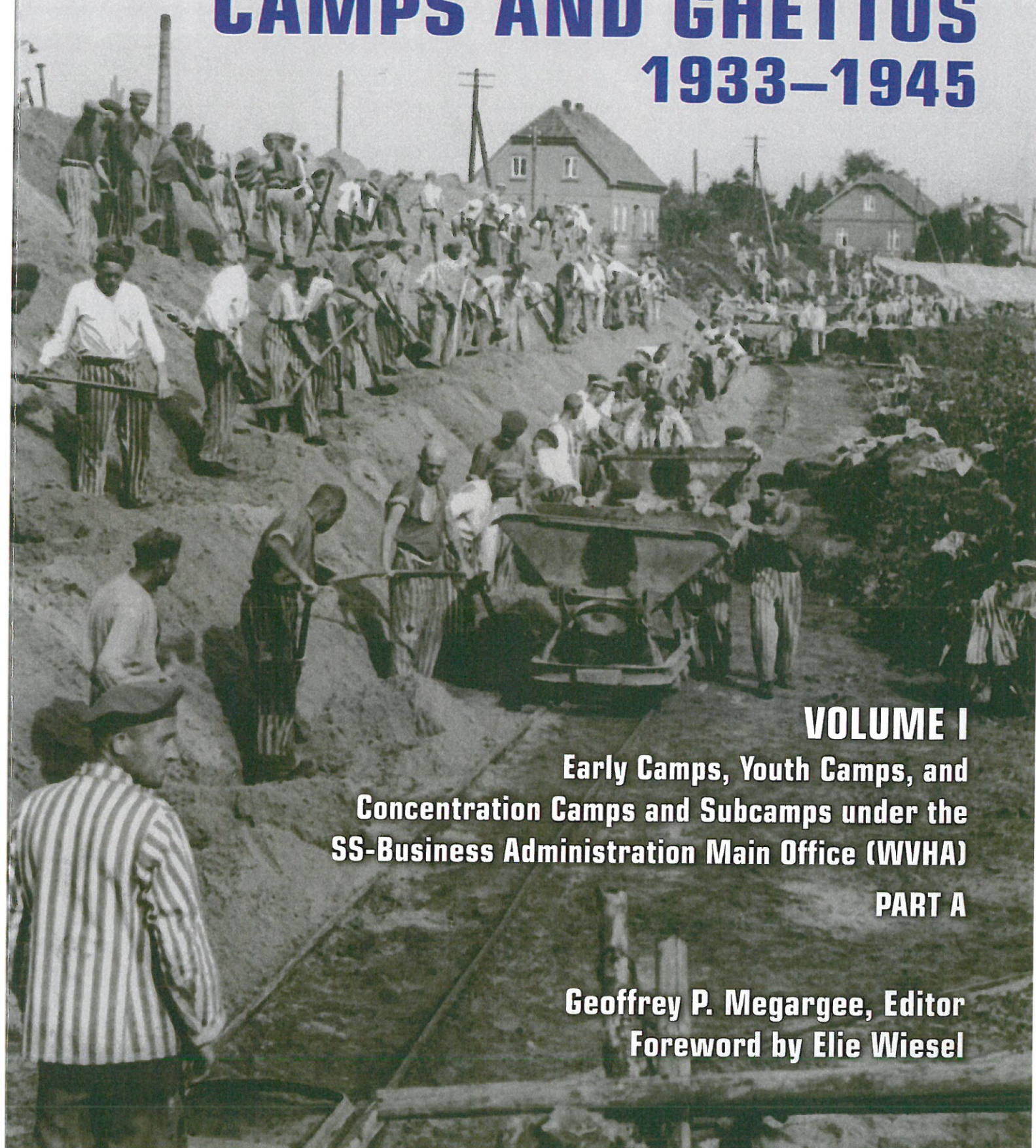


THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CAMPS AND GHETTOS 1933-1945



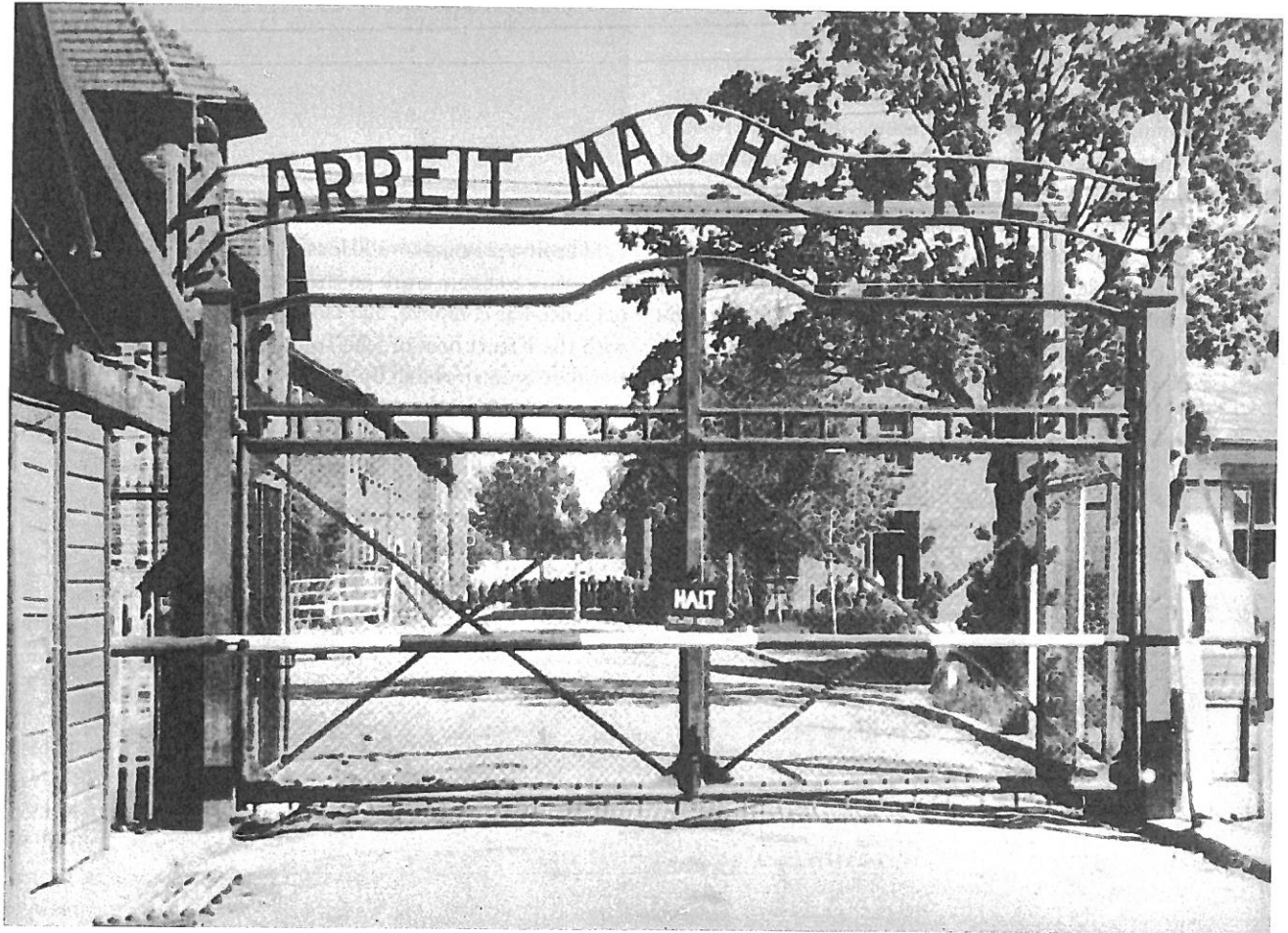
VOLUME I

**Early Camps, Youth Camps, and
Concentration Camps and Subcamps under the
SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA)**

PART A

**Geoffrey P. Megargee, Editor
Foreword by Elie Wiesel**

AUSCHWITZ



Postwar photograph of the Auschwitz I camp gate, with the sign, "Arbeit Macht Frei"
[Work Will Make You Free].

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AUSCHWITZ I MAIN CAMP

The Auschwitz complex of SS concentration camps was the largest and most lethal that the Germans built. In less than five years, the SS and their auxiliaries killed nearly 1.3 million people in the Auschwitz camps. Over 90 percent of the victims were European Jews, and for many people, Auschwitz remains synonymous with the Holocaust itself. The Auschwitz main camp, also known as Auschwitz I, located outside the small Polish city of Oświęcim, was the center of the Auschwitz system.

