me faire savoir s'il y a une solution pour extrader Winkler, Jakob; les autorités ont décidé que le cas devait être jugé par les autorités britanniques].

prior; Balsan had assisted the officers in charge of the case, Major Cooke and Captain German. After acknowledging how Davies' input and presence at Winkler's deposition in Baden-Baden had been 'a good start', he urged that the former commandant, an integral part of the case, needed to stand trial in Klagenfurt that summer. Balsan was getting slightly nervous that the *Directeur de la Justice en Autriche* had still not heard back from Baden-Baden about Winkler's transfer to Austria. As he had done from the outset, Balsan kept pressing the various administrative bodies involved to prevent them from stalling. After stating his intention to write to BMF in Paris—as well as to Cooke and German in Klagenfurt and the French authorities in Baden-Baden—Balsan asked for Davies' advice ('if you could suggest any manner of accelerating the transfer of Winkler').[75]

A week later the French at Baden-Baden confirmed that Winkler would be handed over to the British.[76] Davies communicated his intention of collecting suspects from the French zone to Balsan and Cooke. Yet he also relayed an apparent frustration with his colleagues in Klagenfurt, chiefly for their lack of support. On his own initiative, Davies had applied for the collective extradition of the commandant and other functionaries, and had arranged for them to be held at Germersheim prison.[77] On 5 May, the French authorities gave Davies the green light; Winkler and some of his former

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[75] Balsan to Davies, correspondence, 2 April 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363.

[76] Le Délégué, Délégation du Ministère de la Justice pour la Recherche des Crimes de Guerre en Allemagne, 'Note pour M. le Major Davies', Baden-Baden, 9 April 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363.

[77] Davies to Balsan, correspondence, 19 April 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363; Davies to Cooke, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Camp Case', 23 April 1947, TNA, WO 309/2074.

Loibl subordinates were now awaiting pick-up.[78] Not all of the accused had yet been tracked down. And some would never be traced successfully. Many individuals who had been arrested in the early postwar period were released fairly quickly. Yet in its quest to locate the former Kapo Max Skirde, for example, DJAG was in luck. Skirde had been caught but released in early September 1945. Rather fittingly, he was let go at an 'Ostmark Straße' near Essen. Even more fittingly, the former Kapo was again arrested shortly thereafter and sentenced to a ten-month sentence for theft. The whole process—from tracing to extradition—took the British less than a month. And on 27 May, Captain German dispatched an escort to collect Skirde from his jail cell in Hagen prison, situated just south of Dortmund.[79] After overcoming the many hurdles in their way, British war crimes investigators were anxious to get the trial on the road.

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[78] Le Délégué, 'Note pour Davies', Baden-Baden, 5 May 1947, TNA, WO 309/1363.

[79] DJAG BTA to WCG NWE, HQ BAOR, 'Subject: Skirde, Max', 29 April 1947, TNA, WO 309/2074; PS CDIV RB Munster Police to WCG NWE, HQ BAOR, restricted cipher message, 16 May 1947, TNA, WO 309/2074; JAG VW BTA to WCG NEW, restricted cipher message, 27 May 1945, TNA, WO 309/2074.

TRIAL PREPARATIONS

When *War Crimes Group south East Europe* (WCG SEE) assumed control of investigations in June 1947, as the third of four administrations, the Loiblpass case was a mere three months from trial. Now working out of Ferlach, commanding officer Cooke felt optimistic that his team had entered the home stretch: 'I do not think there are any major snags liable to arise in this case, and apart from administration difficulties it should be pretty plain sailing'. Yet he appeared equally resolute on completing trial preparations at the earliest possible date, even if this meant cutting some corners. For the sake of expediency, Cooke recommended submitting statements instead of affidavits as evidence.[80] Balsan had also become 'very anxious' for the court case to get under way; he was getting married in October.[81] The necessity of making legal concessions would inevitably grow as the trial start date drew closer. And having insufficient time and 'absolutely no experience and no knowledge of the policy or principles governing the drafting of War Crimes Charges' left the team in constant need of assistance from JAG in London.[82] Within the background of time pressure, glossing over ensuing legal challenges became a trade-off. As a result, ambition and optimism would progressively give way to concessions as time went on.

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[80] JAG to War Crimes Group South East Europe (WCG SEE), 'Loibl Pass Camp', London, 15 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[81] BMF to Captain German (WCG SEE), cipher telegram, 24 July 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[82] JAG to WCG SEE, 'Loibl Pass Camp', TNA, WO 310/142.

The British initially considered trying the accused in separate courts and using different legal members for each case, principally to avoid bias from taking root in the course of proceedings. A degree of independence through separation, it was thought, could prevent defendants whose cases were dealt with at an earlier stage from throwing blame on those who followed suit. The application of this approach meant that three defendants would be tried jointly on a general charge of ill-treatment, five together on special charges of ill-treatment, and four conjunctly on murder and ill-treatment charges.[83] Leaving the particulars to the last moment, as had been the case with much else throughout investigations, the British soon decided to simplify matters by conducting a mass trial instead. This policy of flip-flopping was nothing new, and it would remain the norm for a while longer. Whereas all of the accused were ultimately charged with the ill-treatment of Allied nationals, the five highest-ranking defendants faced a second charge of murder. For the first charge, the court planned on summoning eighteen witnesses, each having previously provided between one and five statements; fifteen witnesses were intended to provide testimony in person for the second charge. The statements of eight witnesses who could not appear at court were handed in as evidence.[84]

As late as mid-August 1947, JAG London returned all the necessary documentation to WCG SEE, including the original files and a set of translations.[85] The

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[83] OC (Officer Commanding) WCG SEE to Lt. Col. Barrett c/o JAG, correspondence, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Case', Ferlach, 26 July 1947, TNA, WO 310/142, 57A, pp. 1—2.

[84] Ibid.

[85] JAG to WCG SEE, 'Loibl Pass Camp', TNA, WO 310/142.

Judge Advocate General then provided written approval for the trial to go ahead at Klagenfurt's *Landesgericht*, Austria's chief regional court in Carinthia. Already, the start date had to be pushed back, 'because London were late in returning the documents concerning the exact nature of the charges after they had confirmed them'.[86] The British relied too heavily on a tight schedule that allowed for little flexibility. All of the accused were to be moved out of Wolfsberg and into the courtroom's adjoining prison a couple of days before trial. And a Judge Advocate was eventually dispatched from London to provide legal assistance, despite a decision to the contrary some time earlier.[87] The designated JA, Barrister-at-Law Frederick Honig, would have no bearing on the sentencing. Yet as the only expert with a deep understanding of the law, his presence in an advisory capacity was indispensable for the forthcoming trial.

The last-minute nature of preparations notwithstanding, ambitions were on the rise, and getting slightly out of hand. Requests to set aside forty beds for trial personnel and twenty-five rooms for missions from countries including Russia and Yugoslavia at the British Officers Transit Hotel Moser-Verdino in Klagenfurt had to be rejected, and even the wish for a shorthand writer could not be granted.[88] The rationale behind making a greater spectacle of the trial than originally intended stemmed in part from its

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[86] 'French Olympics Aces as War Crimes Trial Stars', description of forthcoming Loiblpass case disseminated to News Production Section Vienna; WCG SEE; G Sharp, No. 2 Information Services Zone Unit (ISZU); and 1 West Yorks (for "D" Coy.), Klagenfurt, 16 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142, pp. 1—2.

[87] WCG SEE HQ BTA to A-2 HQ BTA, 'Subject: War Crimes – Loibl Pass Atrocities', Ferlach, 13 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[88] BMF to WCG SEE, telegram, 15 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142; JAG to WCG SEE, cipher, 21 August 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

'news and propaganda value', aimed squarely 'at the Austrian population'.[89] The acting president for the duration of proceedings, Lieutenant Colonel D. F. Yate-Lee of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment, believed that the case could well transcend its local dimension: 'As you know this is the biggest War Crimes Trial which has been put on in Austria, and is of considerable International importance'. Yate-Lee hoped for a media presence comparable to that at *Generalfeldmarschall* Albert Kesselring's trial, which had taken place under the Royal Warrant in Venice between February and May 1947.[90] He noted that the press would be well represented by French, American, Austrian, and Yugoslav reporters.[91]

The British Information Services seemed equally enthusiastic, and planned on making gramophone recordings for broadcasting purposes.[92] A minimum of ten newspaper correspondents had been desired, but court permits were procured for twenty English, six French, and another six German reporters.[93] While London prohibited the broadcasting or recording of proceedings, press photographers were granted permission to shoot away when the court was not in session, and provided that 'the decorum' of

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[89] No. 2 ISZU to Cooke, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Trial', 16 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[90] Kesselring was sentenced to death by firing squad for his role as the head of Wehrmacht operations in Italy, but his sentence was commuted and he was released in 1952. The specific charges against him included encouraging his soldiers to perpetrate crimes against Italian civilians (leading to the murder of some 9000) and ordering the execution of 355 Italian hostages. Kesselring used the trial to cement a 'clean' image of the *Wehrmacht*. For a comprehensive study, including a related analysis of postwar Nazi networks and the impact of Cold War politics, see Kerstin von Lingen, *Kesselring's Last Battle: War Crimes Trials and Cold War Politics, 1945—1960* (Lawrence, KS, 2009).

[91] Lieutenant D. F. Yate-Lee to WCG SEE, 'Loibl Pass Trial', correspondence, [undated; likely from mid-August 1947], TNA, WO 310/142.

[92] No. 2 ISZU to Cooke, 'Loibl Pass Trial', TNA, WO 310/142.

[93] WCG SEE to HQ BTA, 'Loibl Pass Trial', 27 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

the court could be upheld.[94] To ensure that the trial would not go unnoticed, the British reserved the two front rows for the Allied press, the next three rows for Allied spectators, and the final four rows for the public. A slice of British propaganda was sent out to the News Production Section in Vienna. A piece entitled 'French Olympics Aces as War Crimes Trial Stars', providing background information on some of the former inmates who would act as witnesses for the prosecution, presumably sought to attract journalists to the proceedings. Yet it was riddled with rudimentary mistakes:

> The leading witnesses for the Prosecution in the biggest war-crimes trial to be held in the British Zone of Austria so far will be Lt Louis Balsan, captain of the French Olympic Games Bob Sleigh team in 1936 and captain-elect for the next year's games, and Francois Schaffin [François Chaffin], a member of the 1936 Boxing team. …. The accused are the commandant, doctor and ten [eight] of the SS guards of the Loibl Tunnel camps. Only the doctor is an Austrian citizen, all the others are Reichs Germans. …. [Those charged with both the ill-treatment and death of inmates] face the prospect of a sentence of death. …. [All are SS men] with one exception [Max Skirde; there were in fact two Kapos standing trial], a "kapo", (i.e. an ordinary "old lag" in this instance with a criminal record dating back to 1927, who had come to be regarded as a "trusty" and put in authority over the political detainees) …. Four other men frequently complained of by former prisoners were caught by the 4th Jugo Slav Army partisans in May 1945 and have not been heard of since. The main interest of the trial is that it follows the Nazi pattern so closely and is a further example of the cold, calculating inhumanity of German logic running amok. …. Balsan, who was "leader" of the camp for almost all the time is bringing between 30 and 40 of his best men as witnesses[95]

Making good on the promise of producing star witnesses required these to arrive in Klagenfurt on time. Moreover, the prosecution's case rested entirely on Balsan's fellow

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[94] WCG SEE to No. 2 ISZU, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Trial – Publicity', Ferlach, 18 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[95] 'French Olympics Aces as War Crimes Trial Stars', TNA, WO 310/142, pp. 1—2.

inmates. And a right balance of witnesses was of the essence, as there needed to be sufficient evidence against every single one of the defendants. Diversity on a national basis was the first thing to be lost. Locating former inmates who were *not* French had proved as laborious as the pursuit of suspects. ADJAG thus ended up relying chiefly on Frenchmen for evidence. That two of the four sitting legal members were French Army reservists only added to this inherent bias along national lines.[96] During earlier efforts, the British had hit some obstacles. Hoping to obtain written statements from Norwegian survivors, for instance, in May 1947 HQ BTA had contacted the British Embassy in Oslo. The reply proved unhelpful and came with the usual buzz phrases: 'the channel of communication … is incorrect'; 'I have no machinery for obtaining such statements'; and 'I do not wish it to become a precedent'. Despite agreeing to deal with the matter, over two months later nothing had been done. After an Embassy representative dropped the characteristic euphemism 'desirable' to make it crystal clear that 'War Crimes are no part of my duty', he relayed that the British Army had no more personnel stationed in Norway for the purpose of looking into such matters.[97]

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[96] The Military Court overseeing the main Loiblpass trial consisted of seven officers. President: Lieutenant Colonel D. F. Yate-Lee of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. Legal members: French Army judges Lieutenant Charles Canet and Captain L. Baudet; Major J. Longbottom of the West Yorkshire Regiment; Captain J. D. Lofting of the Royal Ulster Rifles. Judge Advocate: Barrister-at-Law Frederick Honig. Waiting member: Captain J. E. B. Conder of the Royal Hampshire Regiment.

[97] Colonel K. J. Garner-Smith (Military Attaché, British Embassy) to Control Commission for Germany and Austria in London, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Concentration Camp', Oslo, 4 March 1947, TNA, WO 309/286; British Embassy to JAG London, correspondence, Oslo, 20 May 1947, TNA, WO 309/286. JAG had also attempted to locate two former inmates from Poland; one had been a cook at the south camp, the other a doctor assisting Ramsauer in the north camp. See Cooke to DJAG, HQ CMF, 'Subject: Polish witnesses in Loibl Concentration Camp Case', 13 February 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

As the only non-French former inmate for the prosecution, Cooke requested the presence of the doctor František Janouch.[98] The prosecution's case almost turned into a purely French affair when the Czech Ministry of Health noted that Janouch had fallen ill and would perhaps require medical attention. Furthermore, the Military Attaché in Prague urged that all requirements be expedited as Janouch was 'required urgently back in Prague', and hastened to add that in the light of his high post in the Czech administration it was 'absolutely essential that all courtesies be granted'.[99] To avoid any further setbacks, Cooke promptly booked a Pan Am flight out of Prague and a room at Vienna's Hotel Sacher. The prosecution also managed to secure one Austrian witness, Friedrich Spiel, a former police constable and guard at the Loiblpass.[100]

Arrangements were made to collect witnesses from an assembly point in Paris, where a British conducting officer would then accompany the former deportees to Klagenfurt in time for the trial. Captain Hodgson of the Ferlach team was ordered to take some forty witnesses from France to Vienna, where Captain Ross awaited them for the onward journey to Klagenfurt. The British paid careful attention to their wellbeing. They reserved first class train tickets and made accommodation

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[98] WCG SEE, HQ BTA to British Military Mission in Prague, correspondence, Ferlach, 6 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[99] Military Attaché to WCG SEE and Travel Bureau 'ACABRIT', telegram, 28 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[100] WCG SEE to Direktor der Gebietskrankenkasse für Tirol, request to temporarily excuse Friedrich Spiel from employment to act as a witness at both Loiblpass trials, Ferlach, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

arrangements at Hotel Astoria in the heart of Vienna.[101] A Troop-Carrying Vehicle (TCV) was also requested for short sightseeing tours in the capital. To avoid any further problems, however, Ross and Hodgson were under strict orders to have the group 'kept in one body and not to have them straggling all over Vienna'.[102] Owing to delays in collecting the witnesses, the trial start day had to be pushed back once again, and only twenty-one former inmates from France could be secured as witnesses for questioning during proceedings.[103]

The Frenchmen eventually arrived at Hotel Moser. While they were cared for and given non-essential items such as a weekly ration of twenty cigarettes, the British were less accommodating of other human pleasures in life. On one occasion, the Military Manager at the Moser, Captain J. M. Campbell, requested that the Ferlach team have a stern word with their witnesses: 'It has been brought to my notice that French personnel, witnesses on the present Loibl Pass trial, at present staying in the Moser Hotel, have in the past taken Austrian females into their bedrooms and that these females have spent the night there'. Any further proof of such Austro-French

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[101] WCG SEE, HQ BTA to ACA (BE) 'C' Branch Vienna, 'Subject: Transportation of War Crimes Witnesses', Ferlach, 8 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[102] WCG SEE, HQ BTA to 'Q' Branch, HQ BTA, 'Subject: Transportation of War Crimes Witnesses in Vienna', 13 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

[103] WCG SEE, HQ BTA to Le Haut Commissariat de la République française en Autriche (pour le capitaine Levraux), Service des Crimes de Guerre, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Atrocities Trial', Ferlach, 11 August 1947, TNA, WO 310/142.

fraternising, as Campbell conveyed to his colleagues in Ferlach, would result in the Frenchmen's expulsion, en bloc, from the Moser.[104]

While the final weeks leading up to the Loiblpass trial were still viewed with optimism, aiming ambitiously for 'justice', insufficient attention had been paid to the overall burden of proof. Far from amounting to 'plain sailing', the case itself always stood on shaky ground. And this was nothing even a Judge Advocate could fix. Legal and evidence-related problems had intensified from early August 1947 onwards. Although the prosecution could establish a *prima facie* case against all of the accused, a JAG Military Deputy advisor noted that evidence against four defendants was particularly thin. *SS Unterscharführer* Franz Kessner's case became problematic when it emerged that the witness against him could no longer be called on in person to provide evidence since he had been checked into a 'lunatic asylum'. In the spirit of cutting corners, the prosecution evidently had no problem submitting the unsworn statement as trial evidence. It was not rejected. The former Kapo Max Skirde's case became equally uncertain. The charge against him was almost entirely based on his own testimony; he had willingly confessed to ill-treating inmates. Aware of these shortcomings, WCG SEE was adamant on more thoroughly interrogating the witnesses ahead of proceedings. Adding to this, less than a month prior to the start date three defendants had still not

[104] Captain J. M. Campbell (Military Manager of the British Officers Transit Hotel Moser-Verdino) to WCG SEE, correspondence, Klagenfurt, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 310/142. The British evidently hoped to avoid any potential trouble. As a Catholic stronghold, Austria was also among the last countries in Europe to decriminalise adultery, doing so in 1997.

been interrogated, prompting a JAG Military Deputy in London to advise that they be invited to make statements.[105]

When two days into September the five-week-long court proceedings finally got under way, a mere twelve defendants were standing trial by the Military Court under the Royal Warrant for war crimes committed at the Loiblpass between June 1943 and May 1945.[106] Considering that some thirty Loiblpass suspects had been placed on the UNWCC list, this forty per cent success rate made for a relatively poor showing of defendants in the dock. A handful had been lost to Yugoslavia, another handful could not be located at all, and two others were tried at Dachau. The Americans had captured Hamburg-born Julius Ludolph—a commandant at Mauthausen's Loiblpass, Großraming, and Melk outposts—in Gmunden on 6 May 1945. He was sentenced to death during the Mauthausen trials and 'executed by hanging by the neck until dead' on 28 May 1947. Whilst he was being escorted down the hallways of Landsberg prison, Ludolph shouted 'Farewell comrades' ('Lebt wohl Kameraden'), and, moments before hanging from the gallows, uttered, 'We Germans must die so that other nations can live' ('Wir Deutschen müssen sterben damit andere Nationen leben').[107] The second

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[105] H. Shapcott (JAG) to General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of BTA, 'United Nations Charges Against German War Criminals', London, 11 August 1947, Minutes of Pretrial Advice, Loibl Pass No. I Case, JAG No. 355, Vol. I, Flag A, TNA, WO 235/578. For unsworn statement against Franz Kessner, see 'Exhibit 21' of submitted trial evidence in TNA, WO 235/580.