The camp came into being because of the efforts of Heinrich Himmler's plenipotentiary in Breslau (later Wrocław), the Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF) for Silesia, SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, together with his deputy, the inspector of the Security Police (Sipo) and

the Security Service (SD) in Breslau, SS-Brigadeführer Arpad Wigand. By December 1939, these two SS leaders wanted to establish a concentration camp for Polish resisters and criminals in Silesia, since the jails in the region were already overcrowded. Eventually they succeeded in persuading Himmler to establish a camp; Himmler issued the order on April 27, 1940, and on May 4, he named SS-Hauptsturmführer Rudolf Höss camp commandant. The camp's initial capacity was to be at least 10,000 inmates.¹

The first prisoners—300 local Polish Jews—arrived shortly thereafter to begin work on the site. By early June, the original fence was complete, and Höss had approved arrangements with the Erfurt firm of J.A. Topf & Sons to build and install the first crematorium. By midsummer, renovation was also



Aerial photograph of the Auschwitz complex, from December 21, 1944. The Allied aerial reconnaissance mission photograph was enhanced and cropped in 1978 by Central Intelligence Agency photo analysts Dino Brugioni and Robert Poirier. Pictured at top is Auschwitz II-Birkenau, to the lower left is Auschwitz I, and to the lower right is the IG Farben chemical complex.

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Post-liberation photograph of the Block 11 execution wall at Auschwitz I. USHMM WS #14843, COURTESY OF NARA

completed on the building designated Block 11, which housed large holding cells, offices, and interrogation rooms for the Auschwitz camp Political Section and the regional Gestapo, as well as a basement complex serving as a punishment block of torture rooms, darkened cells, and tiny standing cubicles, where prisoners would be crammed in and left to starve. On June 14, 1940, Auschwitz received the first transport of 728 Polish political prisoners. More than 7,800 prisoners were registered in Auschwitz by the end of the year.²

During the camp's first months in operation, Höss received only meager assistance from the SS and virtually no support from other government or military agencies or private companies. The situation changed dramatically, however, when Auschwitz attracted Himmler's attention for its economic and ideological potential. Within a year, plans for the facility were expanded to incorporate construction, industrial production, agriculture—and mass killing.

Meanwhile, the camp's role in terrorizing the inmates remained. Prisoner transports arrived regularly, and by the spring of 1941, Höss had established a firm collaboration with the regional SS and police in carrying out the growing number of killings in Block 11. There, SS camp personnel shot uncounted numbers of Polish hostages and Gestapo detainees, prisoners they never registered or noted in Auschwitz records, after perfunctory trials by Gestapo courts that sat at least monthly in Block 11.

Auschwitz grew steadily. In March 1941, in connection with the recently agreed establishment of the IG Farben project at the neighboring hamlet of Dwory and the preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union, Himmler ordered Höss to increase the inmate capacity to 30,000. By that spring, the Germans had already registered 15,000 prisoners, and 3,000 had died. All told, between May 1940 and January 1945, approximately 405,000 men, women, and children from every country in Europe and from many lands overseas arrived at Auschwitz I for registration, tattooing (after August 1942), and assignment to one of the other camps in the complex. Of those 405,000, approximately

200,000 perished. The 49 percent mortality rate for registered inmates was much higher than that of the SS concentration camps at Dachau, Sachsenhausen, or Buchenwald and higher even than the death rate at Mauthausen, which by SS classification standards was a harsher concentration camp than either the Auschwitz main camp or Auschwitz II-Birkenau.³

Within the diverse inmate population, different groups occupied different roles and places in the camp hierarchy. Originally, German violent and professional criminals ("greens," in the SS color designation for inmate categories) held the most trusted positions as prisoner-functionaries in Auschwitz: camp elder (*Lagerältester*), block elder (*Blockältester*), room leaders (*Stubendienste*), work overseers (*Kapos*), and work foremen (*Vorarbeiter*). The SS counted on them, as violent criminals, to physically mistreat the inmates under their authority. During 1941, however, Polish political prisoners gradually replaced the German greens as the most numerous inmate functionaries. Until early 1941, the heaviest influx of prisoners into Auschwitz consisted of Poles, followed by German, Austrian, and Western European transfers from other SS concentration camps. These inmates were enemies of the state by Nazi definition—politicals, "asocials," Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and Protestant and Catholic clergymen. Between July and December 1941, approximately 10,000 Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) were sent to Auschwitz, and by May 1942, most of these soldiers had been murdered or had died of starvation, disease, and exhaustion. About one-half of all the inmates registered in Auschwitz each year were Jews. The remaining non-Jews were overwhelmingly Poles.

Jews from all over Europe began arriving in Auschwitz on deportation trains in the spring of 1942. Only a fraction of these people survived the on-arrival selections. By mid-1943, all registered Jewish inmates had been moved from the Auschwitz main camp to the Birkenau main camp. Small numbers of "Gypsies" were registered in the Auschwitz main camp in 1942 and then deported en masse to a special compound in Birkenau until their murder in August 1944. "Gypsies," Soviet POWs, and Jews were considered the lowest-ranking inmates. They were the most frequent



Mug shot of Jerzy Gumiński (26596), born March 20, 1923, shot to death at Auschwitz August 14, 1942. Note the triangle on the left breast with "P" for Pole.

USHMM WS # 02708, COURTESY OF APMD



"Roll Call," by Auschwitz prisoner Wincenty Gawron, 1942
USHMM WS # 27942, COURTESY OF AFPMO

objects of SS and prisoner-functionary abuse and were routinely selected for systematic killing.

In practice, all inmates at Auschwitz had to work. Forced labor was essential to the SS culture of inmate persecution as well as to economic priorities. Inmates worked within the Auschwitz camps in administrative, service, and clerical jobs and in skilled trades and crafts. Outside, they worked on roads, farms, swamps, fish hatcheries, factories, mines, chemical plants, armaments works, utilities, and other industrial concerns. Between June 1940 and January 1945, the SS and the Nazi state cleared in net profit more than 60 million Reichsmark (RM) from the exploitation of Auschwitz inmates.⁴ The inmates received no payment of any kind; the SS, the German state, private industries, and individuals used them as slaves.

In 1943, the number of Auschwitz subcamps near regional industrial and chemical plants multiplied rapidly, and by mid-1944 the Auschwitz main camp served as the SS command and administrative center for a network of more than 30 smaller outside subcamps. The number of private or non-SS concerns using inmate forced labor grew to include IG Farben's coal mining works at Fürstengrube, Janinagrube, and Günthergrube; Siemens-Schuckertwerke AG's electrical components plant; the Reich Railway Rolling Stock Repair Yard; the Oberschlesische Hydrierwerke AG (Upper Silesia Synthetic Gas Works); the Trzebinia oil refinery and reprocessing plant; as well as approximately 150 smaller German firms that subcontracted with the SS for slave laborers in smaller ventures such as textile mills, shoe factories, and retail businesses.

Thousands of men and women perished at slave labor from hunger, dehydration, exposure, disease, and exhaustion. Others were beaten to death by Kapos, killed or maimed in accidents and bombing raids, or shot by SS guards for sport or for minor infractions or while trying to escape. Still others were torn to pieces by SS guard dogs or, at the end of their strength, pulled from ranks by SS doctors and sent back to the Auschwitz main camp or Birkenau to be killed by toxic injection or gas.

The endless stream of new arrivals constantly replenished the supply of victims, and the relentless selections and gassing of exhausted, broken, and enfeebled inmates completed the self-renewing process of exploitation and extermination.

The gas chambers in Auschwitz give the camp its distinctively horrible character in most people's minds. In addition to registered prisoners, the Germans gassed approximately 1.1 million Jews and others (some "Gypsies," physically and/or mentally disabled, and transfers from other concentration camps) who never appeared in the camp's records. Most of these killings took place in Auschwitz II-Birkenau. From early 1942 on, the only Jews who survived arrival and selection to be registered in Auschwitz were those who could work. Gassing in Auschwitz claimed more than 90 percent of the Jewish victims who perished there. Thus, the development of gassing techniques—in an unauthorized experiment—was one of the most important events in the camp's history. At the end of August 1941, while Höss was away on business, his deputy, SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Fritzsche, sealed the basement of Block 11 and gassed to death several hundred Soviet POWs with a powerful commercial-grade prussic acid gas, then commonly known as Zyklon B and used in the camps for delousing inmate clothing. When Höss returned to Auschwitz, Fritzsche repeated the procedure for him several days later, using more Soviet POWs.⁵ Höss and Fritzsche grasped the possibilities and modified the original crematorium in the Auschwitz main camp into the first permanent gas chamber. Later the gassing operations moved to Birkenau.

The task of guarding the Auschwitz main camp, as well as Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Auschwitz III-Monowitz, and all the subcamps, was the responsibility of the SS-Death's Head Guard Battalion (Totenkopfsturmbann) for Auschwitz. This unit grew along with the camp, from 500 guards in late 1940 to 2,000 in July 1942 and over 4,500 in January 1945. It started with a mix of older men from the police, SS reservists, and transfers from the SS guard units in other concentration camps, from the Allgemeine (General) SS, and from Waffen-SS reserve and replacement formations. Later, it received increasing numbers of wounded or older Waffen-SS men from the Russian front. In March 1942, the first SS women guard auxiliaries (Aufseherinnen) arrived to guard the women's compound that had opened in the Auschwitz main camp. Beginning in early 1943, large numbers of young ethnic German SS recruits from Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Estonia, and Latvia began to arrive. Many of these younger SS guards were subsequently called into front-line service with the Waffen-SS, most especially with the SS-Panzer Division "Viking" and the SS-Mountain Division "Nord." And finally, in June 1944, Höss brought in 500 Wehrmacht veterans, gave them SS uniforms, and used them as additional manpower during the extermination of the Hungarian Jews.

Survival in Auschwitz involved obtaining extra food and avoiding physical abuse by the guards and functionaries. This was done by "organizing," which meant stealing or smuggling valuables that could be bartered for food or privileges. Organizing brought physical advantages and also raised an inmate's

stature by proving he had the ability or the connections that could help others survive. The scope and scale of organizing in Auschwitz was so vast as to be unique among all the wartime SS concentration camps, mainly because the luggage and personal effects of gassed Jewish victims provided the inmates with unequaled access to valuables: food and spirits, currency, jewelry, watches and clocks, precious stones, art, medicine, medical supplies and instruments, tools, and hundreds of other items of practical value for survival. Organizing in Auschwitz improved the odds of surviving for thousands. It also strengthened the inmate resistance movement by fostering an underground economy, by providing material support for successful escapes, and by facilitating contacts with the Polish underground outside Auschwitz. Equally important, organizing saved lives and eased suffering by completely corrupting and compromising the SS guard companies and the security at Auschwitz. The scale of bribery involving the SS guards was so great by 1944 that the inmate resistance even procured and smuggled high explosives into Birkenau. The Jewish Sonderkommando used the dynamite in early October 1944 to try to blow up the crematoria and halt the gassings. (The attempt failed, and the SS killed all the inmates involved.)⁶

There were several successful escapes from Auschwitz—dozens, in fact, beginning in June 1940 and continuing to December 1944. The most famous escape was on April 7, 1944, when two Slovak Jews in the Canada Kommando, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzlar, fled successfully and traveled to Slovakia to inform the Allies about Auschwitz and warn the Hungarian Jews of the SS plans for their extermination. Their report eventually reached President Franklin Roosevelt via the Slovakian underground and through Switzerland.

Approximately 7,000 SS personnel who served at Auschwitz between June 14, 1940, and January 18, 1945, survived the war. Less than 10 percent of those, only about 630, were apprehended and tried after 1945 for their participation in persecution and mass murder. Most of the trials of Auschwitz SS personnel took place in Poland immediately after the war and in West Germany between 1963 and 1976. There were no Auschwitz SS defendants at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, although Rudolf Höss testified as a witness in the Ernst Kaltenbrunner phase before the International Military Tribunal. The Allies then extradited Höss to Warsaw to face the Polish Supreme National Tribunal, which came into being in January 1946 to try the most important Nazi and SS criminals who committed crimes in Poland. The Tribunal tried Höss between March 11 and 29, 1947, sentenced him to death, and had him hanged in the Auschwitz main camp on April 16, 1947. Sitting in Kraków from November 26 to December 16, 1947, the Supreme National Tribunal then tried 40 members of the Auschwitz SS, including Höss's successor as Auschwitz commandant, Artur Liebehenschel. Liebehenschel and six others were sentenced to death and hanged, six received life sentences, and another seven drew 15-year sentences. In all their postwar Auschwitz trials, the Poles indicted 602 SS men and women from Auschwitz, tried 590, convicted 584, and

sentenced 97 percent of those to prison terms ranging from 6 months to 15 years.

West German courts began investigating crimes committed by Auschwitz SS personnel in 1950. Over the next 30 years, they convened four separate legal proceedings in Frankfurt am Main against a score of Auschwitz SS defendants. The most notable Frankfurt trial took place between December 1963 and August 1965, when 22 former SS defendants were tried, with 17 of them convicted and sentenced to prison—6 to life and 11 to terms ranging from 3 to 20 years. The Auschwitz trials lasting from 1966 to 1968 brought charges against 5 defendants and resulted in 4 convictions. The last Frankfurt trial of Auschwitz SS figures lasted from December 1973 to February 1976 and involved 2 defendants. German prosecutors ultimately dropped both cases because of health and age problems affecting both the defendants and the witnesses. Richard Baer, the last commandant of Auschwitz (May 1944–January 1945), was arrested in 1960 and died in detention in 1963.

The East Germans tried only one senior SS officer from Auschwitz. In 1966, the former SS camp doctor Horst Fischer was tried, convicted, and executed for the selection and gassing of inmates at Auschwitz. In postwar Austria, there were only two trials of Auschwitz SS, both of which ended in acquittals. The Czechs brought three cases against former SS personnel, all of whom they convicted, sentenced to death, and hanged. There was also a British Military Tribunal proceeding in 1945 against the SS administration at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, at which the main SS defendant was Josef Kramer. Kramer had served at Auschwitz in 1940 as adjutant and deputy commandant and then again in 1944 as commandant in Birkenau. The British tried, convicted, and executed him.

SOURCES In the historical literature in English on Auschwitz, there are a number of excellent studies that include bibliographies, extensive reference material, and suggestions for further reading, as well as citations to documents and archival sources on the Auschwitz main camp. These books include Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, published in association with USHMM, 1994); Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present* (New York: Norton, 1996); Jean-Claude Pressac, *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, trans. Peter Moss (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989); Robert Jan van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the David Irving Trial* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Sybille Steinbacher, *Auschwitz: A History*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (New York: ECCO, 2005); the massive, copiously annotated and documented work by Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1995), published for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum; *Auschwitz: A History in Photographs*, compiled originally and edited by Teresa Świebocka, English edition by Jonathan Webber and Connie Wilsack (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981); and the English translation of the five-volume history of Auschwitz by Waclaw Długoborski and Franciszek

Piper, *Auschwitz 1940–1945: Central Issues in the History of the Camps*, trans. William Brand (Auschwitz: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, in cooperation with the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, 2000). The standard work on slave labor and industry at Auschwitz is Peter F. Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: I.G. Farben in the Nazi Era*, 2nd ed. (1987; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Important also is the older but still substantial work by Josef Buszko, *Auschwitz: Nazi Extermination Camp*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1985). The classic history of the Holocaust, containing a wealth of information about the Auschwitz camps, remains the magisterial study by Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

Searching through the memoir literature, primary sources, and archives essential to a broader understanding and deeper knowledge of the experiences of both the victims and the perpetrators at Auschwitz, the reader should consult, especially, Rudolf Höss, *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, ed. Steven Paskuly and trans. Andrew Pollinger (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1992). This is the most recently edited and revised edition of the extraordinary Höss memoir-autobiography to appear. Among the dozens of published memoirs by inmates, three in particular merit notation. Rudolf Vrba and Alan Bestic's *I Cannot Forgive* (New York: Bantam, 1964) is the account by the most famous escapee of Auschwitz. Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Summit Books, 1988) is the last personal reflection left by the most poetic and tragic Auschwitz survivor. And Hermann Langbein's *People in Auschwitz*, trans. Harry Zohn, foreword by Henry Friedlander (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, published in association with USHMM, 2004) is the recently translated classic by a key figure in the Auschwitz inmate resistance. On the Sonderkommando, an important memoir is Filip Müller with Helmut Freitag, *Auschwitz Inferno: The Testimony of a Sonderkommando*, ed. and trans. Susanne Flatauer (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1979). An important compilation of early testimonies by Polish prisoners at Auschwitz is Janusz Nel Siedlecki, Krystyn Olszewski, and Tadeusz Borowski, *We Were in Auschwitz/6643 Janusz Nel Siedlecki; 57817 Krystyn Olszewski; and 119198 Tadeusz Borowski*, trans. Alicia Nitecki (1946; repr., New York: Welcome Rain Publishers, 2000).