[106] The twelve defendants were *Hauptsturmführer* Josef Winkler and Sigbert Ramsauer; *Oberscharführer* Walter Brietzke and Paul Gruschwitz; *Unterscharführer* Karl Sachse, Otto Bindrich, Friedrich Porschel, Robert Flaig, Hugo Köbernik, and Franz Kessner; Kapos Max Skirde and Johann ('Hans') Gärtner.

[107] For post-trial documents on Julius Ludolph, see Ludolph, clemency file, 1946, NARA, RG 549, Box 354; Ludolph, sworn statement, NARA, RG 549, Box 345; Ludolph, execution file, May 1947, NARA, RG 549, Box 356.

functionary tried at Dachau, Loiblpass and Mauthausen SS medic Otto Kleingünther, received a life sentence of twenty-eight years on 9 September 1947 but was released on parole in February 1955,[108] as most of the other convicted defendants had been by this point.[109]

In the face of the large-scale efforts of the Americans at Dachau, the comparatively poor showing of suspects at Klagenfurt must have been obvious to the British. However, even though an insufficient burden of proof was deemed a problem in convicting defendants, it was not enough to discourage them from embarking on a second case a week into proceedings. The Ferlach Group started preparing a short trial against a couple of later-comers to Wolfsberg: the Austrian but Nuremberg-born Michael ('August') Staab, who had been a *Blockälteste* in the north camp, and *Rottenführer* Simon Stichler. Ten witnesses were summoned to give evidence in court, chiefly to corroborate the incriminating evidence against the accused that they had provided in previous statements. Working against the clock once again, the Ferlach

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[108] Otto Kleingünther, parolee case file, NARA, RG 549, Box 74.

[109] Since most functionaries were released by 1955, this year generally marked the end of any serious efforts to keep convicted subcamp criminals locked up, or indeed to imprison others who had gone undetected. The two last Loiblpass functionaries to be tried in Austrian courts were both acquitted. Despite admitting to shooting dead the Russian inmate Fjodor Malyschenkov in an act of premeditated murder, a jury in Klagenfurt deemed the SS guard Andreas Vogel not guilty in December 1969. Hans Gogl, Loiblpass' first report leader, twice stood trial for alleged crimes committed as a block leader at Ebensee from 1944; he was freed of all charges in May 1972, and again in December 1975. The SS guard Georg Lindert was the last ever Loiblpass functionary to be tried and acquitted. Brought to trial two years after being discovered in the US, Lindert was cleared of all charges by an American court in May 1995. See 'Der Ungesühnte Mord auf dem Loiblpass' section in Winfried R. Garscha, '"Taten, die den allgemein anerkannten Grundsätzen des Völkerrechts und des Kriegsrechts widersprechen": Prozesse wegen Verletzung des Kriegsvölkerrechts', in Thomas Albrich, Winfried R. Garscha, and Martin F. Polaschek (eds.), *Holocaust und Kriegsverbrechen vor Gericht: Der Fall Österreich* (Innsbruck, 2006): 272—275; Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee*, p. 131; Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 443—444.

investigators noted, 'unless the trial of these accused is put on as soon as possible the witnesses will have returned to France and it may well be impossible to persuade them to return to Austria at a future date'. JAG decided against dispatching a Judge Advocate and recommended that proceedings be completed within a week.[110] Moreover, the future held no promise of a subsequent trial; this would turn out to be the last one taken up by the British in their zones of occupation in Austria. The trial took place in the Court Martial Room of Klagenfurt's Jäger Barracks between 25 September and 1 October 1947. Stichler and Staab were sentenced to three and four years imprisonment, respectively.[111]

Whereas the British had run into considerable difficulties throughout, any concerted efforts on their part simply came too late. WCG SEE ceased all operations in March 1948, whereafter WCG NWE took over, but more in theory than in practice. The whole endeavour, from investigation to proceedings, had dragged on for so long that they ended up at the tail end of war crimes investigations in Britain's zones of occupation across Europe. The enduring ambivalence towards both investigating and prosecuting suspects inevitably impacted on the quality of the forthcoming proceedings. The ensuing slew of problems during the trial preparations would ultimately render the court case a missed opportunity. This all had the undesired long-term effect of banishing the legacy of Austria's biggest Allied-run postwar case to the footnotes of

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[110] WCG SEE to JAG London, 'Subject: Loibl Pass Atrocities', Ferlach, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 311/364.

[111] WCG SEE to JAG London, cipher telegram, 2 October 1947, TNA, WO 311/364. The court was presided over by Major T.W.C. Barlas (President) and two Legal Members, Captain A.P. Strange and the Intelligence Corps officer and Barrister-at-Law W.T. Fielding.

history. And in falling short of transcending the local character of the trial, the British effectively missed out on their chance to put the Loiblpass twin camp on the map.

The Americans trying Mauthausen defendants at Dachau had a strategic legal advantage over their British counterparts in Carinthia. Applying the principle that functionaries had acted under a 'common design' to commit war crimes made the need for establishing individual intent and individual guilt less central; 'mitgegangen, mitgefangen, mitgehangen' (cling together, swing together). This amounted to an expedient method of prosecuting defendants.[112] The investigating teams at Ebensee had much of the evidence they needed by early August 1945; the Cohen and Deibel reports fulfilled the basic requirement of the chosen legal approach.[113] In contrast, the British prosecution's case at Klagenfurt focused on proving individual guilt. Evidence therefore had to be solid, a fact that the British had paid insufficient attention to in the months leading up to the trial. In having both decided to do without sworn statements and leaving the case in abeyance for so long, the prosecution was still submitting evidence well into the proceedings. Information on the Loiblpass camp and its functionaries had begun emerging from November 1946 onwards; British officials charged with the case started liaising with the *Amicale des déportés de Mauthausen* to secure statements from former inmates who had since returned to France. Yet the bulk

[112] Paradoxically, the concept that all those participating in a joint enterprise of two or more people involved in murder are equally guilty is an English legal principle, dating back to the mid-eighteenth century. The Supreme Court struck down the 'common purpose' doctrine in February 2016 ('R *v* Jogee' and 'Ruddock *v* The Queen') on the grounds that individual intent needed to be established in all cases.

[113] An analysis of such expediencies reveals 'a troubling and seldom-recognized face of American post-war justice—one characterized by rapid proceedings, lax rules of evidence, and questionable interrogations'. See Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial*, p. 1.

of eyewitness accounts collected lacked the focus of the sworn statements relating to Ebensee. For these reasons it is necessary to draw on trial testimony in reconstructing daily life at KZ Loiblpass. As the following section reveals, a comprehensive picture of the twin camp only materialised in the course of proceedings.

In April 1943, some two thousand political prisoners who had previously been rounded up in France were concentrated eighty kilometres northwest of Paris in the town of Compiègne and sent to Mauthausen.[114] After arriving at the main camp in mid-April, the Frenchmen were placed in quarantine camps intended for those who were eventually assigned to forced labour projects within the KZ empire.[115] Balsan and the twenty-one-year-old political deportee François Chaffin from Paris had been part of this mass transport to Mauthausen. Despite being blessed with a strong physical constitution, they were almost immediately affected by the poor conditions at the main

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[114] Around thirty per cent of the French deportees were arrested either for no particular reason during random raids or due to criminal offences. The others were political prisoners who had been active in the resistance or had refused to join the *Service du Travail Obligatoire* (STO), the compulsory labour conscription programme introduced by the Vichy regime, which had from February 1943 obliged all Frenchmen of military age to work in the Reich. Some sixteen STO men came to the Loiblpass as contract workers during or after the summer of 1943; most of them were employed as drivers. See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 42, 261. For STO, see Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford, 1995), pp. 321—322; Robert Gildea, *Fighters in the Shadows: A New History of the French Resistance* (London, 2015), pp. 296—297, 299, 315, 327.

[115] The quarantine system, supposedly universally introduced after a poliomyelitis outbreak at Ravensbrück in August 1941, initially served the purpose of temporarily housing in-transit forced labourers. In due time, however, quarantine sites became more permanent, isolated places of disease and mass dying. See Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, p. 326; 'Epidemics' section in Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, pp. 206—213; Wachsmann, *KL*, p. 564.

camp. Inmates slept on the ground 'like sardines in a tin' in rooms measuring eight by four metres, and many died or became ill as a consequence.[116]

In diminishing the work efficiency of inmates from the outset, Mauthausen did little in the way of preparing them for hard labour in the stone quarries or the subcamps. And the SS leadership made certain that nobody was under the illusion that life within the system would improve. During a roll call towards the end of May 1943, over three hundred of the strongest Frenchmen were selected.[117] All of them were to be sent to the Loiblpass in cattle trucks a few days later. Just before the departure of the first transport, the rules of discipline were read out to the deportees: for every escapee, as the inmates were told, ten prisoners would be shot, and anyone who dared to attack a sentry would be 'hanged slowly'.[118] Such scaremongering tactics were meant to stifle any potential resistance even before the inmates had reached their new camp.

Prior to the arrival of the first transport, civilian workers had already set up the necessary electrical infrastructure, begun working at the tunnel, and completed the most

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[116] François Chaffin, trial testimony, Klagenfurt, 2 September 1947, Loibl Pass No. I Case, JAG No. 355, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 3—5; Balsan, trial testimony, Klagenfurt, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 65. Lieutenant Balsan became a deputy director of the French Foreign Exchange Control in Paris after the war. After being arrested by the Gestapo in Paris, he spent six months in a Gestapo prison. Balsan arrived in Mauthausen in April 1943 and was on the first transport to the south camp, where he remained until the liberation. Most of the time he worked as a camp clerk and interpreter, but was also assigned to a work *Kommando* at the tunnel from time to time. Unless otherwise indicated, all biographical descriptions in the footnotes are based on the trial testimony provided personally by the witnesses in court.

[117] According to surviving transport lists, a total of 1,636 inmates were deported to the Loiblpass in the course of its existence. Another 50 prisoners came from the nearby Gestapo prison in Begunje. See Gstettner, *Erinnern an das Vergessen*, p. 237.

[118] Jean Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 310—311. Barbier, a solicitor from France, arrived at the south camp on 3 June 1943 with the first transport. He remained at the south camp until 7 May 1945, but worked at the north camp for a month at one point.

rudimentary elements of the south camp. To begin with, the camp consisted of three inmate barracks, an infirmary and kitchen barracks, and accommodation for the police guards and SS men. Chaffin, Balsan, and 328 inmates—mostly fellow Frenchmen—finally arrived at the south camp in cattle trucks on 3 June 1943.[119] A second transport comprising 250 predominantly French prisoners followed on 16 July 1943.[120] Each cattle truck contained around forty inmates, with one train holding about eight such trucks. As the camp was still under construction at the time, all of the inmates stayed at the south camp for three months.[121] In October, some inmates were moved to its gradually emerging twin on the northern side of the pass.[122] The two camps were around seven kilometres apart from one another via the steep road over the pass, and three kilometres if one went straight through the just over one and a half kilometre long tunnel.[123] Until a connection through the mountain had been achieved on 29 November 1943, the route over the pass remained the only link between the two sides.[124]

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[119] Chaffin claimed to have arrived with six hundred fellow Frenchmen, but he was presumably referring to the combined total of both transports (580 inmates); he must therefore have been on one of the two first transports, either in June or July 1943. See Figure A4 for inmate statistics.

[120] Pierre Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 25. The twenty-one-year old former officer of the French Army was sent to Mauthausen as an escaped POW in mid-April 1943. Bouthenot remained at the south camp throughout and belonged to Block 5.

[121] For an overview of the transports to and from the Loiblpass, including the experience of Tržič inhabitants, see 'Die Ankunft der Häftlinge' chapter in Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 99—119.

[122] Pierre Duverdier, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 17. Duverdier was from Bordeaux and a driver by profession. He spent the first period of his incarceration in quarantine at Mauthausen, from 22 April 1943 ('Conditions at Mauthausen were very hard. Everything was calculated to make life only just possible'). Duverdier was at Loiblpass as a political detainee until 5 May 1945.

[123] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 65.

[124] Friedrich Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 290. Spiel, who became a bank clerk after the war, stayed at the Loiblpass until March 1944.

The brutality of the first camp commandant Julius Ludolph instantly quashed the inmates' hope that a life of forced labour in the Karawanks would be a significant improvement on their Mauthausen existence.[125] The commandant was in charge of both camps, and his subordinates were the SS men, police, and inmates. While the civilian firm Universale had Ludolph removed in July 1943 when it was claimed that he 'seemed to be inefficient',[126] his short reign had managed to cement a culture of fear among the inmates and heighten the prisoner functionaries' readiness for violence. Within this background, Kapos were encouraged to draw on their experiences from other camps. As a direct result, a first remarkable display of mass brutality emerged in August: 'The block chiefs told us Frenchmen: "We will show you what Dachau was like in 1938".[127] Then they made us work on a slope and beat us with rubber tubing. One of those who took part was the accused [block elder Max] Skirde. About 100 Frenchmen were beaten that afternoon'.[128]

Conditions improved temporarily when Josef Winkler, nicknamed 'Le Jardinier', took charge as commandant that same month. On the day of his arrival, and shortly after having settled into his accommodation some forty metres from the south camp, he was overheard by an inmate instructing the Kapos to throw away their truncheons. Winkler also prohibited them from thrashing inmates. Three days later,

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[125] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 3—5.

[126] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 66.

[127] Death rates at Dachau rose sharply after 30 May 1938; the date on which the first transport of Austrian Jews arrived at the camp. See Stanislav Zámečnik, *Das war Dachau*, trans. Peter Heumos and Gitta Grossmann (Frankfurt, 2007), p. 106.

[128] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 79.

however, the commandant abandoned his initial policy and the prisoner functionaries took to beating prisoners to enforce discipline once again.[129] Winkler's position in the camp was 'that of a God', and the prisoner functionaries were determined to obey his every command.[130] He soon began ill-treating inmates on his own accord, and many of the deportees received at least half a dozen beatings from him throughout their incarceration. 'When he beat me', a former inmate recalled, 'he put his gloves on and said that he did not want to get his hands dirty'.[131] Winkler had by September 1943 fully embraced his predecessor's disciplinary methods. Given the sheer brutality with which he consolidated his leadership position thenceforth, prisoners soon referred to this early phase in the camp's existence as 'the beating-up period'.[132]

Elsewhere across the KZ empire, an institutionalised system of discipline and self-governance also became manifest through hierarchical structures. The social standing of inmates within the camp depended on classifications that were expressed in the form of initials, shapes, and colours. While Russian civilians had to wear the letter 'R' and their Mauthausen number on the left hand side of their uniform, Soviet soldiers had an 'SU' attached on the right side, followed by their inmate number. This form of identification applied to all nationalities, so that a Frenchman's uniform bore an 'F'. The colour scheme denoted the group with which an individual was associated.

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[129] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 5.

[130] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 33—34.

[131] Charles Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 325. Garnier, a chartered accountant from France, was sent to the south camp in July 1943 and transferred to the north camp at the end of January 1944, where he remained for a year.

[132] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 28—29.

Prisoners who wore green—and inmate functionaries who had the green triangle—tended to be convicted criminals of German descent whose offences ranged from petty theft to outright murder. Political prisoners, the majority of whom were French at the Loiblpass, wore red badges. Most of the others had black insignia, reserved for so-called 'asocial' prisoners.[133] Jewish inmates, 'treated worse than anybody else', were at the very bottom of the prisoner hierarchy. The Hungarian Jews at the Loiblpass had to wear the 'yellow sign'; two triangles—one black, one yellow—that together resembled the Star of David.[134]

At the working sites, prisoners laboured in squads. Each commando had an SS work detail leader (*Kommandoführer*) who gave orders to a Kapo. The prisoner functionary would in turn command the other inmates.[135] Beyond doing their 'duty', prisoner functionaries and SS detail leaders shared a common pleasure in bullying. At the Loiblpass, their extreme methods of ill-treatment did not have to be encouraged anew. Like in the case of functionaries at Ebensee, a high number of the SS men at the Loiblpass had already mastered the common practices of abuse in the course of their earlier postings at various concentration camps. This rule generally also applied to Kapos who had been in the system long enough to know that reaching the top generally

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[133] For the context and a comprehensive overview of the black insignia, see Wolfgang Ayaß, *"Asoziale" im Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart, 1995).

[134] Roland Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 228—230. Lecoutre lived in Paris and worked as a cook after the war. He was arrested on 14 October 1942 and sent to Mauthausen on 16 April 1943. He arrived at the Loiblpass on 3 June 1943. Lecoutre stayed at the south camp throughout, first in Block 3 and then in Skirde's (Block 2).

[135] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 73.

required sheer brutality: 'Gaertner was a miner, then a Kapo miner and then an engine driver of a Diesel engine. He not only beat prisoners while he was a Kapo, but he did so even before he became a Kapo'.[136] Max Skirde, the block elder of Block 2, once doled out sixty strokes to express his distaste of a man who towered over him ('I was tall [1.85 metres], and tall men were disliked').[137] Skirde was known as 'Noeinoeil', owing to his wonky and blind eye.[138] In what appeared to have been a personal vendetta, Skirde caused the French inmate Robert Duval to go virtually blind as a consequence of his beatings.[139]

The *Kommandoführer* took to beating inmates with prejudice in equal measures. One such detail leader soon came to be known as 'The Luxembourger' among the prisoners.[140] Bindrich had presumably earned this nickname after taking a special interest in ill-treating a certain inmate: 'The prisoner Kaysen, a hunchback from Luxembourg, was beaten by Bindrich' on a regular basis. Bindrich's only verifiable act of kindness had been in allowing an inmate to steal a few potatoes from a lorry.[141] Otherwise he acted in a brutal manner and demanded a particularly large output of work

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[136] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 207—208.

[137] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 26, 29.

[138] Gabriel Bombardier, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 100. Bombardier arrived at Mauthausen on 22 April 1943 and at the Loiblpass on 3 June 1943. He was in Block 2—that of Max Skirde—at the south camp throughout. After the war he worked as a customs official in France.

[139] 'Through the grave deterioration in his eyesight Duval lost his job as a railway engine driver towards the end of 1945'. Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 313—314.

[140] Ibid., p. 307.

[141] Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 326, 331.

('He achieved this output by shouting and by hitting us with his fists').[142] Preferences in discrimination varied considerably. 'The Duck', as the SS man Friedrich Porschel was known, 'had a special dislike for the French'. He sometimes kicked or punched Frenchmen whenever they sought shelter from the cold and briefly warmed up by a brazier. At the time Porschel was in charge of a timber commando, he beat up inmates around fifteen times in the course of four months. And although he 'did not do so very often'—compared to other work detail leaders—nature tended to do the rest: 'The party I was engaged in was cutting trees. A number of accidents were caused by falling trees'.[143] Kapos and SS work detail leaders were by no means the only bullies. The commandant of the north camp, *Oberscharführer* Paul Gruschwitz, referred to by the inmates as 'Mère Michel', also enjoyed senseless discrimination. A French prisoner whom the functionaries had named 'the red fox' received daily beating from Gruschwitz in the summer of 1944, 'because he was very tall and red-haired and spoke good English'; he had an English mother. Other SS men joined in the beatings.[144] Intellectuals fared no better: the guardsman and *Kommandoführer* Hugo Köbernik

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[142] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 307.

[143] Ibid., pp. 307—309. Apparently Porschel intentionally positioned inmates in a way that made evading falling trees almost impossible. See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, p. 440.

[144] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 14.

habitually struck and insulted the French teacher Henri About,[145] a man in his sixties at the time.[146]

Few made a greater sport of abuse than the north camp's *Kommandoführer* Brietzke. Armed with a rubber truncheon crafted from the material used for pumping compressed air into the tunnel, he derived pleasure from playing mind games. On one occasion Brietzke asked Chaffin whether he preferred receiving twenty-five strokes before or after having his meal. On another occasion he told him that he would end up in the camp crematorium.[147] The SS detail leader even had a designated place to administer the beatings: 'I myself received 25 strokes from Brietzke in the hut near the tunnel where he used to take prisoners in order to beat them up'. Brietzke was dubbed 'the terror of the north'.[148] Correspondingly, he also became known as 'St Galmier',

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[145] According to the former inmate Louis Breton, About had lectured fellow prisoners on the French Revolution in Compiègne prison. When the Loiblpass SS learned that he was a man of considerable intellect, they confiscated his glasses and forced him to do the hardest labour possible. His German was good but he refused to use it out of principle. See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, p. 196.

[146] Albert Morin, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 40. Morin arrived at Mauthausen on 25 March 1944, was put on a transport on 15 April, and arrived at the Loiblpass two days later. He was assigned to the north camp. At the time of the trial he lived in Paris and worked as an employee in a commercial firm.

[147] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 9—10.

[148] Joseph Duchatelle, trial testimony, 8 September, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 104. Duchatelle arrived at the Loiblpass south camp on 3 June 1943, was transferred to the north camp in September of that year, and returned to the south camp on 15 April 1945; the date of the northern twin's dissolution. At the north camp he stayed in Blocks 1, 2, and 3.

the name of a town in the north of France. When the chief of Block 4 accused a prisoner of stealing a pair of shoes, Brietzke keenly obliged by administering a whipping.[149]

During more severe beating stretches, however, 'St Galmier' liked to delegate a significant portion of the blows to Herbert Scheller, a Kapo with whom Brietzke regularly joined forces. From time to time, the Frenchman Charles Garnier fell victim to their combined efforts. In the summer of 1944, he went to fetch a hammer from a fellow inmate and struck up a conversation. Brietzke promptly ordered his Kapo to punish Garnier. As Scheller pulled no punches, the inmate fell over a gate, lost a tooth, and broke a rib in the process. A few months later the duo struck again. This time Garnier had gone to the coal stove. For no apparent reason, Brietzke ordered him to turn over and lie over a wheelbarrow. The Kapo Scheller was instructed to give Garnier fifty strokes with a sand-filled tube. When Scheller grew tired after forty blows, Brietzke took over. The SS detail leader subsequently kicked Garnier, doing so merely because his victim had not cried out. Garnier noted that 'Brietzke took a sadistic pleasure in beating people' on a daily basis.[150]

Sharing an interest in cruel and unusual punishment, most work detail leaders and Kapos were natural allies. They collaborated in everything ranging from ill-

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[149] Marc Pincemin, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 270. Pincemin, a veterinary surgeon from France, was sent to the Loiblpass in July 1943 (second transport). He stayed at the south camp for a few months, went to the north camp for a couple of months thereafter, and returned again. Pincemin switched between the two camps frequently. Initially, while he was staying at the south camp, every day a lorry would take his commando over the Loibl to work at the north camp; this was common procedure until September 1943.

[150] Charles Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 315—316.

treatment to killing. Beyond ensuring that inmates met their work quotas, they banded together in order to help the SS leadership spread a culture of fear. In this respect, delegating murder was the camp commandant's most extreme method. Four of the five inmates who were shot to death 'trying to escape' in the course of 1943 had become victims of a scheme orchestrated from above.[151] In the space of two days during the autumn of 1943, a Kapo and work detail leader carried out two such murders on the southern side of the tunnel site. Incidents leading up to the killings often acted as an indication of their premeditated nature.

When the Polish prisoner Julian Majchrowicz arrived at the south camp at the end of October he was immediately picked out from among the new Mauthausen arrivals and paraded in front of the inmates at Block 2. Flanked by an interpreter, Winkler approached the Pole and communicated his death threats in a raised voice: 'Those who do not want to work properly, will have a red patch put on the left-hand side of their uniform'.[152] For a prisoner, this red piece of cloth—a circle with a dot in

[151] The following prisoners were shot 'trying to escape' in the course of 1943: on 15 September the Polish worker Andrzej Haluszka was pushed over the sentry line and shot to death; on 17 September the German inmate cook Kurt Windt committed suicide (he crossed the sentry line on purpose, ignored a guard's orders to stop, and was shot to death as a result); on 1 November the Pole Julian Majchrowicz was killed (premeditated); on 2 November the Czech farmer Josef Pospišil was murdered (premeditated); and on 6 December the French butcher Maxime Thiery was shot to death at random while he was working near the north camp. For the list of known deaths, see 'List of deaths at camp (prepared by the witness Balsan)', Loibl Pass No. I Case, Volume III, TNA, WO 235/580, Exhibits 5—6.

[152] Bombardier, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 95—96.

the centre—signified a mark of death.[153] To the victim's immediate superiors within his squad (the Kapo and SS work detail leader) the patch was a command to kill. After the public announcement, the inmates returned to their designated barracks for the roll call. The following morning, Monday 1 November at a quarter to six, Majchrowicz's commando set off for its day's work at the tunnel. Whilst the inmates were marching uphill, the German Kapo Fritz Winkens and *Kommandoführer* Ernst Maier called out the numbers of three prisoners from a sheet of paper. The Pole, a Russian, and a Czech, by the name of Josef Pospišil, were singled out. All of them were already wearing the red target circle of death. As usual, the inmates in the work squad stood to attention upon reaching the tunnel. Before allowing the inmates to fall out, the detail leader called on the three men once more. Maier, whom the inmates referred to as 'Trompe-la-Mort' (someone who cheats death against all odds), became animated and spoke to the three men 'very excitedly'. Whilst pointing towards the demarcation line he shouted: 'There is Stalin, go and see him'. Balsan, who had witnessed the events surrounding the Pole unfold, recalled how the three men gave off the impression of being genuinely unaware of what was about to happen—'but we knew what was awaiting them', he noted.[154] The

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[153] The red dot ('Fluchtpunkt') was a *Sonderkennzeichnung* ('special label') that signified that an inmate was *fluchtverdächtig* ('suspected of fleeing'). The black dot, on the other hand, indicated that a prisoner was a member of a *Strafkompanie* or 'punishment commando'. Both could be applied simultaneously. Even among inmates there appears to have been some confusion over the use of these dots. As Balsan testified, 'It was a custom in autumn 1943 to use the black patch, but later the custom disappeared. I knew a Belgian who wore the black patch for a long time, but had it taken off later and was not shot'. See: Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 84. Sofsky notes: 'Members of the *Strafkompanie* were marked by a special black dot at the apex of the triangle. Those suspected of plotting escape had red-and-white targets on their chests and backs'. It appears that Eberle wrongly indicates that a black dot was reserved for 'Fluchtverdächtige'. See Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, p. 118; Eberle, 'Häftlingskategorien und Kennzeichnungen': 105.

[154] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 67—68.

trio was reassigned to the engine room commando, which worked closer to the woods and near the entrance of the tunnel. On average there were around six squads working at the tunnel at any given time.

Regardless of intent, an inmate's physical crossing of the boundary—an imaginary line between two sentries that prisoners were prohibited from crossing—almost always resulted in their death. All of the guardsmen were well aware of this custom: 'Winkler said that prisoners had to be shot whether they crossed the line by themselves or whether they were pushed over the line'.[155] Many of the forced labourers at the Loiblpass had witnessed the practice of making inmates run towards the enclosure during their time at Mauthausen.[156] A dense distribution of guardsmen ensured that those prisoners who entered the exclusion zone could not get very far. Sentries provided an additional layer of security on top of the *Kommandoführer* by guarding the peripheries of the work sites on both sides of the tunnel. While some were positioned in watchtowers, others patrolled the forced labourers from the ground. The demarcation line resembled a half-circle emanating outwards from the tunnel entrance in all directions by approximately forty metres. Ravines ran alongside the line in some places. Beyond the sphere there were more ravines, dense forests, and civilian huts.[157] As the working sites grew bigger over time, so did the sphere that the various tunnel squads

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[155] Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 287.

[156] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 92.

[157] André Hantz, trial testimony, 4 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 53—54. Hantz was at Mauthausen for forty days before being sent to the Loiblpass with the first transport in early June 1943. He stayed at the south camp for five months and was moved to the north camp, remaining there until it was dissolved.

laboured in. Irrespective of this expansion, one sentry always manned the railway bridge while another permanently stood guard just opposite.[158]

A few hours following the foreboding metaphor of a Stalin beyond the demarcation line, the Kapo Winkens and *Kommandoführer* Maier executed the SS plot to end Majchrowicz's life. The Kapo took the lead. Upon coming across Majchrowicz near the 'tool store', Winkens removed the Pole's inmate uniform cap and threw it on a slope close to the guards on duty.[159] Majchrowicz now faced an insurmountable dilemma: fetching the cap from beyond the sentry line would get him shot; not wearing it would likely get him shot as well. The twenty-one-year old Frenchman Pierre Bouthenot looked on from a distance of fifty metres as the incident became more tense. Having grown impatient, the Kapo started pushing Majchrowicz towards the demarcation line. The Pole attempted to defend himself. After more shoving and pushing, however, he suddenly vanished into the ravine out of Bouthenot's sight: 'Then I heard two shots. After that I ran away'.[160] André Hantz, a French merchant by trade, could observe more clearly what happened next; having left the tunnel for the latrines moments earlier, he now found himself standing a mere ten to fifteen metres from the scene. The Pole had landed on a slope. The guard, standing on the circumference of the no-go zone at a distance of fifteen metres, raised his rifle and fired the first shot without prior warning. It had always been common practice for a sentry to caution a prisoner to

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[158] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 67.

[159] Bombardier, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 95—96. Bombardier observed the killing from a distance of around forty to forty-five metres.

[160] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 28—29.

return and allow him to do so before killing the prisoner. Majchrowicz had received no such reminder. He thus got up and took flight. Moments later, 'a shot came from another sentry on the beat'. Up to seven shots were fired before Majchrowicz finally fell to the ground a metre within or outside of the demarcation line.[161] Winkens requested Bouthenot and two other inmates to return in order to carry their comrade away. The detail leader Maier had been present throughout. As the inmates placed the victim on a makeshift stretcher, Bouthenot observed that 'the Pole's face had been blown away by a bullet'. They took Majchrowicz straight to the open-air crematorium. The corpse was 'burnt immediately'.[162] Effectively, the crematorium—situated merely thirty metres from the prisoners' infirmary—was more of 'a hole in the ground with rails on it; the wood was put on the rails'.[163]

The premeditated character of the murder becomes even more evident when one considers the orders that the camp commandant had given his guardsmen shortly before the death of the Pole: 'The day after Winkler had insisted that prisoners crossing this line would be shot, one prisoner was driven over the line and shot. I heard this [that a prisoner had been killed] the same evening, and I also heard the shots …. When shots were heard, one paid attention to it, because it did not happen very often'.[164] However rare these shootings might have been, the very next day—2 November 1943—the

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[161] Hantz, trial testimony, 4 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 53—54.

[162] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 28—29.

[163] Roland Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 135. Decroix arrived at Mauthausen on 3 April 1943 and at the Loiblpass' south camp on 3 June 1943, where he remained as a medical orderly inmate throughout.

[164] Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 287, 289.

planned killing of the Czech inmate Josef Pospišil was carried out. This time around, however, Maier took charge. Like Hantz the day before, Balsan had been walking along the road leading to the latrines when he heard gunfire: 'Next to me was the secretary of the civilian firm. When she heard the shots, she covered her ears and screamed. [Maier] was running from the tunnel with a revolver in his hand'. The detail leader killed the Czech with a single shot. Pospišil's corpse was then taken to the crematorium for its immediate disposal.[165]

Apart from being accountable to their designated *Kommandoführer*, Kapos also received specific orders from the civilian contract workers. A foreman would typically lay down the minimum daily output of work that each prisoner had to achieve. The inmates and Universale employees were engaged in similar tasks. Yet the prisoners eventually took over tunnelling-related tasks altogether, which amounted to the most dangerous and labour-intensive part of the project. One inmate estimated that their output was around fifty per cent higher than that of the civilians. In large part this had to do with the fact that 'the prisoners were mostly novices', whereas contract workers were more experienced, and they generally did specialised work.[166] The inmates were employed in work like tunnel mining and digging.[167] As in the case of the Frenchman Robert Theeten, however, prisoners worked on a wide array of other tasks and tended

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[165] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 67—68. While there exist a number of conflicting reports regarding the murders of Majchrowicz and Pospišil, I have reconstructed the killings based on the trial testimony provided by former inmates in Klagenfurt. For an overview of other versions, see Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 237—240.

[166] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 229.

[167] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 6.

to switch work parties regularly. Theeten worked in a timber commando from early September 1944 onwards but soon switched into a road party under Bindrich and remained there until November. Thereafter, Theeten laboured in the engine room squad under Brietzke until the end of the year and briefly worked in a tunnel commando in early 1945. Between mid-January and the liberation, he worked in various fortification squads. There were two such fortification *Kommandos*: one worked on building tank traps under Kessner; the other constructed gun emplacements alternately under Bindrich and another SS work detail leader.[168]

For fear of being reported to the SS, inmates were unable to speak out in the presence of contract workers. Those who dared were often subjected to prolonged stints of psychological and physical torture as a result. When on 5 September 1944 a Croat foreman urged Chaffin to work harder, the Frenchman would soon bear the brunt of his reply: 'I told him that I refused to work for Germany'. After the foreman denounced him and a Kapo reported the incident to Winkler, Chaffin found himself at the beginning of a torturous journey that would last for days. Winkler lived a mere forty metres from the camp, so such news always reached him quickly, regardless of the time of day. As soon as he learned of the Frenchman's refusal to work, he promptly assembled the entire camp for a round of beatings. Chaffin received the usual twenty-five blows, which he had to count out loud in German. After three strokes, however,

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[168] Robert Theeten, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 266—267. After the war Theeten began working for the *Amicale des déportés de Mauthausen*, dealing with research concerning the deaths of French deportees. He arrived at the north camp in May 1944, stayed at the south camp infirmary for twenty-four days thereafter, remained at the south camp for three months, and eventually returned to the north camp.

the beating began again. Once the thrashing had been concluded, Winkler smacked Chaffin, sent him back to the ranks, and said: 'You will never see France again'. Sachse, the north camp's *Rapportführer*, then provided further kicks and punches. The French prisoners referred to Sachse as 'Toutoune', which denotes something 'large', but is also an informal way of referencing an overweight woman. He subsequently escorted the inmate to the camp gate and made him stand at attention through the night. All the while, as Chaffin recalled, 'the sentry on the watch tower had his gun trained on me'. Sachse returned the following morning to attach a red patch to Chaffin's uniform ('I think this was done because I was to be shot'). The mark of death was always applied near the inmate's heart. Destined to be shot, he was sent to the notorious *Zufahrtsstraße* (the road leading from the exit of the tunnel to the main road), which typically served as a type of punishment site where the *Strafkompanie* ('punishment company') would labour. For days on end, Chaffin was made to push heavy wheelbarrows up a steep hill whilst running, and without ever stopping to rest. He had to lift large boulders weighing up to eighty kilograms. Whenever he returned to the north camp for lunch, Sachse was already waiting for him to administer the daily twenty-five strokes. At one point he narrowly escaped an execution: 'While I was working I heard one sentry say to another: "Can you shoot from where you are?" The other said: "No", whereupon the first sentry said "Go a little further down, because we must not miss him." I had the impression that the sentries wanted me to leave the boundary and then shoot me. My passing the boundary was to be the pretext for shooting me'.[169] Chaffin had been fortunate. At the

[169] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 6—9.

time, the *Zufahrtsstraße* was widely recognised as the place to which people in the north camp were sent just ahead of being murdered.[170]

The addition of a civilian work force thus heightened the culture of fear and provided an extra layer of discipline: 'The civilian firm worked hand in glove with the S.S'. Whenever the Kapos or the company's employees deemed the work of certain inmates insufficient, they took a note of their prisoner numbers for the SS.[171] Universale's foremen were well aware of the terror regime under which prisoners had to operate. Although they were prohibited from entering the camp grounds and were unable to see into the north camp, civilians had a clear view of the south camp and what went on within it. Moreover, the workers frequently witnessed SS men and Kapos beat inmates in and around the tunnel.[172] Yet the speed and efficiency of work remained the firm's first priority, since it had entered into a contract based on a fixed sum for the entire project; the faster the job could be done, the fewer expenses the company would incur. And the contract workers were free to assign a daily minimum of work as they saw fit.[173]

The French carpenter Maurice Rioux, who lived in the south camp but mainly worked on the construction of huts at the northern site, noted that inmates frequently

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[170] Morin, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 36.

[171] Claude Merlane, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 297. Merlane, an insurance agent from Paris, had been a political deportee at Mauthausen before arriving at the north camp in April 1944.

[172] Pincemin, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 280.

[173] Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 288—289.

came into contact with civilians. According to him there were two types of civilians, '(1) those with whom we had good relations, and (2) those who acted as if they were our guards. In the first category were Yugoslavs and Croats; and in the second category were Austrians who had supervisory and similar jobs. The Austrians employed the same methods as the S.S. guards'.[174] Those civilian foremen who beat prisoners on a regular basis also tended to be on good terms with the SS.[175] Save for the unpleasant and dangerous ones, some helped the inmates and were regarded as decent.[176] From the autumn of 1943 onwards, French inmates were able to pass letters to trusted contract workers in secret to be sent to relations on the outside.[177] Bouthenot would regularly send letters to and receive replies from France in this manner. Upon being found out by Winkler, however, he was interrogated and the covert letter exchanges ceased. While

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[174] Maurice Rioux, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 282—283. After the war Rioux lived in France and continued working as a carpenter. He arrived at the south camp with the first transport on 3 June 1944. When he worked on the construction of the barracks in the north camp, he joined the group that left over the pass in a lorry, always guarded by a number of SS men. The carpenter's workshop itself was located on the southern side.

[175] Pincemin, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 280.

[176] Dr František Janouch, trial testimony, 12 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 186—187. Janouch qualified as a medical doctor in 1928, worked in a hospital for six years thereafter, and eventually worked for Prague's Social Insurance branch, which involved determining whether patients were fit to work. After the war, he became the Director of Social Insurance, supervising around one hundred doctors in clinics and around 350 in general practices. Before arriving at the Loiblpass south camp in April 1944, Janouch had been imprisoned as a political deportee in Mauthausen since October 1943.

[177] This continued for as long as the Slovene contract worker Janko Tišler remained at the tunnel. Tišler posted 184 letters (and a total of 220 including postcards) on behalf of inmates between 15 January and 22 June 1944. Prior to joining the partisans on 1 July, he also received 37 parcels from relatives and relations of prisoners in February and March. See 'Verbotene Kontakte' section in Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 218—230.

Bouthenot admitted nothing, he received twenty-five strokes and Winkler told him that next time he would be sent back to Mauthausen.[178]

Within the actual confines of the two camps, prisoners were also under the control of inmate functionaries. The camp elders (*Lagerälteste*), directly accountable to the camp leadership, were responsible for overall discipline. They held the highest inmate rank and had the power to appoint block elders (*Blockälteste*). In the early camp days, the line between block elders and Kapos had been somewhat blurred. Initially, the block elders had also gone out with the squads. A block elder would thus sometimes carry out the same duties as a Kapo. The essential difference, however, was that a Kapo acted as the superior among the prisoners in work squads, while the *Blockälteste* was their superior in the block. With the exception of one Kapo from Alsace-Lorraine in the north camp, all of the Kapos and block chiefs were Germans or Austrians, and most were common law criminals.[179] Each block elder was in charge of the prisoners and discipline in his respective hut. He had to report to the report leader (*Rapportführer*), an SS man who had to oversee roll calls and was accountable to the camp commandant for overall discipline.