The most important archives for the history of Auschwitz are in Poland and Russia. They are the APMO, on the site of the former Auschwitz main camp, which houses the most extensive and complete collection of documents, records, and Auschwitz artifacts in the world. The archive may also be previewed on the World Wide Web at www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl. In addition, and in Warsaw, the IPN houses the postwar trial records of the Supreme National Tribunal and extensive collections of wartime SS documents from Auschwitz. In Moscow, RGVA contains extremely important SS records relating to the construction and expansion of Auschwitz and a mass of individual SS personnel and employee files and Auschwitz prisoner records. Some of these

records are available in microfilm at USHMMA in RG 11.001 M.03, Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz collection. A helpful published compilation of the Auschwitz garrison orders is Norbert Frei et al., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000). Those interested in further study of the archival records, memoir literature, and rapidly expanding field of scholarly and general books about Auschwitz should consult the recent extensive bibliography in Długoborski and Piper, *Auschwitz 1940–1945*, 5:235–284.

Charles Sydnor

NOTES

1. The original SS command group assigned to Auschwitz is listed in "Führerstellenbesetzungsplan für den Stab des Inspektors der Konzentrationslager mit den Konzentrationslagern," effective June 1, 1940, BA-B, NS 3/438, as cited in Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton, eds., *Archives of the Holocaust*, vol. 20, *Bundesarchiv of the Federal Republic of Germany, Koblenz and Freiburg* (New York, 1992), Doc. No. 192, p. 497.

2. Regulations for SS guards and prisoners at Auschwitz, as at all other concentration camps, were the same as those originally drafted at Dachau in October 1933 by the then Dachau commandant Theodor Eicke. NARA, RG 238, 778-PS and 1216-PS. The first of these is reprinted in *TMWC*, 26: 291–297. See Rudolf Höss, *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, ed. Steven Paskuly and trans. Andrew Pollinger (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1992), pp. 91–105, 243–250: Höss's account of his SS guard service before Auschwitz and his biographical profile of Theodor Eicke. See Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1995), entry for Thursday, June 14, 1940.

3. Höss, *Death Dealer*, pp. 124–164. NARA, RG 238, Nuremberg Doc. 1063-A, "Einstufung der Konzentrationslager," a general order issued by Reinhard Heydrich on January 2, 1941. Ten months before construction of Birkenau began, the SS classified the Auschwitz main camp as a less severe concentration camp than Auschwitz II—which is mentioned for the first time in this document from early 1941.

4. NARA, RG 238, NO-1290, "Arbeitseinsatz der KL Häftlinge," an order by Oswald Pohl as Chief of the SS-WVHA to all camp commandants, dated January 22, 1943, prescribing season work hours for inmates in all the camps.

5. Rudolf Vrba and Alan Bestic's *I Cannot Forgive* (New York: Bantam, 1964) is the memoir of one escapee. Höss, *Death Dealer*, pp. 155–157, is the recollection Rudolf Höss recorded.

6. Höss, *Death Dealer*, pp. 38–42. See Filip Müller with Helmut Freitag, *Auschwitz Inferno: The Testimony of a Sonderkommando*, ed. and trans. Susanne Flatauer (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1979): the personal account of an eyewitness and one of only a few survivors of the crematoria corpse-burning detail.

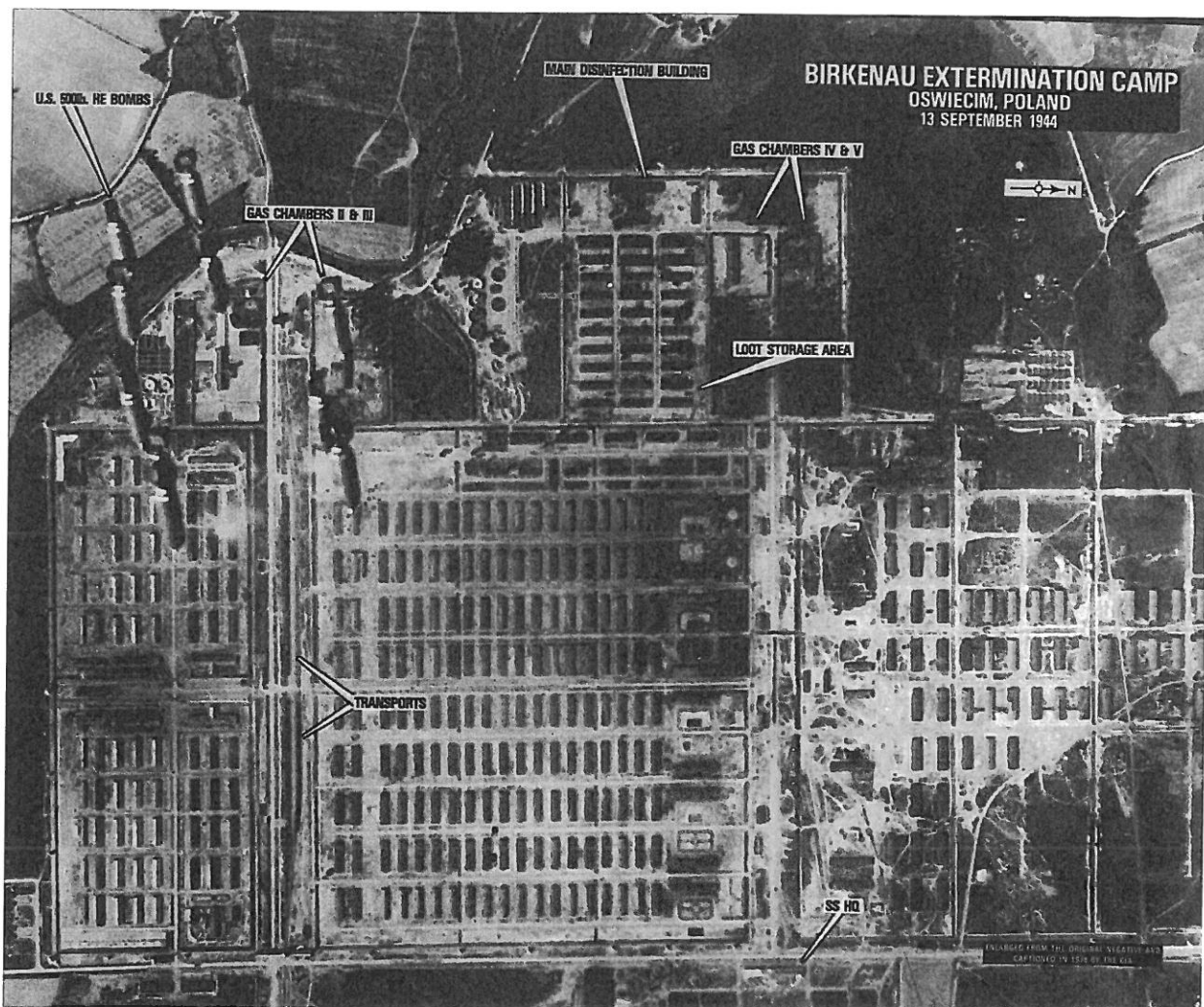
AUSCHWITZ II-BIRKENAU MAIN CAMP

The Birkenau camp (designated Auschwitz II between November 22, 1943, and November 25, 1944) was the largest of the approximately 40 camps and subcamps included in the Auschwitz complex. It was unique in that it combined the function of a killing center, like Treblinka or Bełżec, with the aim of contributing directly to the "Final Solution" through the use of gas chambers, with that of a concentration camp. In the last part of its existence it also became a source of manpower for industrial plants deep within the Reich.