The inmate huts held up to 120 individuals. They measured around sixty metres in length and between ten and twelve metres in width. While the north camp barracks were not well insulated against the cold, the southern ones were slightly better built. In general, each hut had a sleeping area, an eating quarter that occupied less than a third

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[178] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 26.

[179] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 88.

of the space, and a stove that was not always lit. At first there was only one hut in the north camp, but another four went up in due time. Apart from a block elder, every hut had an inmate clerk (*Blockschreiber*), whose task it was to prepare roll call lists, act as an interpreter, and assist in the cleaning of the living quarters. While the *Blockschreiber* received their orders from the *Blockälteste*, their instructions also came directly from the camp commandant and report leader, who acted as their immediate superior officer.[180]

Whenever inmates were afforded exceptional privileges, the SS and prisoner functionaries combined forces to ensure that their victims would never enjoy these in full. This became most evident when the deportees began receiving parcels from their families back home. To everyone's surprise, the inmates were finally permitted to send a first batch of postcards to the outside world in December 1943. Until that point, most of their relatives had little idea as to where the inmates had been taken. 'None of the prisoners could receive any parcels before March, 1944', Balsan explained, 'because our families did not receive our address until they had received our first letter'.[181] Although the camp leadership ultimately distributed these packages to their rightful recipients, prisoners rarely received all of the contents. The mail always arrived at the train station in Tržič (Neumarktl), the closest town on the southern side of the Loiblpass.

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[180] Duverdier, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 22; Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 73, 88.

[181] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 92. Balsan received fifteen parcels in total. This stopped after the Normandy landing.

An SS man fetched it via lorry, and sometimes a few prisoners came along.[182] The parcels were brought directly to the office of the *Lagerälteste* to be searched.[183] In the short period between delivery and distribution most of the more appealing contents went missing. The north camp's report leader made a habit of swinging by the senior camp prisoner's office whenever a new batch arrived: 'Sachse distinguished himself by stealing the prisoners' parcels'. Roland Lecoutre's wife, for example, had dispatched thirteen parcels, of which five were torn open. Generally, only half of the contents were handed to an inmate. In Lecoutre's case, items such as chocolate, sardines, butter, clothing, and cigarettes had been removed; 'Tins of peas and beans did not interest the S.S. very much'.[184]

Although the thefts happened behind closed doors, it was easy to work out who was responsible: 'I have seen Sachse eat chocolate in the camp. Whether it was French chocolate, I do not know; but it was a curious coincidence that he always ate chocolate when parcels arrived for Frenchmen'.[185] On one occasion in March 1944, however, the prisoners caught the thieves *in flagrante delicto*. Some thirty prisoners had gone to collect their parcels at the office, situated just behind the shower bath. Through the half-open door, they observed the camp elder take items from the parcels and put 'whatever he fancied' into two baskets. The lists of contents had already been torn off. Winkler

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[182] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 311.

[183] For a collection of censored letters written by the Czech inmate doctor at the Loiblpass, see František Janouch, *Selbst der Teufel würde erröten: Briefe meines Vaters aus der Hölle von Auschwitz und aus dem KZ am Loiblpass* (Vienna, 2006).

[184] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 222.

[185] Ibid., p. 226.

stood beside the *Lagerälteste* and advised him on what to remove. Of the fifty parcels that had been dispatched to the Frenchman Barbier, only thirty arrived, and all of these had been looted.[186]

Even though prisoner functionaries led comparatively fortunate lives within the inmate hierarchy, 'the SS were the real masters in the camp, and for a Kapo to refuse to carry out an order was very difficult'. The *Rapportführer*, being responsible for overall discipline, tended to be among the most brutal of the SS men. Each camp employed one SS report leader at any given point in time. The south camp had Hans Gogl, whom Sebastian Binder later succeeded. Balsan recalled how Gogl 'used to knock Kapos about rather dynamically'. The Kapo Max Skirde received several thrashings ('but the beatings he dished out were more considerable').[187] Most of the time report leaders were more concerned with ill-treating the other inmates. At the northern twin, disciplinary measures intensified with the arrival of Sachse in mid-1944. During his reign as *Rapportführer*, roll calls could last for more than two hours, depending on his mood and regardless of the weather. Prisoners typically held their caps while standing to attention. Sometimes they were ordered to lie down and get up again. On at least eight occasions, Sachse found pleasure in making his subordinates execute his so-called 'carpet exercise'. While some prisoners were made to create a human carpet by lying down, others were instructed to crawl over their comrades. 'If any limbs stuck out', Hantz noted, 'he used to strike them with a rubber hose'. Sachse

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[186] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 300—302.

[187] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 85—86.

took an active role in the exercise by walking all over his 'carpet', kicking inmates at random as he went.[188] The SS leadership encouraged such forms of ill-treatment, so long as not too many inmates were taken out of commission in the process. Even report leaders therefore had to 'tread carefully'.

Hierarchical structures ensured that only the camp commandant had no direct superiors to fear. Winkler could do as he pleased. And although the first commandant, Julius Ludolph, had effectively been sacked for going too far, his KZ career subsequently improved; he went on to become the camp commandant of Großraming and Melk. Contract workers and lower-ranking guards were thus not immune to Winkler's terror regime either. To this effect, policemen from across Austria—charged with helping the SS guard the inmate population—always received a personal welcome from Winkler on the roll call square. Friedrich Spiel from Innsbruck came to the south camp in September 1943 in the capacity of a policeman. At this point work on the north camp had already begun and a few hundred metres had been drilled into the mountain on the south side.[189] In the company of two other fresh recruits, Spiel was told that he had come to 'a working camp for foreign prisoners'. The policemen were instructed not to give the inmates any food or cigarettes. Failing to 'keep strict secrecy', Winkler threatened, would lead to their arrest and imprisonment. The police guards were accountable to the SS men, had to obey their orders, and had no right to give any directives. In a sense, a policeman's role was limited to the shooting of anyone who

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[188] Hantz, trial testimony, 4 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 47.

[189] Friedrich Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 291.

tried to make a run for the forest ('Winkler also said that no prisoner was allowed to go beyond the demarcation line and that we had to shoot as soon as a prisoner went outside this line').[190] Aside from having to stay in line, policemen shared all the common SS privileges at the camp. They received the same food as the SS: breakfast consisted of soup, coffee, bread, and butter; lunch included soup, meat, potatoes, and gravy; and supper entailed bread, sausage, marmalade, and coffee. The contrast between their and the inmates' food was comparable to the difference between 'milk and water'.[191]

Food for the inmates was always insufficient. At first, breakfast consisted of nothing more than a bland coffee-like liquid. Lunch at noon came in the form of a litre of soup with carrots and roots, and boiled potatoes. The final meal of the day, served between seven-thirty and eight o'clock, consisted of some bread, a thin slice of sausage or some margarine, and a cup of *ersatz* coffee. Daily bread rations varied, ranging from three to five hundred grams. Clerks like Balsan deemed the food sufficient when they did not have to work on the tunnel.[192] According to a French inmate who was eventually sent back to Mauthausen, the food at the Loiblpass differed little from its main counterpart, but the work at the Loiblpass tended to be harder. In contrast to the Loiblpass, however, the food situation at the main camp had grown exponentially worse

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[190] Spiel, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 284—285.

[191] Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 287—288.

[192] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 4; Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 77.

towards the end.[193] And the twin camp never assumed the character of an extermination camp. Officially, Kapos and blocks elders received the same rations as the other prisoners. In practice, however, they were given additional food in the kitchen.[194] Adding to this: 'The Kapos were often drunk when they fetched bread rations on Saturday evenings'.[195]

The food in the inmates' infirmary was equally poor, and an unfair distribution by prisoner functionaries made matters worse for the many patients who had a feeble pulse of around thirty heartbeats per minute.[196] Although sick Kapos were also admitted to the prisoners' infirmary, their fellow functionaries would bring them the same food that SS patients received.[197] Patients did not even receive supplementary rations like those who worked the night shift at the tunnel between around 7pm and 6.30am. The infirmary food gave off a foul smell and contained a fair share of maggots, 'so that often patients could not eat it in spite of their hunger'.[198] Patients with a fever were initially put on a diet consisting of semolina. Only five such portions were made available for feverish inmates, even on days when the infirmary held some twenty-five

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[193] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 224. For an overview of the deteriorating food situation at Mauthausen, see 'Die Ernährung' chapter in Maršálek, *Die Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen*, pp. 53—62.

[194] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 91—92.

[195] Rioux, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 281.

[196] Janouch, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 199—200.

[197] Michel Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 256—257. Gasior, a chemical engineer from Marseille, arrived at the Loibl south camp in June 1943 and worked as a medical orderly in the prisoner and SS infirmaries. In January 1944 he spent a month working in a commando.

[198] Janouch, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 199—200.

patients with a temperature. These special meals were discontinued altogether in the autumn of 1944.[199]

'Nothing had been prepared from a medical point of view' when the first transport of inmates arrived at the Loiblpass in early June 1943. A hut with eight beds had been set up in advance. As increasingly more beds trickled in, the infirmary eventually had to be moved to a larger block. Medication only arrived some time later. On the outskirts of the south camp and at a distance of roughly one hundred metres from the prisoners' clinic, a solid infirmary with cemented floors was erected for the SS personnel. In August 1943, Sigbert Ramsauer replaced the SS doctor Hermann Richter, who had been in charge for the first couple of months. Ramsauer lived in the already completed SS infirmary, but sometimes he would reside in a house outside the camp with his wife and children. The doctor also alternated between wearing a white coat in the infirmary and dressing in his SS uniform, complete with revolver. During the day, he usually worked in his office at the SS infirmary. Presumably because of his tendency to be a late riser, Ramsauer permitted his inmate helpers—medical orderlies and professional doctors—to sleep longer than the other prisoners. While the inmate doctors were concerned with diagnosis and treatment, the role of medical orderlies was generally limited to washing and feeding patients. As the camps grew, from time to time there could be up to seventy beds distributed across several rooms, and the infirmary often occupied an entire hut. Despite the swelling numbers, the number of

[199] Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 256—257.

inmate medics did not increase significantly over time. Ramsauer's aides included Dr Jospeh Krupowicz, Dr Rokitzky, Roland Decroix, Michel Gasior, and later Dr František Janouch. When the north camp had been completed, the Polish prisoner doctor Rokitzky was sent there to run the southern twin's smaller counterpart.[200]

Differences among the three infirmaries were stark. The SS infirmary, reserved for the camp SS and Austrian policemen, usually only treated cases of influenza; seriously ill cases were dealt with at civilian hospitals. Typically, between two and three patients resided there at a time, with six being the maximum number of admissions recorded.[201] Ramsauer often operated on inmates or administered lethal injections to them at the SS clinic, but the prisoners never slept there; they were strictly prohibited from entering the facility. On the other end of the spectrum was the north camp installation for inmates. It resembled nothing like a treatment facility. Rokitzky had been provided with the most basic of instruments and almost no medicine.[202] The northern infirmary had no real purpose. In a way, its mere existence did more harm than good. Since even the most curable of illnesses and treatable of injuries could not be sufficiently dealt with there, many prisoners' condition inevitably became so serious that their transfer to the main infirmary became necessary. Yet: 'As a rule, the men reporting sick from the north camp came too late … their diseases were already almost

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[200] Roland Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, pp. 117—118; 10 September 1947, pp. 143, 153—154; 11 September 1947, p. 157, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I.

[201] Gasior, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 231.

[202] Janouch, trial testimony, 11 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 172.

incurable'.[203] Moreover, sick inmates could not simply wander over to the southern clinic individually. Most of the time Dr Rokitzky and the report leader Sachse—or another SS man—accompanied the ill prisoners after the group had become sizeable enough to warrant a crossing. Whereas the diseases from which inmates suffered were more or less the same, the north camp produced a significantly higher number of patients than its twin. Apart from the fact that prisoners on the northern side were barred from reporting to the south camp infirmary right away, harsher conditions and a greater malnourishment were two of the chief reasons for this disparity.[204]

Rapportführer Sachse made the admission process to the main infirmary extremely unappealing. 'I never reported sick', Chaffin explained, 'because I know that if I had done [so], I would have been beaten even more'.[205] The northern report leader had a special custom for those who received his permission to go to the southern infirmary: inmates had to undress and were then beaten ('This was the normal and compulsory procedure'). Their wounds were not spared in these thrashings.[206] In fact, Sachse even targeted the condition of his victims: 'When a prisoner, to give an example, presented himself with a bad arm, Sachse took great pleasure in striking him on that arm, or, when it was a leg, he would beat him on that leg'.[207] When the Frenchman

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[203] Ibid.

[204] Janouch, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 201—203.

[205] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 13, 11—12.

[206] Pierre Gandin, trial testimony, 4 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 57—58. Gandin, a metal turner from France, was imprisoned at Mauthausen for around ten days in August 1944 as a political prisoner. He was detained in the Loiblpass north camp until October 1944, whereafter he went to infirmary at the south camp.

[207] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 222—223.

Christian Laffont had amassed seven phlegmons (areas of spreading inflammation caused by the infection of the soft or connective tissue) and Sachse finally accompanied him to the south side, the report leader presented the patient to a French orderly and said, 'You can treat him if you like. But I do not like red-haired people. I have a system of choosing the sick', and just before returning to his camp added, 'the patients think twice before they report sick, because I beat them'.[208] Claude Merlane, an insurance agent from Paris who arrived at the north camp in April 1944, also had to wait before receiving treatment for an abscess on his foot. The *Rapportführer* told him that he was 'just lazy' and 'strong enough to work'. Rokitzky cautioned Merlane, relaying that since Sachse would not be granting any transfers for a while it would not be in his interest to ask for one. The inmates dubbed the report leader 'Dr Sachse', since the actual doctor—the inmate Rokitzky—'had no power …. It was Sachse who decided whether a prisoner was sick or not'. Ultimately, the Frenchman waited for almost a fortnight before being admitted at the main infirmary. Just ahead of the group transfer, Merlane received the customary round of beatings.[209] The physical abuse of sick prisoners journeying to the neighbouring site for treatment did not stop there: 'I have seen cases of grave illness which were sent to the south camp for treatment. The patients had to walk there, usually through the tunnel, and they even had to carry things while doing so'.[210]

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[208] Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 245—246.

[209] Merlane, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 293—294.

[210] Morin, 4 September 1947, p. 42.

When viewed against its twin, the south camp infirmary appeared to have been a comparatively promising place for recovery. For one, the main clinic had a more advanced infrastructure, including sleeping, visiting, and surgical rooms. Apart from Ramsauer, there were also two specialist doctors. At first there had been just the inmate doctor Krupowicz with whom Ramsauer could confer regarding surgical cases. When in April 1944 the total inmate number across both camps threatened to surpass one thousand, Ramsauer took the initiative of recruiting another specialist. The SS doctor visited Mauthausen for this purpose. After a brief conversation with his inmate doctor Janouch, Ramsauer had his new assistant transported to the Loiblpass. Slight improvements notwithstanding, in most matters the SS doctor lacked initiative. The main infirmary held only the most basic of instruments for operations, even though necessary additions could have been acquired from a hospital in Klagenfurt. The doctors therefore had to improvise: 'Once we even had to borrow a carpenter's saw for the amputation of an arm'. No effort to obtain an X-ray machine was made, although Mauthausen had one and despite that fact that such facilities were available in nearby hospitals.[211] Neither of these options had ever been viable; the SS leadership would not have permitted inmates to visit a civilian hospital, and a transfer to Mauthausen amounted to a death sentence in most cases.

[211] Janouch, trial testimony, 11 September 1947, pp. 160, 163; 15 September 1947, p. 201, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I.

'The turnover of prisoners was frequent', and—by Balsan's estimation—'about 3000 prisoners must have passed through the camps'.[212] Between May 1944 and the liberation, the combined total of prisoners remained close to one thousand. The inmate population reached its peak at 1319 in mid-September 1944, but dropped to its average of around a thousand again by the end of that year (see Figure A4). From the summer of 1943 onwards, around fifteen to thirty individuals reported sick on any given day, or in other words up to three per cent of the inmate population at a time. These high figures made the effective treatment of inmates virtually impossible. Ramsauer sought to alleviate resource pressures by assigning some inmates to so-called 'light duty' without any prior treatment. Prisoners were never permitted to be off duty, and 'light duty' tended to be even tougher than the sick individual's previous work.[213] Among the rampant diseases, illnesses, and ailments were scabies, diphtheria, typhoid, fevers, diarrhoea, arthritis, bronchopneumonia, abscesses, frostbite, and tuberculosis. Many of the conditions were caused by accidents at the tunnel, a harsh climate, unsuitable clothing, and poor hygiene. Wounds tended to get infected and become progressively worse due to the scarcity of soap or clean clothes. Ill-fitting inmate clogs and a lack of socks were to blame for the prisoners' foot wounds.[214] In the absence of coal throughout the first year, there were no shower baths whatsoever. Thereafter, and until the liberation on 8 May 1945, inmates in the south camp had merely fifteen such shower

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[212] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 90.

[213] Decroix, trial testimony, 10 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 146,

[214] Janouch, trial testimony, 11 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 162.

baths altogether.[215] The main infirmary never had enough sheets, so that a single bed linen was used by up to four patients.[216]

Labouring in extreme conditions at an altitude of one thousand metres took a toll on the physical state of inmates. Unforgivingly cold temperatures endured for around six months, from October to April, and snow could be observed as late as June. The Loiblpass' geographic location made it particularly prone to prolonged periods of rain and snowfall, which could last for days on end. Yet inmates would continue working for as long as possible. Their original leather shoes from Mauthausen did not last; these were then replaced with unsuitable wooden clogs. Prisoners were shielded from the cold only by their winter coats and pullovers. Their trousers and overcoats were both made of wood fibre. While half of the inmates worked in the open, the other half laboured in the tunnel. Given the harsh climate and insufficient protection from the cold, many of the survivors suffered from tuberculosis and lung problems for some years after the liberation.[217] Inmates often died as a consequence of mistreatment at the hands of a functionary in combination with freezing temperatures. In one instance, a Polish prisoner by the name of Henryk Ostazenski informed Sachse—with the help of an interpreter—that he had a temperature. Sachse responded by directing the interpreter to fetch a pail of water, which he then promptly poured over the sick man's head. Ostazenski, drenched from top to bottom, was kicked back into the ranks and had to

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[215] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 33.

[216] Decroix, trial testimony, 10 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 144.

[217] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 71—72.

continue working until the end of the shift at noon, and thus for another six hours at approximately minus fifteen degrees Celsius. Two days later he was admitted to the infirmary in the south camp. In another few days he was dead.[218]

In spite of having been confronted with the appalling conditions of his patients on a regular basis, the SS doctor never once voiced concern for their wellbeing. Nor did he ever respond to his helpers' pleas to curb the infirmary Kapo's brutalities. Johann Danter, 'Ramsauer's handyman', regularly beat the patients ('Sometimes he threw patients with high temperatures out of their beds').[219] 'To speak of a sense of responsibility in Ramsauer is almost ridiculous', Janouch clarified, and further noted that the doctor 'did not attach the same value to human life as we did'.[220] Even if Ramsauer had revealed any compassion to act in the patients' best interest, according to Decroix his questionable skills and a 'below average ability' rendered every operation a risky gamble.[221] When the Frenchman Maurice Murat landed in the infirmary after being shot in the shoulder, Janouch observed his boss' poor surgical performance in trying to remove a bullet lodged a couple of millimetres below the jugular vein: 'The operation lasted 4 ½ hours. For anybody with experience the operation would have lasted about 45 minutes'. While the patient could return to work after the procedure, it exemplified that 'Ramsauer's medical knowledge was poor in

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[218] Hantz, trial testimony, 4 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 48; Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 244.