The majority of the victims of the Auschwitz complex, presumably about 90 percent, perished at Birkenau—an ap-

proximate total of 1 million people, the decided majority of whom (over 90 percent) were Jews. In addition, a significant portion of the roughly 70,000 Poles who died or were killed in the Auschwitz complex perished at Birkenau, as well as about 20,000 Gypsies, Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), and thousands of prisoners of other nationalities.¹

The idea of establishing a camp in Brzezinka (Birkenau), a village located near the original Auschwitz concentration camp, first came up on March 1, 1941, during Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler's first inspection of Auschwitz, when he



Aerial photograph of Auschwitz II-Birkenau, from a September 13, 1944, Fifteenth Army Air Forces mission against IG Auschwitz enhanced and cropped in 1978 by Central Intelligence Agency photo analysts Dino Brugioni and Robert Poirier. Pictured at top left is a cluster of nine bombs appearing to fall on the camp but actually falling on the IG Farben complex to the east. From left to right are sectors BI, BII, and the unfinished BIII. At the top are the killing centers and the loot storage complex called "Kanada."

USHMM WS #03198, COURTESY OF NARA

issued a series of orders for the camp's enlargement and for prisoner deployment, including a "camp for one hundred thousand prisoners of war." Himmler subsequently chose the village of Brzezinka, which the German occupation forces renamed Birkenau (The Birch Woods), as the site for the POW camp.²

The camp's first designs and plans originated at the SS-Main Office for Budget and Buildings (HHB), which in February 1942 became part of the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA). These plans initially provided for a camp with a capacity of 125,000 people, but in October 1941, during preliminary construction, the Germans increased the capacity to 200,000. According to those plans, the camp would eventually consist of four sections, called building sectors (*Bauabschnitte*), numbered BI to BIV: the first sector was to hold 20,000 people, while the other three would hold 60,000 people each. The entire camp was to occupy 175 hectares (432 acres).³

The prisoners performed most of the camp construction. In October 1941, the Germans deployed 10,000 Soviet POWs from the Neuhammer am Quais (later Świątoszów) POW camp and probably from Lamsdorf (later Łambinowice) for this purpose. Temporarily placed in nine assigned and separately fenced barracks of the Auschwitz camp, they were brought daily to the village of Brzezinka, where construction began on sector BI.⁴ Construction continued right up to 1944, using successive drafts of prisoners, and only stopped because of the approach of the Soviet armies, by which time the Germans had progressed as far as section BIII (called "Mexico" by the prisoners). In total, over an area of about 140 hectares (346 acres), the Germans erected about 300 barracks and residential, administrative, and utility buildings, 13 kilometers (8 miles) of drainage ditches, 16 kilometers (10 miles) of barbed-wire fencing, a dozen or so kilometers (7 or more miles) of roads, and—between early 1942 and June 1943—four gas chamber/crematory complexes in their own compound. Adjacent to the killing complex were warehouses that collected the loot amassed from the killing centers' victims. Called "Kanada," because the prisoners imagined Canada as a land of great wealth, the warehouse contents stimulated SS corruption and furnished barter goods for "organizing" by some prisoners.

From March 1, 1942, to November 22, 1943, Birkenau was under the command of SS-Obersturmbannführer Rudolf Höss, along with the rest of the Auschwitz complex. As a result of the reorganization and division of the Auschwitz complex into three separate camps at Himmler's orders in November 1943, Birkenau was renamed Auschwitz II and placed under SS-Sturmbannführer Fritz Hartjenstein. Josef Kramer replaced Hartjenstein on May 8, 1944.⁵ On November 25, 1944, the Germans recombined Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II into one camp called Konzentrationslager Auschwitz, over which the Auschwitz I commandant, SS-Sturmbannführer Richard Baer, took charge.⁶

On September 8, 1944, there were 908 SS guards.⁷

Between 1942 and 1945, the Birkenau administration divided the camp's existing sectors into smaller compounds—

also called camps—each with its own purpose and chain of command. Camp leaders (*Lagerführer*) supervised these compounds through noncommissioned report officers (*Rapportführer*) and block leaders (*Blockführer*). These compounds included separate men's and women's areas, hospital and quarantine camps, transit camps, and "family" camps, one for "Gypsies" and one for the Jews from Theresienstadt. The family camps, where men, women, and children lived in the same compound, were primarily a propaganda tool, as the Germans forced prisoners to write letters painting a false picture of camp conditions.

The mass extermination facilities (gas chambers and crematoria) were a separate complex of buildings generally subordinate to the camp commandant, who was responsible for the progress of the extermination operations, and immediately subordinate to the camp administration's political detachment (Politische Abteilung). After the November 22, 1943, division of Auschwitz into three camps, the garrison senior (Standortälteste) issued Order No. 53/43 entrusting the supervision of the extermination facilities to the commandant of Auschwitz II, who was also the director of Auschwitz Post Command for Special Tasks (Befehlsstelle Auschwitz für besondere Einsätze).⁸

Both during the time when Birkenau was under the Auschwitz commandant and afterward, when it became an individual concentration camp, it was closely associated with the other camps, that is, Auschwitz I and Auschwitz III-Monowitz (which controlled various subcamps). In part this cooperation came about because of Order No. 53/43, in which the Auschwitz garrison senior stipulated that the commandants of these camps work closely together, with the Auschwitz I commandant serving as Auschwitz garrison senior and being officially designated as the senior staff member (Dienstältester) with respect to the other commandants and with powers to resolve disputes.⁹ The Auschwitz I camp continued to house the garrison administration, central employment office, political branch, and headquarters of the garrison physician (Standortarzt), who was the chief of health services in all the camps.

Although the Germans had begun building the Birkenau compound as a POW camp (*Kriegsgefangenenlager*) and continued this designation in building records (letters, plans, and reports) until 1944, the camp never served that function. The Germans gradually decided, while the camp was still being built (by February 1942 at the latest), to change the nature of the camp and to incorporate it into the Auschwitz complex as an integral component. The failure to achieve the expected quick victory over the Soviet Union and the attendant need for labor that the prospect of a long war created, combined with the decision to exterminate the Jews of Europe, set up the conditions that led to Birkenau's further development into a center for extermination and forced labor.

The Soviet POWs whom the Germans had brought in to build the camp were the first victims. Out of the original 10,000 prisoners who arrived in Auschwitz in October 1941,



Jews from Carpathian Ruthenia await selection at the Birkenau railway ramp, May 1944. Prisoners from the Kanada detachment and some SS men stand to the left.
USHMM WS # 77405 COURTESY OF YVA

over 9,000 died in five months, mainly due to the primitive conditions under which they had to live and work while building the Birkenau camp.¹⁰ When the 945 surviving prisoners were transferred to Birkenau on March 1, 1942, the newly formed camp was already a part of the Auschwitz complex, and from that point forward, Jews constituted the vast majority of arriving prisoners. The camp subsequently housed a portion of the approximately 140,000 Poles registered at the Auschwitz complex, about 23,000 “Gypsies,” and prisoners of other nationalities.

Immediate death awaited the vast majority of the arriving Jews; out of approximately 1.1 million Jews transported to Birkenau, a maximum of 200,000 were temporarily saved when selected for labor.¹¹ Selections took place either before Jews climbed aboard the trains that brought them to Auschwitz or, more commonly, upon arrival. The exact sequence of events varied somewhat, but typically the Jews selected for death were marched to the extermination compound, ordered to undress (under the pretext of bathing and disinfecting before entering the camp proper), and herded into the gas chamber. Specially trained SS technicians then dumped hydrogen cyanide tablets (Zyklon B) into the chamber. When the prisoners were dead, the chamber was ventilated, and the special detachment (Sonderkommando), made up of other Jewish

prisoners, removed the bodies, cut off women’s hair, removed any gold dental work, and burned the corpses in the crematoria.

Birkenau’s prisoner population grew steadily with its expansion and the selection of some incoming prisoners for labor. There were approximately 90,000 male and female prisoners living in the camp on August 22, 1944 (including approximately 60,000 registered prisoners marked with camp numbers and about 30,000 unregistered ones; the latter were called “depot prisoners”). Seventy-four percent of the prisoners in Birkenau at that time were Jewish.¹² Those whom the Germans selected for work faced a slower but usually no less certain fate than those who went straight to the gas chambers. A few lucky ones—usually those with connections of some sort—could work in the camp administration, in the kitchens, or in some other relatively easy position indoors. For most prisoners, however, the work was extremely hard and often dangerous; the Nazi aim was “destruction through labor” (*Vernichtung durch Arbeit*). Demolition and construction on the camp itself or other nearby facilities formed a major part of the workload, as did agricultural labor; other prisoners worked in Kanada or in nearby armaments factories (Union, which manufactured fuses, and Zerlegebetriebe, where the prisoners dismantled wrecked aircraft). In any case, the guards and Kapos drove the prisoners

furiously and beat anyone who faltered—often to the point of death. Roll calls at the beginning and end of every day, often lasting for hours, added to the torment and fatigue.

The living conditions further lessened the prisoners' chances for survival. Sleeping arrangements consisted of wooden shelves, with a minimum of straw bedding, on which the prisoners were packed. The camp uniform consisted of a striped shirt and trousers of rough cloth, never changed or washed, stiff with dirt, sweat, and excrement, infested with lice, and completely inadequate to protect against the weather. Wooden shoes were the only footwear. The diet consisted of the lowest-quality food in amounts that could not sustain life; the only hope for survival lay in "organizing" additional food, and such opportunities were scarce. Prisoners that fell sick either got well by themselves or died; there was no medical care to speak of. Prisoners who managed to stay alive, but became too weak to work, were subject to periodic selections: the Germans wanted to make room for new arrivals and were uninterested in feeding "useless eaters."

Birkenau also served as a transit camp and source of prisoner labor for other locations. In 1942 and 1943, it sent prisoners mostly to local subcamps and to the industrial complex of Monowitz. Then, beginning in the spring of 1944, Germany's military and economic situation was so desperate that the SS decided to use concentration camp labor more extensively in hundreds of industrial plants in German-controlled areas and in the Reich proper. To that end, they opened new camps near Auschwitz and shipped thousands of prisoners from Birkenau to other WVHA camps.

Resistance groups existed in all parts of the Auschwitz complex. Their task was to save lives by acquiring additional food, clothing, and medication. Furthermore, these groups documented the crimes and gathered intelligence, through Poles who lived near the camps, for the Polish Government in Exile in London to inform the world concerning the mass murders committed in the camp. Requests to put pressure on Nazi Germany to stop these crimes were also directed to world public opinion. In the last stage of the existence of the camp it was the clandestine groups that prepared for resistance in case the Germans should attempt to kill the inmates during the camp's possible liquidation.

Resistance groups were mainly organized by nationalities, political ideology, or professions (such as Polish officers). On June 10, 1942, a mutiny took place in the penal company that included about 400 Polish inmates. Unfortunately, only 9 inmates were able to escape, 2 of whom were tracked down. During the mutiny, 13 inmates were shot, 20 were killed during an examination that took place immediately afterward, and about 300 were killed in the gas chambers.

Other forms of resistance included escapes that in most cases served only to save one's life. On June 24, 1944, the Polish inmate Edward Galiński stole an SS uniform and escaped from Birkenau with Mala Zimetbaum. Both were caught and killed after an interrogation in the camp.

In Birkenau, Jews who worked in the Sonderkommando formed a resistance group. On October 7, 1944, during an

attempt to forestall the escape of a group of inmates, they revolted, attacking SS men with hatchets, hammers, and stones. The Sonderkommando mutiny ended with the SS killing the majority of its members (451 people) and the burning down of gas chamber and crematorium IV.

Another resistance activity was the documentation of Nazi crimes by copying (*sporządzanie*) German documents and writing their own observations. The Jews of the Sonderkommando gathered and buried such notes in the ground. Discovered after the war, they constitute a precious source of information regarding the crimes committed at Birkenau. Information was also regularly gathered and preserved by Polish inmates regarding the crimes committed in the camp, its organizational structure, and the perpetrators.

Important information was also delivered by escapees and was published in Poland and abroad during wartime. The most valuable information of this kind was included in the reports of the Pole Jerzy Tabeau and the Jews Alfred Wetzler, Walter Rosenberg (Rudolf Vrba), Arnost Rosin, and Czesław Mordowicz. These reports were presented to the Allied governments, including Britain and the United States, and were published in Washington, DC, in November 1944. These reports led Jewish groups in Britain and the United States to call for bombing the Birkenau killing center or its approaching railways.

With the approach of Soviet forces in January 1945, the Germans decided to evacuate the Auschwitz complex. They had begun dismantling the gas chambers and crematoria in late 1944, in order to remove the industrial fixtures; in January, on the eve of the evacuation, they blew them up. On January 17, 1945, after the inmates' partial evacuation, 15,000 male and female inmates still remained in Birkenau. As in other Auschwitz camps and subcamps the majority were led out of the camp the next day. They were taken by foot to a site about 63 kilometers (39 miles) from Auschwitz, at Loslau (Wodzisław Śląski) and Gleiwitz (Gliwice). Many inmates died during this march, either shot by the guards or from hunger and cold. The survivors were put on open cattle cars and taken to camps in Germany.

During its five-year existence, about 8,000 SS men served at the Auschwitz concentration camp. They all shared responsibility for the death of about 1 million people. Only about 1,000 stood trial after the war. About 800 were turned over by Germany to Poland and were sentenced in Poland. The first one to be sentenced was the camp's founder and first commandant, Rudolf Höss, who was sentenced to death by the Supreme People's Court of Poland and executed on the site of the former camp on April 16, 1947. A second trial took place in Kraków against Auschwitz SS men, including 40 members of the camp administration. On December 22, 1947, 22 were sentenced to death, 6 to life imprisonment, and others to 3 to 15 years in prison. One was acquitted. The remaining SS men who had been delivered to Poland for sentencing were tried in regional, county, and special courts.

Between 1963 and 1976, four trials against Auschwitz SS personnel took place in Frankfurt am Main. Thirty SS men

had to stand trial. Furthermore, SS men from Auschwitz were tried by various Allied courts in a number of postwar trials that dealt with the staff of other concentration camps.

SOURCES The published sources on Auschwitz are legion. Here are some of the most important publications pertaining to Birkenau: Waclaw Długoborski and Franciszek Piper, eds., *Auschwitz 1940–1945: Central Issues in the History of the Camp*, 5 vols. (Oświęcim: Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, 2000); Franciszek Piper and Teresa Świebocka, eds., *Auschwitz: Nazi Death Camp* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, 1996); Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, published in association with USHMM, 1994); Franciszek Piper, *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz aufgrund der Quellen und Erträge der Forschung 1945–1990* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, 1993); Franciszek Piper, *Arbeitseinsatz der Häftlinge aus dem Auschwitz Konzentrationslager* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, 1995); Jean Claude Pressac, *Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989); Danuta Czech, *Auschwitz Chronicle, 1939–1945* (New York: H. Holt, 1997); Sybille Steinbacher, *Auschwitz: A History* (London: Penguin Books, 2005); Robert Jan van Pelt, *The Case for Auschwitz: Evidence from the Irving Trial* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Hermann Langbein, *People in Auschwitz*, trans. Harry Zohn, foreword by Henry Friedlander (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Ernst Klee, *Auschwitz, die NS-Medizin und ihre Opfer* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1997). On the controversy concerning the nonbombing of the Birkenau killing center, see Michael Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum, eds., *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, published in Association with USHMM, 2003).