[219] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 122.

[220] Janouch, trial testimony, 12 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 186, 188.

[221] Decroix, trial testimony, 11 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 157.

every respect'.[222] Yet most of the inmates whom he operated on were less fortunate than Murat.

In the summer of 1944, Antonio Ferenzi, an Italian father of four and agricultural worker by trade, reported to the main infirmary at the south camp with a fractured right thigh. Krupowicz urged his superior to perform an immediate amputation after the first examination. Ramsauer nevertheless left Ferenzi waiting for a week. When he decided to operate on 4 August, Krupowicz advised him that the opportunity to do so had long passed. Even so, Janouch and Gasior were ordered to carry their patient to the SS infirmary for the procedure. Decroix watched as Ramsauer made an incision near the abdomen to deal with the inflammation in this region of the Ferenzi's body. All of a sudden Ramsauer stopped operating and professed that there would be no point in continuing, stating that he would 'finish the matter by injecting petrol into Ferenzi's heart'. Ramsauer missed the heart; but he had used up all of the petrol. Ferenzi was still alive. Ramsauer thus resorted to an old method that he had mastered during his time on the Eastern Front: he took a bottle with a concentration of thirty per cent peroxide and injected the solution into both lungs. 'At that moment', Decroix recalled, 'froth came out of Ferenzi's mouth' and he 'moaned 2 or 3 times' before dying 'rather slowly'.[223] For reasons unknown to the inmate aides, Krupowicz and the two medical orderlies were instructed to dissect the corpse and preserve the pelvis. 'Suddenly a terrible noise came out of the throat of the patient', and Ramsauer

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[222] Janouch, trial testimony, 12 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 186, 188.

[223] Decroix, trial testimony, 10 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 136—139.

responded to his helpers' blank faces by explaining that the noise stemmed from the peroxide escaping the lungs. Their superior went on to recount that he had regularly performed such experiments on 'Russian bandits',[224] boasting that he had injected air into their veins to gauge how much peroxide was needed to bring on death.[225]

Adding to malpractice and negligence, the SS doctor made no effort to save patients who would not be able to work again. In such cases, he refused to administer treatment and went straight to murder. A notable example of this occurred at the end of March 1944, when Felix Léon, a former railway official from France, broke his back in an accident at the tunnel. As Balsan remembered, the SS lost no time. Since rumours spread quickly, he had already learned of his comrade's fate before he was instructed to 'pile up wood in the crematorium' later that day: 'On our way back we saw a stretcher being carried past us with a man on it who was still alive. …. The stretcher was being carried in the direction of the S.S. infirmary', located just west of the camp boundary.[226] Shortly after the paralysed Frenchman's body reached the SS infirmary, Krupowicz confirmed that the patient had a broken spine. Ramsauer hurried over to examine Léon. After about a minute, Decroix heard him speak the Frenchman's death sentence with a single word: 'euthanasia'. Krupowicz and Ramsauer discussed the case for a while longer; 'Ramsauer said that it was better to give Léon an injection so that his widow

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[224] Janouch, trial testimony, 12 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 182

[225] Gasior, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 240. As a witness at trial, Gasior recited Ramsauer's words: 'We made experiments on Russian partisans. I injected air into their veins to find out how much a man could stand'. See Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 241.

[226] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 74.

could remarry'.[227] The SS physician remained resolute and always had the last say. Léon's fate thus had been sealed with a single spoken word. Balsan later saw smoke rising into the air from the crematorium, where he had placed firewood earlier in the day.[228]

Respiratory illnesses produced the highest inmate mortality in 1944. Anyone who had a severe case of pneumonia or bronchitis had a slim chance of survival. For a patient exhibiting symptoms of such a nature, the infirmary quickly became a site of death rather than a place of healing. The moment the Belgian inmate Marcel Closset arrived at the infirmary in June 1944 with an advanced case of double pneumonia he was already condemned.[229] A little after sunrise the next morning, Closset—a forestry worker in his former life—would already be dead. The SS paramedic Kleingünther had been ordered to administer a lethal injection. Gasior tried to prevent Kleingünther from entering the prisoners' infirmary, where the Belgian was lying at the time. 'Do not go in', the inmate medic pleaded, 'because he will know why you have come'. Kleingünther responded with a cynical remark: 'We are not Jews. We are not savage. We know how to do it', and reassured Gasior that he would use an anaesthetic, as 'then he will not know when he dies'.[230] As usual, the crematorium had been made ready ahead of the execution. Upon seeing firewood being carried past the barracks from his

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[227] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 129—130.

[228] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 75.

[229] Bombardier, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 98.

[230] Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 257.

infirmary bed, Closset asked Decroix, 'For whom is this wood intended?' The SS medic waited until Closset had fallen asleep before approaching his left side. Kleingünther then promptly took a bottle of petrol out of his pocket, prepared the syringe, and administered the lethal injection between the fourth and fifth rib. Decroix was certain that the SS medic had used petrol, 'because both Kleinkinder [Kleingünther] and I had used that same bottle before to fill our lighters'.[231] Like Ramsauer, Kleingünther never shied away from sharing his stories about the murders he had committed: at Mauthausen he had administered fifty lethal injections per day.[232] After around ten minutes, the corpse had 'assumed a bluish colour'. Not much later the fire had been lit and Closset was taken to the open-air crematorium.[233]

Tuberculosis patients were the least likely to survive: 'Everybody knew that T.B. patients were gassed in Mauthausen'. At no site in the KZ empire did prisoners with this disease stand a chance of receiving adequate care. Inmate medics and doctors often concealed TB cases in order to prevent their transport back to the main camp by labelling them as 'bronchopneumonia'. A high number of forced labourers thus never reported to the infirmary in the first place.[234] However wise this decision might have

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[231] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 134—135. Regarding the use of lighters and why Decroix knew that the bottle contained petrol: 'Although prisoners were not allowed to have lighters, many of us did. I smoked quite a lot, even in the presence of Ramsauer'. See Decroix, trial testimony, 10 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 151.

[232] Gasior, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 237.

[233] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 135.

[234] Janouch, trial testimony, 12 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 192.

been, many later died as a consequence.[235] As Ramsauer banned his inmate helpers from treating TB patients, the doctors and medical orderlies did so as covertly as they could.[236] The SS doctor also tended to reverse his inmate assistants' practice of strategic misdiagnoses. Just ahead of Mauthausen transports, and in order to bolster the returnees figure, he even went as far as writing 'TB' on the charts of patients who had pneumonia or generic lung problems.[237]

In 1944, putting the sick on *Rücktransporte* (transports to Mauthausen) became a common method by which the SS periodically sought to alleviate resource pressures on the camp and infirmary: 'The number of patients was limited by the number of beds. Moreover, as soon as the figure was around 70, the possibility of sick transports became acute'. At least four such transports left for Mauthausen between April and November 1944. Whereas the April, July, and August transports had been limited to sick prisoners, the November *Rücktransport* also included entirely healthy inmates.[238] In an effort to contain prisoner numbers, the camp commandant took the most active role in monitoring the infirmary; while Ramsauer usually only made weekly visits, Winkler came to the clinic up to twice a day. And whenever the camp commandant thought that

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[235] A considerable number of inmates with TB who made it through the war only had a while longer to live. One survivor who had in 1945 returned to Paris with 110 of his Loiblpass comrades recounted that two thousand ex-deportees with tuberculosis had reported to hospitals across the capital. From among his fellow Loibl returnees, fourteen were admitted for TB treatment upon arrival in Paris. And by September 1947, five of the initial fourteen had already died. See Theeten, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 269.

[236] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 123.

[237] Gasior, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 236.

[238] Janouch, trial testimony, 11 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 167, 169. There were no more *Rücktransporte* after November 1945 ('transports were no longer possible, because communications to Mauthausen were bad').

patients had become a liability he would say, 'These people have stayed too long. We will send them to Mauthausen with the next transport'. Ramsauer would then make the rounds with a red pencil, writing an 'M' on the charts of those patients who had supposedly overstayed their infirmary visits.[239] Just ahead of a *Rücktransport*, the medical orderlies did what little they could to save the lives of their fellow comrades by smuggling patients out of the clinic and readmitting them shortly after the transport had left.[240] With the exception of outright murder or death, being sent to Mauthausen was the worst fate that could befall an inmate at the Loiblpass. As one inmate noted, it also figured among the most common forms of punishment, which were 'standing to attention for days and nights, beatings, and being sent to Mauthausen or to the north camp of the Loibl Pass'.[241]

The November 1944 transport to Mauthausen comprised 284 prisoners, many of whom were disciplinary cases. As the last and largest of the major *Rücktransporte* to depart from the Loiblpass, it etched itself onto the memories of the inmates more than any other. Winkler chose prisoners in the camp and Ramsauer made the infirmary selections. At the infirmary, Ramsauer picked his victims as he passed their beds. Many of them had pneumonia, phlegmons, tuberculosis, or diarrhoea. As Winkler had instructed him to 'get rid of as many patients as possible', Ramsauer selected those who

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[239] Gasior, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 236.

[240] Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 255.

[241] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 313.

were in such a physical state that they would likely not survive the journey.[242] From among the relatively healthy prisoners, the camp commandant generally selected 'weak people or bad workers' whom the civilian foremen considered incompetent and who were disliked by the Kapos. Others were chosen simply 'because Winkler decided that they should go'.[243] The physical selection procedure began at around nine o'clock on the night before the transport. The Parisian clerk Jean Briquet was already in bed at the north camp when he and almost one hundred fellow inmates were summoned to the roll call square. Less than an hour later, the prisoners were marched over to the south camp. A snowstorm slowed their crossing to such an extent that it took some seventy-five minutes to reach the southern roll call square. Once the inmates had been counted, they were taken to Block 3 for further examination. 'The block chief inspected our clothing', Briquet remembered: 'what decent clothing we had was taken away from us' and replaced with items that were in a state of utter disrepair. The prisoners were then checked for vermin and had their heads shaved. At 2.30am they were finally permitted to sleep on the floor of Block 3. The northern selectees were woken up again at four in the morning to be united with the roughly two hundred southern inmates who would be on the same transport. Once the 5am roll call had been concluded, the column of close to three hundred Mauthausen-bound inmates set off through the blizzard, without food and without sufficient protection from the cold. The sick were forced to walk to Neumarktl, trudging through thirty centimetres of snow with great difficulty. Soon

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[242] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 123—125.

[243] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 93.

everybody was 'wet to the skin'.[244] Overnight, the temperature had plummeted to at least ten degrees below freezing.[245]

The eleven-kilometre journey to the train station lasted close to five hours. 'On arrival at Neumarktl', Lecoutre recounted, 'we saw an S.S. man in front of each house we passed. The population was very sympathetic towards us. As far as they could, they gave some of the prisoners bread and other food. When we arrived at the station of Neumarktl, we boarded cattle trucks'.[246] While the prisoners were loaded onto the train, Winkler took to beating some of them. The camp commandant even struck a Kapo who was attempting to help struggling inmates board their respective trucks.[247] Each of the five trucks held up to seventy prisoners, guarded by two men. The stoves on the inside of the trucks were useless, as prisoners were not allowed to approach them. After two days of travel, the inmates arrived in Mauthausen just as drenched as they had been at the start. Throughout, they had not been permitted to exit their respective trucks at any point. Adding to this, the exhausted prisoners had to march for two hours to get to the main camp. Lecoutre later learned that twenty prisoners had died during the train journey, and he had also seen at least four corpses being unloaded shortly after the transport had arrived at the train station near Mauthausen: 'When after our arrival at Mauthausen I was waiting for the shower bath, I saw a lorry unloading corpses near the

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[244] Jean Briquet, trial testimony, 15 September, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 209—214. Briquet arrived at the south camp in June 1943, but was sent to the north camp in the autumn of 1943. In November 1944 he was put on a transport back to Mauthausen. After the war Briquet worked in Paris as a clerk.

[245] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 225.

[246] Ibid. pp. 215—219.

[247] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 123—125.

crematorium. …. I knew they were dead bodies, because they were unloaded like loads [stacks] of hay'.[248]

At Mauthausen, the ex-Loiblpass deportees were made to stand naked outside in the snow for three hours. Only when everyone had been disinfected were the prisoners finally permitted to settle into 'Camp 3' and given their first meal in three days; supper consisted of some bread and sausage. Camps 3 and 4 were both quarantine sites for inmates whom the SS leadership eventually put on further transports. Lecoutre survived because he had been fortunate enough to be transferred to the so-called 'free camp'. Almost all of his ex-Loiblpass comrades were eventually assigned to forced labour squads at other camps. The vast majority were sent to Auschwitz, 'where most of them died'. This Auschwitz transport comprised approximately eight hundred inmates, between 250 and 300 of whom were Frenchmen. Around 150 of them had been on the November transport from the Loiblpass.[249] The medical orderly Gasior recalled that two patients had eventually returned to the Loiblpass.[250] Yet for most, as Balsan rightly noted, 'being sent back to Mauthausen was equivalent to being sentenced to death'.[251] While this rule applied to Kapos just the same, there appears to have been only one who had been sent away to Mauthausen never to return. Another joined a transport to Mauthausen merely for a dental appointment ('He came back after two

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[248] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 215—219, 223.

[249] Ibid., pp. 215—219.

[250] Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 249.

[251] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 86.

weeks').[252] Of the Frenchmen who had left on the November transport, the Paris-based organisation *Amicale des déportés de Mauthausen* confirmed that only forty-four had returned to France after the war.[253] The organisation had also managed to compile a list that included the names of fifty individuals who had survived the November transport but had ultimately died at Mauthausen.[254]

The alternative of staying at the Loiblpass did not exactly guarantee an inmate's survival. Conditions deteriorated significantly in the period leading up to the major transport in November 1944. An estimated twenty-five inmates died in 1944 alone, five times the 1943 death toll and eight times the 1945 one. Exact figures are not verifiable, but Balsan succeeded in compiling a list before the various index cards holding the names of the dead were reduced to ashes. All of the records were kept at the south camp. Sensing their imminent destruction and spurred on by a desire to inform the relatives of the deceased after the war, Balsan took advantage of his relative freedom as a clerk at the south camp and sprang into action: 'One Sunday, shortly before the end of the war, the camp clerk was out. I went to the filing room, and I took out the files concerning the dead prisoners. Then I went to the infirmary and made a copy of the records with the help of the medical orderly Decroix'.

Balsan's statistics cover the entire period of the camp's existence, from June 1943 to May 1945. They relate to prisoners from both sides of the Loiblpass who were

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[252] Gasior, trial testimony, 17 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 257.

[253] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 123—125.

[254] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 94.

cremated after their death. Given the pressure under which he jotted down the list, however, he 'may have left out one or two cards'.[255] Upon leaving the camp on 5 May 1945, Balsan had also managed to retrieve the infirmary book that had been kept by Dr Krupowicz. At least sixteen of the thirty-three deaths that Balsan had written down occurred in the main infirmary. Thirteen mortalities were documented as attempted escapes.[256] At least two of the inmates had committed suicide: Štefan Turunski had genuinely attempted to escape on 1 December 1944,[257] whereas Kurt Windt had told Balsan that he would take his own life by strolling across the sentry line. The rest of these alleged escapes had been falsified.

In stark contrast to other concentration camps, authentic escape attempts were not altogether uncommon in 1944. A few Russians, Yugoslavs, and Frenchmen accomplished this unlikely feat. Towards the end of the year, one such effort yielded mixed results. A squad was trudging through a metre of snow between the tunnel and pass. The prisoners were walking in threes and had covered a distance of four or five kilometres when a Pole and Yugoslav suddenly broke free from the work squad: 'Instead of picking up their shovels, these two comrades jumped into the ravine. One of the S.S. guards noticed it, loaded his automatic pistol and fired one burst. The S.S.

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[255] According to a recent research project, a total of thirty-nine inmates were killed at the Loiblpass. The research team, led by Andreas Baumgartner, could thus identify six more deaths. For the findings of this study, see Andreas Baumgartner, *Die Häftlinge des Loibl-KZ: Ein Gedenkbuch* (Vienna, 2010).

[256] Balsan, 5 September, 1947, pp. 79—81; 8 September 1947, pp. 93—94.

[257] On the attempted escapes of Štefan Turunski and the Slovene Alojz Odar, see Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 335—339. Unlike Turunski, Odar managed to escape and rise in the ranks of a partisan battalion in Carinthia. After the war, he joined the Fourteenth Division of the Yugoslav People's Army.

man walked up to him to see whether he was still alive. The Pole got hold of the S.S. man's leg whereupon the S.S. man fired another burst at point blank range and killed the Pole'. After executing the Pole, the SS man fired a shot into the air to alert the other guards that an escape was under way. The Yugoslav nevertheless managed to remain undetected. When the inmates came across him again after the liberation, they learned that he had joined the partisans.[258] Unlike at most other camps, where next to nobody even entertained the idea of making a run for it, the presence of partisans and vast stretches of thick forest around the Loiblpass made getaways slightly more feasible. As most successful escapes at the Loiblpass were executed under the cover of darkness, the Yugoslav had been particularly fortunate.

The odds were always stacked against an escape. Not only were the chances of avoiding eventual recapture far slimmer than at a POW camp, the potential consequences usually made death an inevitable outcome: 'we were told that if recaptured we would be hanged and reprisals would be taken on our families. All those who were recaptured were sent to Mauthausen. Also the sentry lines were thick, and an escape was almost a superhuman effort'.[259] Beyond the guardsmen, another unpleasant safety measure had been put into place. The south camp apparently had two SS *Rottenführer* who had been trained as *Hundeführer* ('dog handlers'). Their dogs hunted down and tore into the flesh of anyone whose absence had been quickly noticed.[260] At

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[258] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 304—305.

[259] Balsan, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 90. Frau Scheiring's mother took in a few French escapees, as she revealed during our interview.

[260] Theeten, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 268.

any given point in time, there were up to three dogs at the camp. In the spring of 1944, two Poles evidently tried their luck near the tunnel on the northern side. Gruschwitz's personal protector and mobile weapon, a police dog by training and a Wolfhound by breed, was dispatched straight away. The dog picked up their scent, pelted after the pair, and brought them down with vicious bites. The Poles had barely made it out of the camp gate.[261]

Escapes of any kind always met with reprisals, regardless of whether or not an attempt had been successful. The punishments that followed were often extended to the fellow countrymen of an escapee. 'One morning', as Decroix reported, 'after the escape of a Russian prisoner, Ramsauer came to the infirmary and sent all the Russians to work against the advice of Dr. Janouch'.[262] Some time in early 1944, after the recapture of a Pole, the south camp's inmates were summoned to the roll call square, denied their evening meal, and made to stand [at] attention in the rain until midnight.[263] Upon the arrival of their comrade—now dressed in civilian clothes—the camp commandant had two interpreters translate some opening remarks. Winkler alleged that the Pole had struck a sentry in the process of escaping and relayed the news that the Pole would be hanged at Mauthausen. To further intimidate the prisoners, the recaptured inmate was forced to walk along the ranks whilst saying, 'Comrades, I am back, and I will be hanged' in French and Polish. Once the verbal intimidation had been concluded, the

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[261] Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 323—324.

[262] Decroix, trial testimony, 9 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 120.

[263] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 204—205, 207.