During the liquidation of the camp, the SS men destroyed the majority of the documents that dealt with the administration and functioning of the camp. The most important losses are the copies of the transport lists of Jews containing several hundred thousand names; the *Zugangslisten* (acquisition lists) containing the names of numerous new inmates for the years 1940, 1942, 1943, 1944, and 1945; questionnaires and index cards; inmate registration cards; the ledgers of the camp; the card index; and the files containing the death records of inmates for the years 1944–1945. Among the documents that survived by accident or were not destroyed, the most valuable documents (which are available in APMO) are about 70,000 death registration records for a portion of the registered inmates, from July 1941 to December 1943; *Zugangslisten* for the year 1941, containing about 28,000 names; the *Stärkebuch* (strength book) from January to August 1942; the *Hauptbuch* (main book) for the camp of the “Gypsies,” containing about 21,000 names of Romā and Sinti; the death register of Soviet POWs, containing 8,420 names and some inmate numbers; a collection of records of the construction management (Bauleitung) of the camp, among others maps and technical documentation of the gas chambers and crematories; the records of the SS-Hygiene Institute, containing names of inmates and the results of laboratory analyses. In addition, APMO houses about 4,000 statements and memories of inmates and numerous trial testimonies; some 10,000 photographs, among

them 4,000 photographs of inmates taken during their registration at the camp and photographs of buildings and objects in the camp during its construction. To the most valuable sources outside of APMO belong the transport lists stored in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Germany, and Norway, which contain the names of Jews deported from these countries; the registers of the names of a part of the Hungarian Jews deported from Hungary to Auschwitz, which are stored today in Hungary; the records of Polish prisons from which Poles were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp; the records in local German archives regarding the registration, imprisonment, and deportation of “Gypsies” to the Auschwitz camp; records of trials against the SS personnel of the Auschwitz camp; and records of German authorities like WVHA and RSHA related to the administration of Auschwitz. Copies of many of these collections are held at USHMM and YVA. USHMM also holds microforms of captured German documents from the Soviet Union and Soviet investigation records, which concern the planning, construction, and liberation of Auschwitz II-Birkenau. They include RG 11.001 M.03, Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz collection, copied from RGVA, fond 502 (reels 18 to 71); and RG-22.008, Records relating to Auschwitz and other camps from TsGAMORF, 1940–1945. Music sung by Birkenau prisoners was the subject of a research project by former Polish prisoner Aleksander Tytus Kulisiwicz. The fruits of his work are found in USHMM, RG-55.003. A recent addition to USHMM is the newly discovered “SS-Auschwitz Album,” Acc. 2007.24. From internal and external evidence, it was apparently arranged by the last adjutant of Auschwitz I, Karl Höcker, and includes images of ranking SS staff and female SS Hilferinnen during moments of recreation at the nearby SS retreat at Solahütte. Featured in this album are photographs of Rudolf Höss, Richard Bär, Josef Kramer, Josef Mengele, and others. Many of the images date from June 1944, which means the creation of this album coincided with the destruction of the Hungarian Jews. The F-B-I and the Auschwitz State Museum have recently published a DVD of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (4 Ks 2/63), as *Der Auschwitz Prozess: Tonbandmitschnitte, Protokolle, Dokumente* (Berlin: Directmedia Publishing, 2004). The U.S. War Refugee Board published the Auschwitz Protocols in November 1944. They are listed as *German Extermination Camps—Auschwitz and Birkenau* (Washington: WRB, 1944); and reprinted in David S. Wyman, ed., *Bombing Auschwitz and the Auschwitz Escapees’ Report*, vol. 12 of *America and the Holocaust*, 13 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), Doc. 1. A helpful published compilation of the Auschwitz garrison orders is Norbert Frei et al., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000). For the testimonies of the Sonderkommando, see *Amidst a Nightmare of Crime, Manuscripts of Members of Sonderkommando* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, 1973). The first published testimonies on Birkenau appeared in Polish in wartime. They include [Natalia Zarębina], *Obóz śmierci* (Warsaw, 1942), reprinted as *Obóz śmierci; Zbiór relacji z obozu w Oświęcimiu opublikowanych w kraju przez ruch oporu mas pracujących* (London, 1943), trans. as *The Camp of Death* (London, 1943), *The Camp of Disappearing Men: A Story of the Oswiecim Concentration Camp; Based on Reports from the Polish Underground Labor*

Movement; Poland Fights (New York, 1944); *Oświęcim, campo de la muerte* (Mexico City, 1944); Zofia Kossak, *W piekle* (Warsaw, 1942), trans. as *In Hell* (London, 1944); and Halina Krahelska, *Oświęcim: Pamiętnik więźnia* (Warsaw, 1942). For enhanced and cropped aerial photography of the Birkenau killing center, see Dino Brugioni and Robert Poirier, *The Holocaust Revisited: A Retrospective Analysis of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Complex* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1979).

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

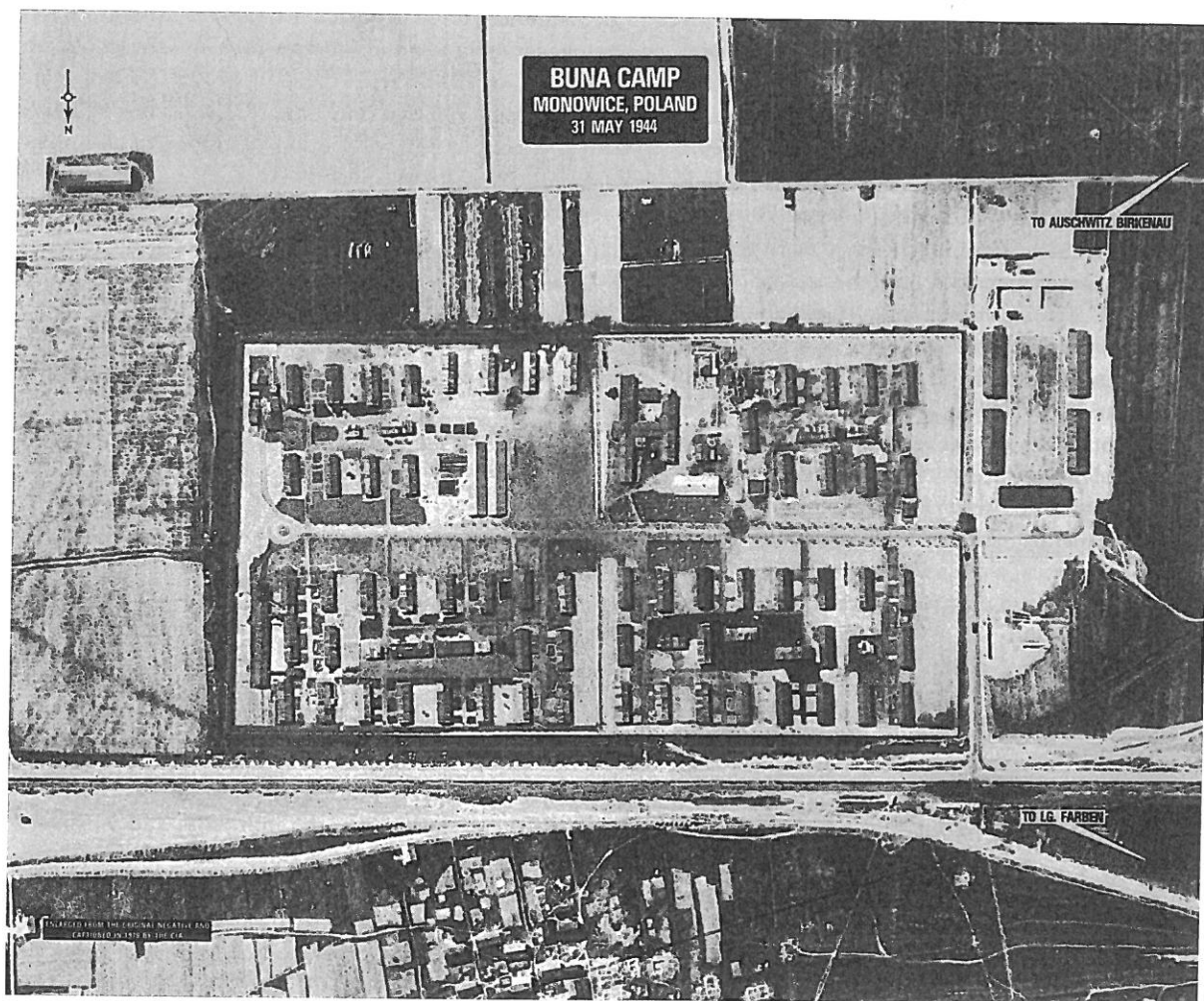
1. APMO, D-AuI-2/1-46 Sterbebücher, contains ca. 70,000 records of death registrations of inmates of different nationalities. D-AuI-3/1/5 Stärkebuch, D-AuI-5/2 Leichenhalle, D-AuI-3/1 Bunkerbuch, D-AuII-3/1 Hauptbücher des Zigeunerlagers.
2. APMO-B, D-AuI-3a, Folder 14, Report of Himmler visit by Heinrich Schwarz of March 17, 1941, Höss trial, 21:33.
3. APMO, Entwurf, HHB betr. KGL Auschwitz, November 1, 1941. Microfilm number 1034; BW 2/2. Lageplan des KGF—Auschwitz OS, October 14, 1941; BW 2/5, Lageplan des KGL BA I, II, III; IV, August 15, 1942.
4. APMO-B, D-AuI-3/1-7646 Index of the Russian Prisoners of War.
5. APMO-B, D-AuI-1 Standortbefehl Nr. 53/43, November 22, 1943.
6. APMO-B, D-AuI-1 Standortbefehl Nr. 29/44, November 25, 1944.
7. APMO-B, Mat. RO, 2:147–151 (Resistance Movement Report of September 8, 1944).
8. APMO-B, D-AuI-1 Standortbefehl Nr. 53/43, November 22, 1943.
9. Ibid.
10. APMO-B, D-AuI-3/1/1, p. 90, Stärkebuch.
11. APMO-B, D-RO/123 Transportlisten (Nuremberg Doc. NOKW-2824).
12. APMO-B, D-RO/2:94–115 (Report of the secret military council of the camp).