Pole was made to lie on a sawing block and was beaten by the block elders. According to Barbier, he received one hundred blows, whereafter Ramsauer kicked him in the chest and on the head half a dozen times.[264] Lecoutre recalled a slightly different version of events. To his memory, a total of twenty-five blows had been ordered, most of which were administered by Franz Winkens and completed by Skirde. 'In Winkler's opinion Franz did not strike hard enough'. During the beatings 'Ramsauer laughed'.[265]

In what appeared to have been one of the more resourceful attempts at escaping, a group of Russians belonging to the north camp took flight on a diesel vehicle during the night. After they were caught, the entire night shift was made to stand at attention throughout the next day, cutting into their much-needed rest. When Winkler reached the camp to oversee the reprisals, all of the inmate functionaries and SS were allowed to punish the trio as they wished. Shortly before being sent away, as Chaffin recalled, 'the youngest of them said to me that they were going to Mauthausen to be hanged. How he knew that, he did not tell me'.[266] As had been the case after an escape of a Pole, Sachse ensured that during the roll call the inmate functionaries—the Austrians Rudolf Brucker (camp elder) and Julius Staab (Kapo) among them—beat the entire Russian camp population.[267] Owing to military setbacks on the Eastern Front, the ill-treatment of Russian prisoners at the Loiblpass had worsened in the course of 1944. And since

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[264] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 298—299.

[265] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 204—205, 207.

[266] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 5—6.

[267] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 220.

the continuous outflow of inmates to Mauthausen did little to satiate the Loiblpass functionaries' appetite for killing, it is likely no coincidence that the SS leadership ordered premeditated murders on Russian nationals in 1944. These killings soon outnumbered genuine attempts to escape.

On 8 February 1944, Brietzke and his favoured Oberkapo Herbert Scheller conspired to end the life of Mihael Kruk, a *Zivilrusse* ('civilian Russian') at the north camp. At around 9am on a blisteringly cold morning, with clear skies all around, the French prisoner Louis Henri Rivière from Besançon went to use the latrines. From there he observed a sentry pointing his rifle at the young Russian, who had gone to use the bathroom. Feeling ill at ease, he quickly headed back to the working site. Rivière had covered no more than a hundred metres when the first shots echoed through the mountain range. Sentries were firing rounds from two positions: 'I actually saw the sentries pointing their rifles in the direction of a little hill where the young prisoner was running among the trees …. I think he was running inside the line formed by the sentries'. Using the trees as cover, Kruk dodged around eight bullets but eventually took a hit to the arm. The work squad Kapo got a hold of the Russian and escorted him back to the *Kommando*. Since Kruk had survived the hunt, Scheller began pushing him in the direction of a slope just outside of the working site.[268]

[268] Louis Henri Rivière, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 107—110. Rivière lived in Besançon and worked as a commercial agent after the war. He had been interned in France for five months before being sent to Mauthausen. Rivière arrived at the south camp with the first transport and was sent to the north camp on 19 October 1943.

Here, another inmate—the Frenchman Marc Pincemin, who had been filling his miner's lamp at the entrance of the tunnel—saw the Oberkapo bring Kruk to the ground. Scheller began kicking the Russian to get him to stand up, but his victim would not budge. The Russian fell just in front of the ravine that represented the demarcation line. And at a distance of three metres, he had landed dangerously close to a sentry positioned in the watchtower to his left. The other sentry, standing on the right side by the notorious *Zufahrtsstraße*, was some fifteen to twenty metres further afield.[269] Moments later, Pincemin heard someone from a nearby *Kommando* shout, 'Look, St. Galmier'. From a distance of forty metres, he watched as the SS detail leader—revolver in hand—sprinted towards Kruk. Once he had reached the Russian, Brietzke leaned towards him, and after a split second shot him in the head.[270] As a third witness recalled: 'When Brietzke had fired the shot, he smiled'.[271] Conceivably, the *Kommandoführer* had been in the process of beating another prisoner when he was summoned, as he had come from 'the hut he was in the habit of using'. Immediately after the execution a Kapo instructed a few inmates to collect firewood.[272] This murder had managed to incorporate three common methods by which an inmate who bore the mark of death could be killed: shooting by sentries, pushing by Kapos, and execution by SS men.

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[269] Pincemin, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 271—278. For further details on other shootings, see Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, p. 241.

[270] Pincemin, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 271—278.

[271] Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, pp. 317—318.

[272] Rivière, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 107—110.

Patlomy Tsotsorija, the second Soviet man to be murdered, died at the south camp on 18 May 1944. The camp SS had been informed in advance, and since few made an effort to remain tight lipped, the news of a premeditated murder in the making spread rapidly: 'In the morning when we came back from work we heard through the indiscretion of an S.S. man that Tsotsorija would be shot that day. All the prisoners and the block chiefs [elders] said that Tsotsorija was going to be shot later the same day'.[273] Even Florent Stadler, a *Blockälteste* from the north camp, marched over to the main infirmary on the southern side to deliver a message. 'Today you are going to get a corpse', he told the medical orderly Decroix.[274] While the inmates learned that their comrade would be shot, nobody quite knew why the murder had been ordered. Tsotsorija had been employed in the cleaning of the camp, which sometimes required him to work outside the camp gate.[275] The inmates had christened him 'Stalingrad'. To Balsan's memory, who worked as a clerk in Block 1 at the time, Tsotsorija had been 'half-paralysed from shell shock' and was 'also mentally deficient'. Far from being a target, however, the SS had grown to see him as 'a kind of clown' and thus gave him additional rations ('the way he moved much amused the sentries').[276] At around seven o'clock in the morning, Decroix heard a first gunshot coming from the garbage dump. Moments later, he spotted an SS detail leader with a revolver at the scene. Just as the SS man slipped out of sight, the medical orderly heard another two revolver shots.

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[273] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 304.

[274] Decroix, trial testimony, 10 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 139—140.

[275] Ibid.

[276] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 69.

Decroix and Gasior were then ordered to fetch a stretcher and collect the corpse. Tsotsorija was lying face down in a ditch by the camp gate. Several SS men had assembled around the dead body, the killer among them: 'He made no secret of the fact that he had fired the shots'.[277] Balsan later saw Tsotsorija's corpse in an empty room at the infirmary. The *Lagerälteste* ordered him to help get the body to the crematorium. When they passed the camp commandant, Winkler and the camp elder exchanged smiles.[278] As Balsan clarified, 'Winkler was grinning devilishly when Tsotsorija's body was being carried past. In matters such as these the S.S. officers in the camp and the German common law criminals were accomplices. Therefore I knew what Winkler's grin meant'.[279]

This premeditated murder was the last from among the Soviet ranks. Their presence at the Loiblpass did not last. Shortly after the 'diesel engine' getaway attempt and Tsotsorija's murder, the Russians became one of two groups to be entirely removed from the camp by way of *Rücktransporte*. All of the estimated 150 Russians from both camps left the Loiblpass prior to or with the November transport ('Before being sent away their bodies were shaved from top to bottom').[280] By the end of 1944, another

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[277] Decroix, trial testimony, 10 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 139—140.

[278] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 69.

[279] Ibid., p. 83.

[280] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 5—6.

groups of inmates had been entirely removed: the Hungarian Jews.[281] As the only Jewish inmates to have officially passed through the Loiblpass, their fleeting presence at the north camp left a lasting impression on the other prisoners. The fifteen to thirty individuals were divided into two age groups: thirteen to seventeen-year-olds at one end of the spectrum, and those older than fifty at the other end. There were none in between. The work demanded of the Hungarians was more difficult than that of any other group. They were isolated from the other prisoners and had to work in a separate commando. The Jewish group laboured primarily in the so-called *Zufahrtsstraßenkommando*, on the road leading to the tunnel. The other inmates could only ever observe their efforts from afar: 'These Jews had to carry trees on their backs up a hill. This working party was rather far from the camp, and the work was harder than any other'.[282] Overseen by the SS detail leader Köbernik, they worked at a distance of two kilometres from the camp. From among the SS, Köbernik, Brietzke, Sachse, and Gruschwitz in particular derived great satisfaction from ill-treating the Hungarian Jews.[283]

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[281] In early April 1944, Hitler had tasked Himmler with bringing 100,000 Jews into the armaments industry, thus reversing the decision (eighteen months prior) to remove all Jews from the Reich. At the time of the *Wehrmacht* occupation of Hungary in March 1944, some 765,000 Jews were still in the country. By July, 458,000 had been sent to Auschwitz. While 350,000 were sent straight to the gas chambers, 108,000 were selected for forced labour in concentration camps. Ulrich Herbert has viewed Hitler's decision to mobilise Jewish Hungarians as a sign of ideological flexibility: 'He was prepared at least temporarily to subordinate central ideological aims … to the needs of the war economy'. See Ulrich Herbert, 'Labour and Extermination: Economic Interest and the Primacy of Weltanschauung in National Socialism', *Past and Present* 138 (February 1993): 189—190, 193.

[282] Theeten, 17 September 1947, pp. 264—265.

[283] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 16 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 228—230.

Life for the deportees at the Loiblpass did not improve with the expulsion of the Jewish and Soviet groups. The camp commandant became increasingly violent in the course of 1944. During one of his speeches in August he assured the inmates that the disciplinary regime would be intensified; 'he said something about discipline becoming slack and measures having to be taken to remedy this'.[284] In the face of imminent military defeat, the SS also tended to oscillate between the extremes. As a result, not even the inmates could agree on the nature of the camp's final phase: Barbier saw that 'discipline in the [south] camp became more severe towards the end of the war. Roll calls lasted longer';[285] according to Balsan, on the other hand, 'The general atmosphere of the [south] camp improved as the military situation for Germany grew worse'.[286]

No other man better illustrated the growing ambivalence among the SS than the notoriously brutal *Rapportführer* of the northern twin. When the camp's last Christmas came around, Sachse coordinated a most perverse celebration. The inmates were forced to stand to attention in the deep snow for two hours whilst singing French and Polish ballads. The Christmas tree on the roll call square was a meagre consolation; the shoes of the inmates were in tatters and nobody could remember what wearing a pair of socks felt like. Around the same time, Sachse began to feign a degree of humanity by

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[284] Theeten, 17 September 1947, pp. 258—259.

[285] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 300.

[286] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 84.

institutionalising so-called 'social evenings'.[287] But the roll call leader could never quite abandon his favourite maxim: 'There are no sick here. There are only workers or dead men'.[288] Sachse continued his brutal treatment when Christmas had passed. In mid-January 1945, Garnier was subjected to a senseless bullying spree. Despite having been beaten by Brietzke in advance, Garnier was to endure a second round of thrashings on his return from work: 'He knew that I had already been beaten by Brietzke. He said: "You are a Communist". When I said: "No", he beat me about 25 times with a stick on my ears and said: "You must say, you are a Communist". When I would not say that I was a Communist he struck me with his fists, and then he made me stand in the snow completely naked'. After the physical and psychological torment, Garnier's comrades helped get him back to his barracks.[289]

Most of the other prisoner functionaries also continued ill-treating inmates well into February 1945. The block elder Skirde still made a habit of disciplining his subordinates. Whenever Skirde deemed the beds untidy, he would make the prisoners stand in front of their beds and strike someone in the face a handful of times.[290] The purblind block elder also kept up the habit of aiming for his victims' eyes. On one particular evening in February, Skirde chased an inmate around the dining room: 'When Skirde finished with me, my face was covered with blood, and one of my eyes was

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[287] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 14—15.

[288] Garnier, trial testimony, 22 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 320.

[289] Ibid., pp. 321—322.

[290] Duverdier, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 20.

closed'. The Frenchman had been caught puffing away near a non-smoking area. While smoking was strictly prohibited in general, Sachse occasionally allowed the inmates to smoke in the dining room, as had been the case on that particular day. Yet the block elder spotted him outside the dining room, and caught him just as he was about to put out the cigarette.[291]

With a view to the future, Sachse eventually realised that ill-treating prisoners in the context of a collapsing Reich would not be to his advantage. Three weeks short of the Allied victory, the south camp Kapos stopped beating the inmates altogether. Only Gärtner, the prisoner functionary who belonged to Block 5, continued his brutality until the very end.[292] Before calculated pleasantries became the new order of the day, there had been—in the memory of the Frenchmen—only one SS man whose comparatively mild nature shone through. Franz Kessner, a guard and detail leader at the south camp, received the nickname 'Uncle Franz' for showing greater humanity than most. When at one point Bouthenot had to stand to attention for seventeen hours straight and asked permission to use the latrines, as he recounted, he 'rendered me a personal service'. Upon being asked, Kessner replied, 'Not now, but later, because the commandant is about'. Half an hour later he sent Bouthenot on his way with half a cigarette to smoke in the latrines.[293] Prisoners remarked of Kessner that he 'was very

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[291] Rioux, trial testimony, 18 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 281—283.

[292] Armand Busquet, trial testimony, 8 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 103. Busquet, who worked as a bailiff in the Court of Bayeux after the war, was held as a political prisoner at Mauthausen between 18 April and 2 June 1943. He arrived at the Loiblpass on 3 June and spent nine months in Block 2 at the south camp before being reassigned to Block 1 at the north camp.

[293] Bouthenot, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 31.

fond of shouting, but the prisoners were not afraid of him'.[294] Barbier even vouched for him by making a point of the fact that 'he was one of the most decent men in the camp'.[295] During his time as *Kommandoführer* on the night shift, he beat prisoners with 'a very small stick', and 'did not beat anybody badly'.[296]

On 15 April 1945 the north camp was dissolved due to an increase in partisan activities.[297] Some inmates were transferred to the south camp and others were taken to a provisional site in Neumarktl.[298] Sachse went along to the new locality, where he continued to work on redeeming himself. Having taken almost every parcel apart in the past, he now handed over an unopened one from Chaffin's girlfriend.[299] Yet as the concentration camp started to dissolve, the inmates faced the ultimate threat: being executed. The increasing likelihood of a partisan takeover threatened to spark a mass killing at any point: 'Some time before the end of the war we had to lie face down on the parade ground [roll call square]. All lights around the camp were turned off, so that in case the partisans attacked the camp, we would be unable to revolt and could be shot'.[300] There had also been plans to kill all of the prisoners at Tržič: 'A few days before our liberation a group of S.S. wanted to kill all the detainees at Neumarktl. I

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[294] Spiel, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 290.

[295] Barbier, trial testimony, 19 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/579, Vol. II, p. 309.

[296] Lecoutre, trial testimony, 15 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 206.

[297] In April 1945 four partisan battalions were deployed in the area by the Carinthian partisan association ('Koroški odred'), which was under the control of Ivan Uranič, commander of the Yugoslav Fourth Zone of operations. See Rauchensteiner, *Der Krieg in Österreich*, p. 359—360.

[298] Hantz, trial testimony, 4 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 52.

[299] Chaffin, trial testimony, 2 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 14—15.

[300] Balsan, trial testimony, 5 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, p. 74.

heard of this from Sgt. Zimmermann who was in charge of us then'. The order had already been issued when the SS decided against executing it, 'because the Allies were near, and the local population was friendly'.[301]

Winkler assembled all of the inmates a few days before the Loiblpass camp was finally dissolved. Thinking that the Americans—rather than the British—would be at the gates of the camp any day now, the camp commandant announced that all those who were capable of walking would be marched to Villach. For the sick and wounded, he noted, there would be no transport. With up to twenty-five prisoners still requiring medical attention, Janouch decided to stay behind with the dentist Roger Puybouffat, whom he made his new medical orderly. On 7 May the healthy inmates set off downhill and under guard. At two o'clock in the morning on 8 May the lights went on in the SS quarters and the last of the Nazis left in the direction of Klagenfurt. Those prisoners who had stayed behind at the south camp were prisoners no more. Janouch felt liberated: 'Ramsauer no longer had any power to give orders. I could also use the S.S. infirmary'. Right away, he did a round of the camp: 'I found large quantities of flour, noodles, margarine, semolina and lots of other things. The patients had never been fed so well. There was also meat and potatoes. I also looked at the medical stores in the S.S. infirmary. There was a room with shelves full of bandages, ointments, disinfectants and medicaments'. Janouch and Puybouffat promptly filled three large boxes with medication and began nursing their patients back to health.[302] And so began the afterlife.

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[301] Morin, trial testimony, 3 September 1947, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I, pp. 40—41.

[302] Janouch, trial testimony, 15 September 1947; 12 September 1947, p. 187, TNA, WO 235/578, Vol. I,

The witnesses at court left the British with the most complete record of crimes and conditions at the wartime Loiblpass twin. Piecing together the accounts by former inmates has allowed for a detailed understanding of a subcamp that remains almost entirely missing from the historical narrative. Differences notwithstanding, KZ Loiblpass bore all of the markings of a notoriously brutal Mauthausen subcamp. The inmates had not just passed through Mauthausen in the first place; they had also lived in constant fear of being placed on *Rücktransporte*. In psychological terms, alone the possibility of being sent to the northern twin as an alternative form of punishment ensured that life in the south camp cannot be construed as 'the lesser of two evils'. And murder, ill-treatment, disease, malnourishment, and prisoner hierarchies governed an inmate's life on both sides of the pass. Furthermore, Himmler had not intended to keep the prisoners alive at the war's end. Like at Ebensee, there appear to have been plans to force the inmates into the tunnel before sealing off both ends through the use of explosives; Zimmermann supposedly informed the partisans ahead of time, who in turn occupied the wooded, mountainous areas above the entrances to prevent this plot from materialising. [303] What ultimately becomes clear is that traditional Carinthian

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pp. 196, 200. Three Poles who remained at the Loiblpass with Janouch died shortly after the dissolution of the camp: Waclaw Gonsior on 12 May at the south camp, where Janouch buried him; Marjan Krulikowski on 6 July in a hospital in Golnik; and Cseslaw Brel (or Bryl) presumably died soon after leaving the same hospital on 9 June (he had decided to return to Poland when his condition began deteriorating). See Tišler and Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ*, pp. 409, 416—417.

[303] See 'Eine Broschüre über das Nebenlager Loiblpass, Übersetzung aus dem Jugoslawischen', p. 19. AMM, Sig. B/27—28.

renderings relativizing the suffering of victims or the brutality of their captors cannot hold sway in the light of the evidence presented between September and October 1947.

CONCLUSION

While the human consequences of the Holocaust have been dealt with extensively since the 1980s through a burgeoning DP literature, the rigid separation of historiographical domains along pre- and post-1945 lines continues to inhibit our understanding of the broader character of Nazi concentration camps. A general historiographical neglect of the Loiblpass and Ebensee subcamps prompted this study and its efforts to chart the histories of these two subcamps onto the history of their neighbouring communities, and vice versa. Analysing the camps and their bordering societies in unison presents an effective way of overcoming inconsistencies in memory. Beyond merely reconstructing life in these subcamps, therefore, an inclusion of their local contexts and postwar dimensions has made it possible to identify the main contributing factors shaping their local legacies between 1943 and 1948.

This dissertation has endeavoured to contribute to the literature by taking a contextual approach. Using 'agency' as the unifying feature, the conclusion assesses the role of those to whom the subcamps were connected, reinforces how local conditions as well as provincial forces acting on a region and community could cement the legacies of a subcamp by 1947, and highlights the wider potential and adaptability of this dissertation's framework. At several points the conclusion indicates which aspects, given the necessary time and resources, might warrant further investigation.

VICTIMS OF A PARADOXICAL LIBERATION

Let us begin by reflecting on two groups whose protagonist part in negotiating the 'lives and afterlives' of the subcamps continues to be compromised by issues of representation: inmates and survivors, on the one hand, and civilian populations in the vicinity of the subcamps, on the other hand.

Individuals persecuted by the Third Reich tended until fairly recently to be portrayed as passive victims.[1] This depiction must be challenged. Neither during nor after the war were inmates and then survivors overwhelmingly complacent. This dissertation has therefore paid attention to the important role of inmates and survivors throughout, including: instances when inmates saved the lives of fellow prisoners during the war; the central role of survivors in the relief process; and the significance of former inmates in capturing suspected war criminals, helping the Allies investigate them, and providing evidence to ensure that at least a portion of the suspects were brought to trial. In relation to the postwar dimension, the theme of 'liberation' provides an ideal point of departure in contesting notions of helplessness.

The process of the liberation at Ebensee became fraught with paradoxes: former inmates were freed and imprisoned by their liberators; the local population first

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[1] When NBC's televised series 'Holocaust' was broadcast in West Germany and Austria in 1979, for instance, the fourth most frequent question by historically-interested callers had been: 'Why were the Jews so passive?'. See Andrei S. Markovits and Rebecca S. Hayden, '"Holocaust" before and after the Event: Reactions in West Germany and Austria', *New German Critique* 19 (1980): 61. Also see Wachsmann, *KL*, where he argues: 'Another myth—also attached to the image of Auschwitz as a death factory—is that of wholly passive victims' (pp. 317—318).

sympathised with and then re-marginalised survivors; expressions of international solidarity among DPs materialised, only to give way to ethnic tensions. These symptoms of regression all surfaced within a matter of months after the end of the war, thus ensuring that freedom would remain relative and progress in rendering relief and rehabilitation would not be linear. As a survivor of Ebensee later recalled: 'The prisoners continued to live in the squalid [former concentration] camp above, waiting, trying to gather strength, looking forward to the arrival of UNRRA relief'. 'Food rations', he noted, 'gradually improved, but nutrition was still far from adequate, and many prisoners continued to fail and die. Bodies were accumulating at a hazardous rate'. Indeed, the task of saving lives and containing the outbreak of disease had rested at first in the hands of the liberated. In spite of all of the prevailing injustices, uncertainties, and complications—and not to speak even of the lasting physical and psychological effects of the Holocaust—former inmates did not revel in them: 'Left to their own devices, they cooperated to maintain the camp themselves'.[2] One need only recall that by 1946 most survivors within 'the Settlement' were fully employed and self-sufficient in organising social, political, and economic life.

From among the Mauthausen branches that had still contained prisoners at the war's end, the Loiblpass is unique in not having experienced an Allied liberation. Despite the danger presented by retreating forces loyal to Nazi Germany, the inmate doctor, Janouch, and his helper, Puybouffat, voluntarily stayed behind in the south

[2] Garcia, *As Long as I Remain Alive*, pp. 18—19.

camp in order to nurse twenty-five sick inmates back to health. Aided by partisans, the convoy of around one thousand inmates—which had left the camp under guard on 7 May—succeeded in freeing itself in the Valley of Roses. Yet it is part of the greater irony of postwar Southern Carinthia that the expulsion of Yugoslav forces wrote itself deeply into provincial memory as a self-liberation, consequently assuming a narrative that had, in truth, belonged to the former inmates of the Loiblpass. Well over one hundred French survivors immediately formed the *Brigade Liberté* to continue the very efforts that initially had caused many of them to be incarcerated; resisting and fighting the influences of Nazism. Further examination of this particular postwar chapter could prove interesting; not least because the resistance fighters had helped capture and guard some two-dozen former Loiblpass SS functionaries whose destinies remain unclear.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MARGINALISATION PRACTICES

In regards to the second of our passive vocabularies—the commonly used term 'bystander'—an integrated approach has enabled us to question whether this word, if used too loosely, skews our understanding of agency. One might agree with the moral considerations of its application. Yet in the light of the evidence presented in this thesis alone, can its denotations continue to be applied to all locals in the same manner, and without differentiating among individuals and across localities? Is it useful? Or, does it convolute our understanding of local awareness and detract from gaining a deeper understanding of the reasons why locals generally did not put up any resistance to the

presence of the wartime camps? However morally ambiguous, every group of actors has to be heard in order to be critically examined. Only by listening to all can one begin to appreciate how distinct claims to personal victimhood were constructed, rationalised, and subsequently mobilised to relativize the suffering of concentration camp inmates.

What has become especially clear in the course of this dissertation is that civilian subcamp societies did not require politically-engineered myths of victimhood or ignorance from above; they did well to construct their distinctly local and unique narratives in every respect. Framing local awareness in these terms contributes to diminishing some of the lingering misconceptions that the 'island syndrome' has left in its wake. And it may well inspire scholars to resume the efforts of survivors by circling back to originally uncontested assumptions of community awareness. After all, those who spoke out after the liberation openly questioned: 'Why did this Inferno that we on the inside behind barbed wire endured never prompt just feelings of agitation and indignation among you out there in freedom?'[3] With the benefit of hindsight, and seeing as locals had in many cases been forced both to tour camps and dig graves for thousands of dead inmates, one must consider how nothing sufficed to adjust their perspective accordingly. As this study has exposed, awareness could have the opposite effect; it had the power to erode sympathies, stimulate personal claims to suffering, and re-marginalise the marginalised.

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[3] Draws-Tychsen, 'Völkerpsychologie, Gestapoterror und Völkerfrieden': 3. Original quote: 'Warum hat jenes Inferno bei uns da drinnen hinter Stacheldraht niemals bei euch da draußen in der Freiheit eine gerechte Resonanz des Aufgewühltseins und der Empörung gefunden?'

A greater degree of local awareness had the potential to inspire disdain towards former inmates and encourage a distorted version of a subcamp. The case of Ebensee in the early postwar period hints at a deep understanding on the part of the civilian population and local bureaucracy, whose initial compliance with American demands appears to have been motivated more by fear and feelings of uncertainty than genuine compassion. The efforts of a strong antifascist survivor network—aided by the local occupying authorities—provided formerly persecuted individuals and groups with considerable support. Antifascist solidarity was relatively short-lived, and not only because local authorities began increasingly to voice their resistance to survivors living in and around the area. Even so, a growing opposition to the continued presence of DPs emerged due to an acute awareness, prompting the community to more confidently blame KZ survivors for any ensuing postwar hardship. Reversions to old order mentalities consequently came into full swing, ensuring that the postwar years would come to represent continuity rather than a break with the past. Ultimately, the active marginalisation of former concentration camp inmates could be interpreted as a direct result of a heightened awareness of wartime camp crimes and the postwar presence of DPs in and around Ebensee.

The Loiblpass twin camp certainly figured less prominently in the postwar lives of its neighbouring community. Given the fact that the camp was promptly abandoned and largely stripped of its infrastructure by local farmers, it served no postwar purpose that could have sparked a degree of self-reflection or would have significantly contributed to a deeper knowledge of its wartime nature. In the absence of a more direct

confrontation with the conditions, and free of the directives that obliged Mauthausen and Ebensee inhabitants to 'clean up' the camp grounds, locals could more freely shape and negotiate memory.

In deconstructing the arguments presented by those who lived close to the north camp, a binary 'selective association process' emerges. In socioeconomic terms, the memory of the tunnelling project prompted positive associations. Most farmers had been heavily indebted, and the Loibl Valley was a desolate place, largely devoid of any contact with the outside world. With the arrival of the camp, therefore, the Valley had witnessed a new age of economic optimism as well an increase in social interactions. A political association with the site, however, was embedded in a larger 'culture of silence' resulting from the difficulty of choosing one side (Germany, Austria, or pan-Germanism) over the other (Yugoslavia or Communism). Many were wary of taking a stance and effectively lived in zones of grey, which, in turn, generally compelled locals to omit negative camp aspects from any given narrative. Political allusions provoked a relativizing of brutality and a claim to personal victimhood through the lens of the SS-partisan armed struggle. These factors left little room for acknowledging the suffering of formerly persecuted inmates. Although more or less diametrically opposed, both forms of association point to a warped local understanding—but not a denial—of the camp's existence. The Valley's inhabitants chose to accept the 'benefits' of the camp during the war but later refused to acknowledge any genuine suffering that might detract from or undermine their own provincial version of events.

SURVIVORS AND THE PROTEST DIMENSION

Conversely, active representations present an equally serious challenge. Selective depictions of survivors in an unfavourable capacity had been common practice in the early postwar period. Leading US Army officials at Ebensee betrayed their fading sympathies towards former inmates within a matter of days. Captain Brennan, for instance, expressed this in no uncertain terms: to his mind 'most of them were animals', and had it not been for the troops, he purported, 'there would have been rape, pillage and the town would have been, undoubtedly, burned to the ground'.[4] The municipal bureaucracy initially showed restraint, but by November 1946 local politicians gained the confidence to urge the mayor to solve the 'Jewish Question' by removing this 'negative element' from the town.[5] In respect to KZ Loiblpass, the Allies did not uncover or liberate the site, nor did Loibl Valley inhabitants witness the continued presence of survivors. To quote Siegfried Ogris, 'no one saw where the convicts went'.[6] Witnesses from the Valley and several provincial historians have not fully accepted vital differences between prisoner functionaries and other inmates on the one hand, and between inmates and more universally-accepted notions of criminals on the other hand ('An inmate is an inmate. And this is the same the world over').[7]

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[4] T. Brennan to V. Brennan, personal correspondence, Ebensee, 16 May 1945, USHMM, AN 1997.A.0212.

[5] Gemeindeausschußprotokoll, Ebensee, 19 November 1945, ZME.

[6] Ogris, personal interview.

[7] Scheiring, personal interview.

Let us briefly reflect on a recent Mauthausen-related controversy in order to appreciate the latent perils of limited representation and their contemporary relevance in Austria. In August 2015, the right-wing magazine *Die AULA* published an article depicting Mauthausen survivors as a cohort of 'mass murderers' who had exercised a reign of terror at the expense of the civilian population and to the detriment of a country 'suffering' from the liberation. Although a Green party politician promptly sued the magazine on the legal basis of the NS Prohibition Act, the authorities prosecuting the case ultimately struck the motion down. The Ministry of Justice's legal protection officer not only concurred with the decision; he proceeded to reinforce the revisionist account by offering circumstantial evidence of his own. Having grown up in the vicinity of KZ Mauthausen, the government prosecutor readily mobilised anecdotal childhood memories: a former inmate had upon liberation threatened his father, a policeman at the time, with a pistol.[8] A contextualised approach can and must counter the logic underpinning revisionism and attempts to deflect blame. To do so, one should revisit the early postwar period.

Neither the local bureaucracy in Ebensee nor the Army men on the ground offer an acceptable and sustainable version of events. Both groups appear to have employed selective representations as a coping mechanism or calculated strategy. The US forces had not prioritised the liberation of the camps in the first place. And beyond understaffing and resource shortages, those who arrived upon the dissolution of the site

[8] For a recent overview of the case, see Colette M. Schmidt, '"Aula" darf KZ-Häftlinge "Landplage" und "Massenmörder" nennen', *Der Standard*, 7 February 2016.

were insufficiently experienced or prepared to provide effective relief. The presence of DPs, who required serious attention and received 'preferential' Allied treatment, motivated some inhabitants to shift their resentments away from the Third Reich and project these onto the 'Landfremde', as supposed foreigners or Jews often had been referred to in Upper Austria. A disproportionate media coverage of DP crimes reinforced such narratives and further fuelled contempt towards the genuine victims of the Third Reich.[9]

The actions of former inmates may be viewed within a protest dimension; as a series of logical expressions of grievances through which individuals sought to fight previous, continuing, and emerging injustices. The initial, fleeting wave of 'lynch justice' was chiefly directed against former prisoner functionaries and SS men who had been in many cases responsible for the murder of inmates. Local inhabitants, by contrast, remained unscathed. The fact that some had even shown contempt by throwing stones at inmates during the war did not motivate the liberated to pursue an indiscriminate murder spree. Although emaciated prisoners and the stench of burning flesh had passed through the wartime village with sufficient frequency, the indigenous population could go on fervently to deny having known the extent of camp conditions. The recollection of an Ebensee survivor highlights the comparatively harmless nature of revenge. Asked how 'liberation' had felt, he noted: 'You didn't believe it. It took a while. No, it took a

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[9] For postwar crime analyses regarding the Federal Republic of Germany and Upper Austria, see Alan Kramer, '"Law-abiding Germans"? Social Disintegration, Crime, and the Reimposition of Order in Post-war Western Germany, 1945—9', in Richard J. Evans (ed.), *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History* (London, 1988): 238—261; Quatember, Felber, and Rolinek, *Das Salzkammergut*, pp. 107—113.

while. The only thing I remember', he continued, 'we went to town and to a coffee shop outside', in a group of between four and eight survivors, and 'sat down at a couple of tables. We ordered bread, all kinds of food. Coffee. Then we got up, we said, "Hitler will pay," you know, we told them'.[10]

In the longer term, those who remained in the Settlement as non-repatriable DPs—Jewish survivors in particular—bore the brunt of mounting Allied neglect. Dissent through organised activities like hunger strikes was not uncommon. Yet the most notable form of demonstration became manifest through the vibrant and self-sufficient communities that former inmates helped to build at a time when municipal council members were still busy fabricating myths. The former group's approaches to combating prevalent discrimination demand further research if we hope to prevent the aforementioned tendencies towards misrepresentation from proliferating. For it is indisputable that, above all, the course of 'liberation' ultimately came at the expense of the survivors of the camps.

THE POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF THE TRIALS

The final task rests in briefly revisiting the divergent reasons why the subcamps of Ebensee and the Loiblpass failed to reach their political potential, and in considering how available trial records may benefit future research. Tracing a part of the journey

[10] Norman Belfer, in discussion with Joan Ringelheim, Washington, DC, 31 May 1996, in 'Oral History Collection', USHMM, AN 1996.A.0194, RG-50.030*0367.

leading to the postwar trials has demonstrated that their failure to transcend a local dimension was by no means inevitable. This was especially true in the case of American Mauthausen investigations in Upper Austria. Unlike the British, CIC officers and war crimes investigating teams could take full advantage of the continued presence of former inmates and the high concentration of former functionaries. The British in Carinthia faced a plethora of regional difficulties exacerbated by a lack of institutional continuity and cooperation. Although the initiatives of resolute survivors ultimately guaranteed that the Allies had sufficient information to capture and prosecute suspects, two decisions in the course of investigations ensured that the trials of the former functionaries of these subcamps would likely not garner sufficient national or international attention.

In locating the trials of Mauthausen suspects at Dachau, the Americans contributed to the legend that National Socialism always had been and continued to be a German problem. The British took the opposite approach; they opted for Klagenfurt as a venue in an attempt to heighten provincial awareness of Nazi crimes in the region. Despite being the largest Allied war crimes trial in Austria, its poor conduct meant that it would prove ineffective in reaching a wider audience. It remained a local affair that represented a missed opportunity to put the Loiblpass on the map. For all of their calculated expediency in matters concerning the military occupation, and despite serious administrative failures leading up to the proceedings, the British ultimately succeeded in staging a comparatively free trial: the prosecution avoided the legal cover that tarnished the American proceedings at Dachau, trusted instead fully in the former

inmates for the necessary proof, and thus honoured the victims by placing their experiences centre stage.

Against the background of the burgeoning Cold War, the causal relationship between a reintegration of former Nazis and a re-marginalisation of their victims would henceforth gain ever greater momentum through the support of federal actors. The year 1947 ultimately marked the end of any remaining hope that those belonging to formerly persecuted groups would in the near future be given a chance to rebuild their lives with the same opportunities afforded to other postwar Europeans. The wartime SS doctor Sigbert Ramsauer could not just continue practising medicine in Klagenfurt after his release in 1954; his views could also go uncorrected. During an interview filmed in 1990, a mere fourteen days before his retirement, Ramsauer offered a final personal reflection on the Third Reich:

> I continue to be a so-called Nazi, and the people know this, and I do not much care for the resistance fighter …. In my opinion they are still traitors to the fatherland and guilty of high treason. And I also do not support the fact that in Carinthia monuments are being erected for partisans while our freedom fighters are not even bestowed a badge of honour. And then there are these KZ associations, and so on. All this is rooted in financial considerations. The more they lie, the more they get, one could say. These millions of gassings of Jews are a chapter in and of themselves. Read the scholarship, what foreigners, and not Germans, write about it—established historians! …. No, not just [David] Irving …. Well, first of all the word Nazi was not coined by us; it is a Jewish word that denotes a National Socialist, and a National Socialist one can very well be, on the inside. …. I still agree to this day with the goals, with the politics, of the Third Reich …. I would have solved the Jewish question differently than it was approached in the end. But to my mind one cannot blame the Führer for this …. But this

> has nothing to do with the fact that it is a gross exaggeration to speak of six million Jews whom we killed.[11]

While postwar Southern Carinthia in particular provided an ideological safe haven for convicted war criminals after their exoneration, a consideration of Ramsauer's postwar network in general speaks volumes about the social, political, and legal support that former National Socialists enjoyed until the early 1990s. Where Mauthausen-related studies have managed to provide broader insights, their subjects mostly have been viewed in isolation.[12] And as in the case of the legacies of the Mauthausen complex for the local context and postwar dimension, our understanding of the factors impacting on the social reintegration of lesser-known subcamp functionaries has been subsumed into the broader picture of nationally-motivated policies, amnesty laws, party-political dealings, and the Cold War order.

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[11] Sigbert Ramsauer, in discussion with Egon Humer, Klagenfurt, 17 January 1990, 'Gesprächsprotokoll: Interview Dr. Ramsauer', pp. 17—18, in National Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Janko Tišler collection, Box 194. Original quote: 'Ich bin nach wie vor ein sogenannter Nazi und das wissen die Leut', und ich halte nix vom Widerstandskämpfer .... Das sind immer noch meiner Ansicht nach Vaterlands- und Hochverräter. Und ich halte auch nichts davon, daß man Partisanen in Kärnten Denkmäler setzt und unseren Abwehrkämpfern nicht einmal einen Orden zubilligt. .... Und es gibt da KZ Vereine usw. Das hat ja alles einen finanziellen Hintergrund. Je mehr sie lügen, desto mehr kriegen sie, könnte man sagen. Diese Millionen Vergasungen von Juden, das ist ja ein Kapitel für sich. Lesen Sie einmal die Literatur, was Ausländer – nicht Deutsche – darüber schreiben, bekannte Historiker! .... Na, nicht nur den Irving .... Also, erstens einmal das Wort Nazi stammt nicht von uns, das ist ein jüdisches Wort, soll heißen Nationalsozialist und Nationalsozialist kann man ja sein, innerlich. .... ich bin mit den Zielen, mit der Politik, die eben im Dritten Reich geherrscht hat, heute noch einverstanden .... Die Judenfrage hätte ich anders gelöst, als sie dann angegangen wurde zum Schluß. Aber das alles kann man meines Wissens nach gar nicht dem Führer zur last legen, sondern das waren irgendwelche Unterläufer .... Aber das hat nichts damit zu tun, daß es eine maßlose Übertreibung ist von 6 Mio. Juden zu reden, die wir umgebracht haben'.

[12] This is also true of the autobiographical account of Ramsauer. See Rettl and Pirker, *"Ich war mit Freuden dabei"*, which nevertheless presents a rare and insightful Mauthausen study of a subcamp SS doctor.

Although few subjects are better suited to provide new insights into the transition from war to postwar society in Central Europe, the biographies of SS and inmate functionaries have not been sufficiently analysed beyond 1945. A comprehensive account of their pre-war and wartime rise and role, postwar capture and prosecution, and later rehabilitation and reintegration has yet to be written. So-called 'perpetrator research' has focused more on higher-ranking actors and the period preceding the war's end. There also exists no comprehensive monograph dealing with the personnel who guarded and administered the Mauthausen concentration camp complex between 1938 and 1945. For a more complete analysis, this dissertation proposes that future research could make use of the vast collection of largely untapped Mauthausen trial-related archival sources.

One possible avenue would be to marry the social histories of functionaries and former functionaries with the local and political contexts that nurtured them between the 1930s and 1990s: from the communities neighbouring Mauthausen and its subcamps to the various German and Austrian towns to which many eventually returned after serving out their sentences. Since most of the sites within the complex were located in the US zone of occupation, an ideal point of departure would be to consult NARA's relevant war crimes files, which include investigation reports, trial proceedings, clemency appeals, prison records, and parolee case files. However, few camp historians have consulted the trial records to help trace the longer biographies of these men.

The paradoxical nature of the inmate functionaries' relative absence from the scholarship becomes most evident when one considers their noticeable presence in the docks at Dachau; around one quarter of the suspected Mauthausen war criminals brought to trial had been prisoner functionaries. Yet in his comprehensive Mauthausen monograph, David Pike—presuming that most of the inmate functionaries had fallen victim to 'lynch justice'—contends that it 'is most unlikely that a history of the Kapos of the KZ will ever be written'.[13] As Karin Orth rightly highlights: 'Worthwhile – and achievable on the basis of trial records – would be detailed analyses of the network of power relationships ... between the SS men and prisoner functionaries'.[14] Doing so through an integrated approach may tell us something about wartime relationships between functionaries, differences among them, and their relationship to the communities which nurtured them throughout. Tackling such issues and ultimately placing them within the broader context of both Germanies and Austria could help advance interpretations relating to their divergent National Socialist legacies.

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[13] Pike, *Spaniards in the Holocaust*, p. 61.

[14] Karin Orth, 'The concentration camp personnel', trans. Christopher Dillon, in Caplan and Wachsmann (eds.), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany*: 55.

APPENDIX

Figure A1. 'Ebensee DP statistics showing main recorded changes between 31 January and 30 September 1946'. Data representation based on semi-monthly and monthly statistical reports by Team 313.[1] Graph conceived and statistical evidence processed by the author.

Figure A2. 'Inmate and SS strength at subcamps attached to Mauthausen on 27 March 1945'. Excludes the main camp and the Gusens. Data representation based on statistics provided by a former inmate on 15 May 1945.[2] Graph conceived and statistical evidence processed by the author.

Figure A3. 'Monthly inmate deaths at Ebensee between December 1943 and April 1945'. The total death toll for this period is 8535; statistics for May 1945. While the graph cannot account for all deaths on site and does not include individuals sent to Mauthausen for extermination or cremation, the figure is higher than that cited by Florian Freund (8200). Data representation based on statistics provided and statements made by two former inmates.[3] Graph conceived by the author.

Figure A4. 'Loiblpass inmate statistics depicting arrivals, transports back to Mauthausen, and prisoner strength between June 1943 and May 1945'. Based on statistics provided by Janko Tišler.[4] Representative of known statistics; does not include figures for most return transports to Mauthausen.

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[1] For statistical reports ending on 31 January, 15 February, 28 February, 15 March, 31 March, 15 April, 30 April, 15 May, 31 May, and 15 June (all 1946), see 'UNRRA Austrian Mission Semi-Monthly Statistical Report on DP UNRRA Operations in American Zone', Ebensee DP Camp. For statistical reports covering the months of June, July, August, and September (all 1946), see 'UNRRA Austrian Mission Monthly Statistical Report on DP UNRRA Operations in American Zone', Ebensee DP Camp. All of the above-mentioned reports are contained in 'American Zone Reports - Monthly Statistical Reports - Team 313 Ebensee 1944-1949', ARMS, Series 0527, Box 142, File S-1494-0000-0374, Folder US/S/8. The DP population data for 31 January is slightly inaccurate: an addition of the total DP population on the basis of nationalities and categories adds up to 1301; on the basis of age and sex the total adds up to 1321.

[2] Ernst Martin, sworn statement, Mauthausen, 9 May 1945, Cohen Report, pp. 76—78, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 22, pp. 1—2.

[3] Drahomír Bárta and Vincent Bernot, sworn statement, Ebensee, 17 May 1945, Cohen Report, pp. 100—105, NARA, RG 549, Box 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31, p. 6.

[4] Janko Tišler and Christian Tessier, *Das Loibl-KZ: Die Geschichte des Mauthausen-Außenlagers am Loiblpass/Ljubelj*, trans. Hans Pfeiffer (Vienna, 2007), pp. 112—115.

Figure A1. *Ebensee DP statistics showing main recorded changes between 31 January and 30 September 1946.*

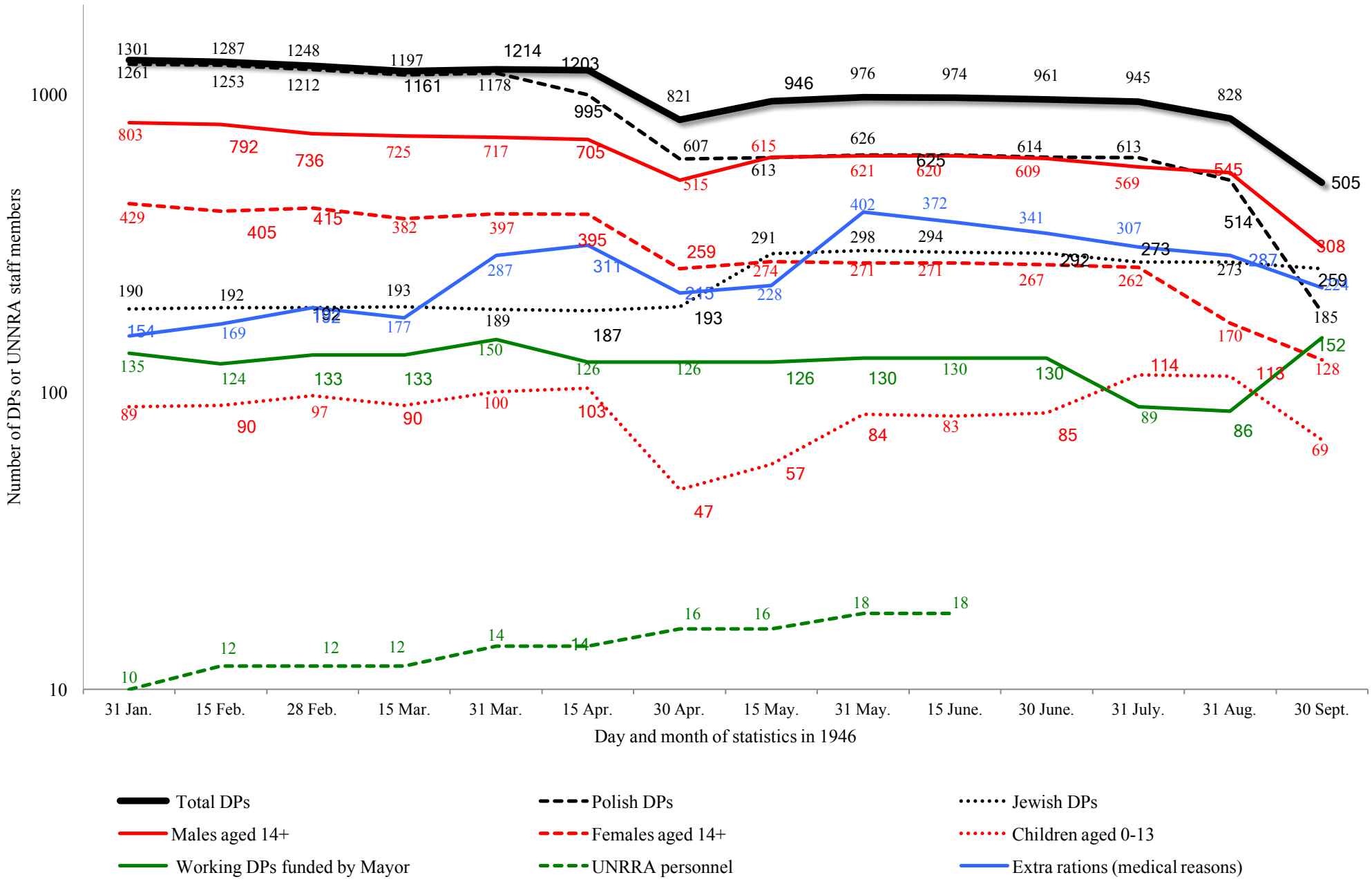
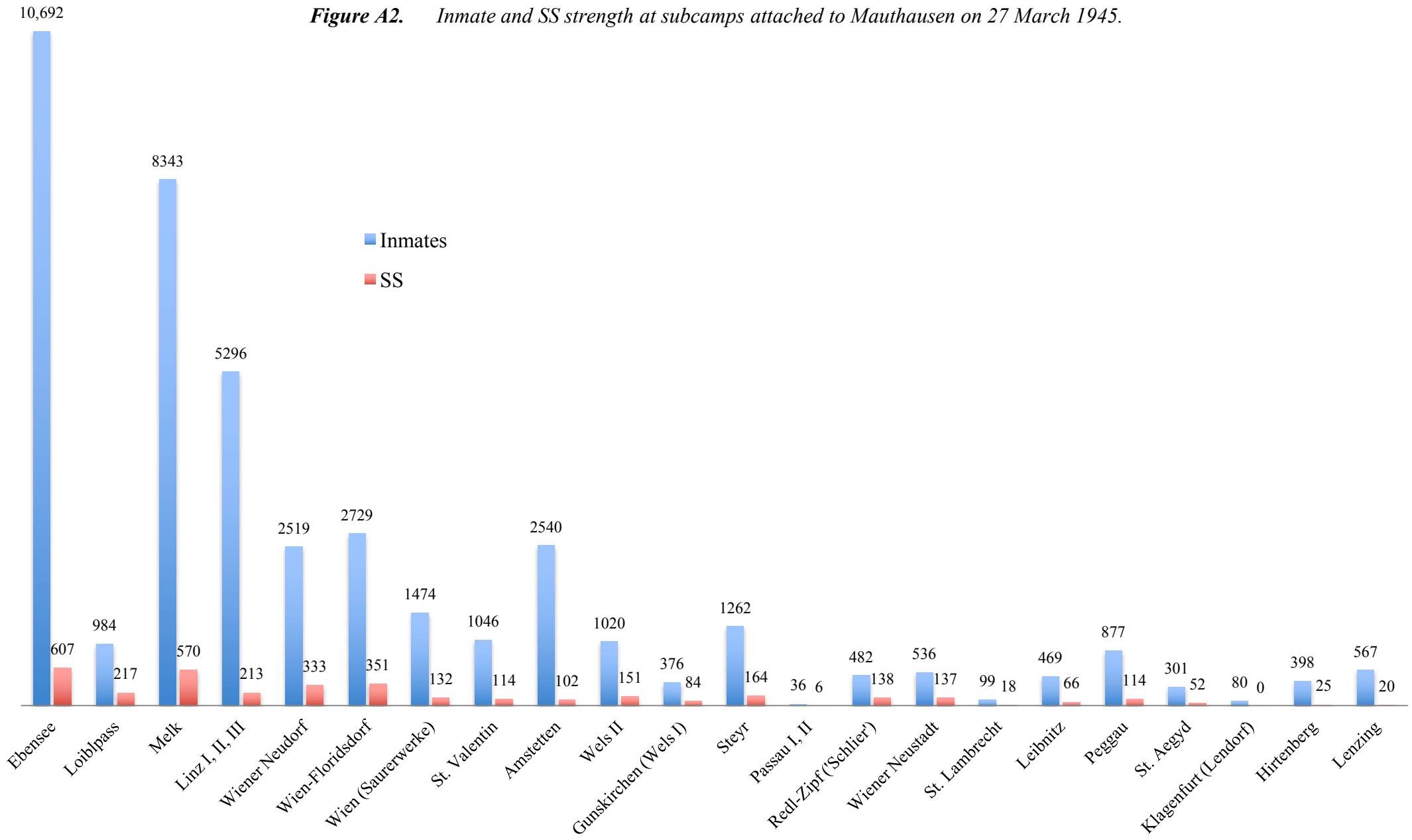


Figure A2. *Inmate and SS strength at subcamps attached to Mauthausen on 27 March 1945.*



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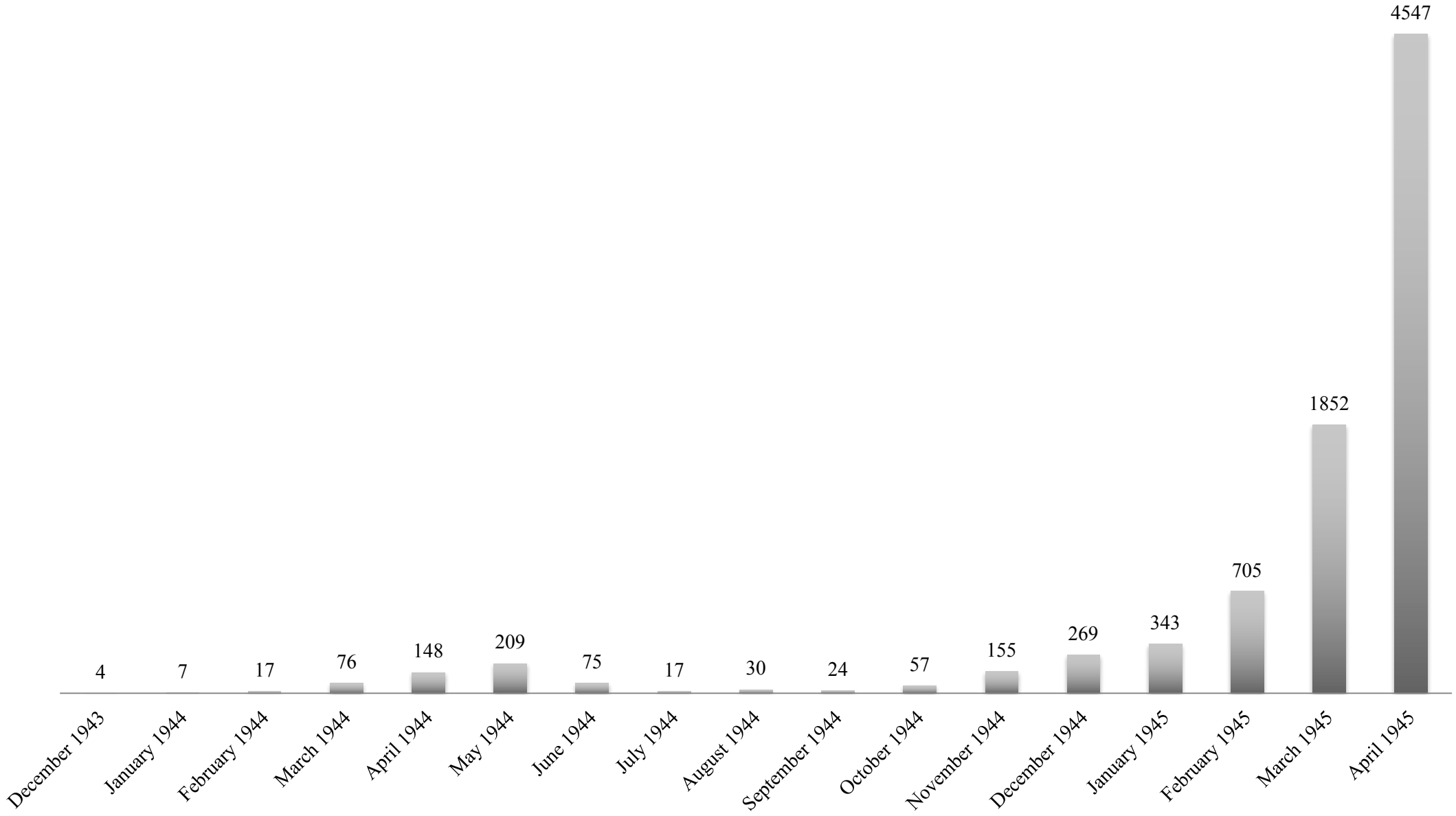
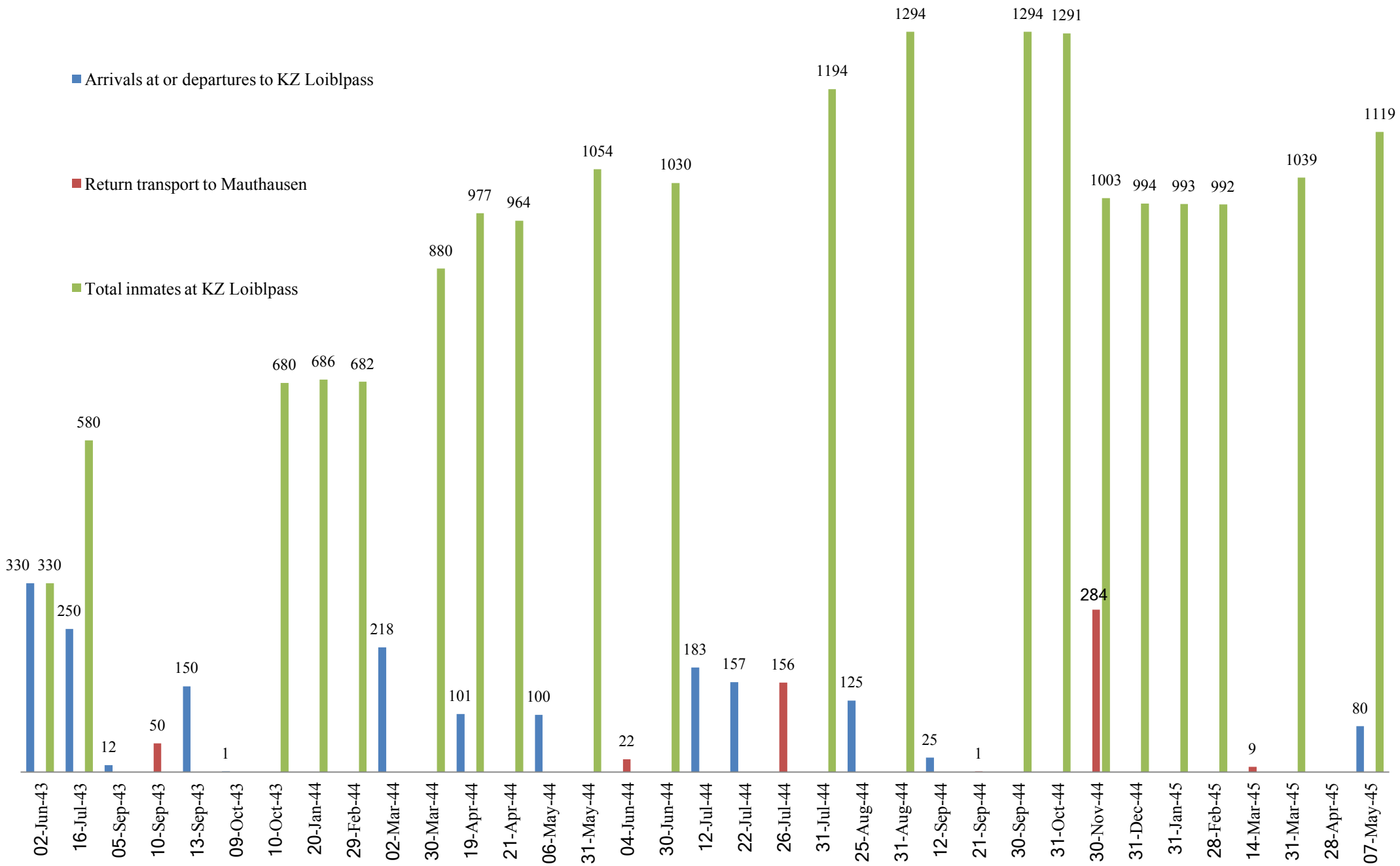


Figure A4. *Loiblpass inmate statistics depicting arrivals, transports back to Mauthausen, and prisoner strength between June 1943 and May 1945.*



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