AUSCHWITZ III-MONOWITZ MAIN CAMP [AKA BUNA]

The Monowitz main camp lay about 6.5 kilometers (4 miles) east of the Auschwitz I main camp, near the Polish town of Monowice. In the neighboring hamlet of Dwory, on a construction site of several square kilometers in area, the German chemical firm IG Farben built a huge chemical complex for the production of synthetic fuels and rubber (*Buna*), starting in April 1941. Besides access to nearby coal mines and convenient transport connections, the availability of thousands of prisoners played an important role in the choice of this site. Leading managers of IG Farben approached Hermann Göring when they learned of SS plans—part of the Germanization policy—to forcibly resettle the Polish inhabitants and deport the Jewish population from Auschwitz and the surrounding villages. On February 18, 1941, the company persuaded

Göring to order Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler to delay the forced migration and to support the building of the Buna plant by providing prisoners from the camp as slave laborers.¹ Himmler issued an order in February 1941 to support the plant's construction, and the following month an agreement was reached between IG Farben and the leadership of the SS. That agreement became a key model for the deployment of concentration camp inmates in the German war industry.

In April 1941, prisoners from the main camp started work as the Buna-Aussenkommando to build the factory for IG Farben. In the beginning, the Buna-Aussenkommando was populated by Polish prisoners; from the spring of 1942 onward, it was reinforced with French Jews. The prisoners had to complete an exhausting march from the main camp to the



Aerial photograph of Auschwitz III-Monowitz, May 31, 1944, enhanced and cropped in 1978 by Central Intelligence Agency photo analysts Dino Brugioni and Robert Poirier.

USHMM WS # 91362, COURTESY OF NARA

construction site and back every day. From the end of July, the 1,000 to 1,300 prisoners in the Aussenkommando were transported by rail to conserve their strength.² On October 21, 1941, IG Farben proposed to the camp administration that the number of prisoners be raised to between 4,000 and 5,000 prisoners and that they be housed on the factory grounds. Due to a lack of SS guards and resources, the camp commandant, Rudolf Höss, was unable to fulfill that request at the time.³ The exact timing of the decision to build a subcamp on the Buna site is subject to debate. It is known that construction began in March 1942.⁴ With 57 living-quarter barracks, 5 wash barracks, and five latrines, the planned dimensions were extraordinarily large for a subcamp.

By the end of October 1942, more than 2,000 prisoners had arrived at Monowitz.⁵ From that point, the camp population grew steadily and, with the introduction of large numbers of Hungarian Jews in the spring and summer of 1944, reached a high point of 11,000.⁶ Inside the subcamp, Staatspolizeistelle Kattowitz established a so-called work education camp (*Arbeiterziehungslager*).⁷ Five blocks separated with barbed wire were used to imprison about 400 to 500 inmates, the goal being to discipline forced laborers who were uncooperative, came to work late, or attempted sabotage. While the administration lay in the hands of the Gestapo, the SS guarded this camp, which existed until the evacuation of Monowitz.

Eventually, more than 90 percent of the inmates of Monowitz were Jews, who came from Germany, Austria, Poland, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, and Czechoslovakia. The majority of the non-Jewish inmates were citizens of Poland, the USSR, and Germany. About 1 to 2 percent of the camp's population were "Gypsy" of unknown nationality.⁸ In response to successful escapes in the summer of 1943, the SS transferred many Polish and Czechoslovakian inmates to Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, where foreign prisoners' chances to survive after escaping were much smaller. Due to the mass deportation of the Hungarian Jews in the spring and summer of 1944, their proportion of the camp population increased markedly.



Street construction detail at IG Auschwitz, 1943-1944.
USHMM WS # 79489, COURTESY OF BA

The inmates of Monowitz were almost exclusively male. The exception was a small group of 10 to 20 women who were forced to work as prostitutes. From at least the summer of 1944 onward, and possibly from the end of 1943, they were placed in a separate block surrounded by barbed wire.

The prisoner-functionaries, such as block elders, prisoner physicians, or overseers, were mainly prisoners from Germany, Austria, or Poland. Besides political or personal links, the decisive factor for their nomination was often the ability to understand orders by the SS in German.

The commander of Auschwitz III-Monowitz was SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz, who was born in Munich in 1906. By the end of 1931, he had joined the SS (No. 19691) and the Nazi Party (NSDAP) (No. 786871). He started his career in the camp SS in September 1939, first in Dachau and later in Mauthausen. In September 1941, he was assigned to Auschwitz, and he became the commandant of the newly designated Auschwitz III camp on November 22, 1943.⁹ He kept this position until Monowitz was evacuated. On February 1, 1945, he became the commandant of Natzweiler-Struthof.¹⁰

By Himmler's order of November 22, 1943, Auschwitz was partitioned into three administrative units: Auschwitz I (main camp), Auschwitz II (Birkenau), and Auschwitz III (Monowitz and subcamps). From that time onward, the Monowitz headquarters was responsible for the administration of all Auschwitz subcamps.¹¹ In December 1943, the camp, which until then was named Lager Buna, was renamed Arbeitslager (work camp) Monowitz.¹² In November 1944, the administration was reorganized once again. By order of the garrison senior of Auschwitz, the camp at Birkenau was assigned to the main camp, and the "Monowitz work camp" was renamed "Monowitz concentration camp" and became an independent administrative unit.¹³

On November 22, 1943, the guard units Wachkompanie Buna and the 5th Wachkompanie were subordinated to Schwarz.¹⁴ On May 22, 1944, the SS-Totenkopfsturmbataillon (Death's Head Storm Battalion) Auschwitz III was established by Schwarz's order. It was seven companies strong. The 1st Company, under the command of SS-Obersturmführer Paul Heinrich Theodor Müller, was to guard Monowitz, while the other six companies as well as the 8th Company (established later) guarded the subcamps.

The prisoners were exploited by private enterprises and the SS inside and outside the camp as slave laborers. A total of perhaps 100 to 120 prisoners worked inside the camp, in offices, the camp kitchen, the infirmary, and on various maintenance duties. Outside the camp several thousand prisoners had to work for private companies at the construction site. IG Farben put its prisoners to work in its own plant or lent them to subcontractors. The arrangement was profitable for IG Farben since the daily fee the firm paid to the SS per prisoner amounted to roughly one-third less than for labor at the regional wage level. In addition, the firm saved considerable amounts that it normally would have had to spend for such costs as housing, sick benefits, separation compensation,

social welfare, and cultural activities, costs that could amount to approximately 25 percent of the wages of nonprisoner labor. These savings more than compensated the firm for the lower productivity of the emaciated, often diseased camp inmates.

Among the most dangerous details were the excavation Kommando and the transport Kommando, in which the prisoners suffered nearly continuous, brutal beatings. These murderous Kommandos also included the cement Kommandos, in which prisoners had to carry 50-kilogram (110-pound) cement sacks at a run. In other Kommandos, the prisoners had to build underground bunkers or lay cable, carry tree trunks, or even dig up unexploded bombs. The chances of survival were better in the electricians' Kommando, in which 120 to 180 Jewish prisoners were forced to build electrical power systems and switchboards. As the construction of the factory advanced, the job specifications changed. A growing number of prisoners were deployed as skilled laborers. They had to work as mechanics, masons, carpenters, painters, or welders. During 1943, more and more prisoners were put to work in the assembly Kommandos. And starting in 1944, an increasing number

of prisoners worked in production Kommandos, where many of them performed highly skilled work in chemical laboratories, as exemplified by Primo Levi. In the camp administration, prisoners worked as scribes and dealt with correspondence and the camp statistics.

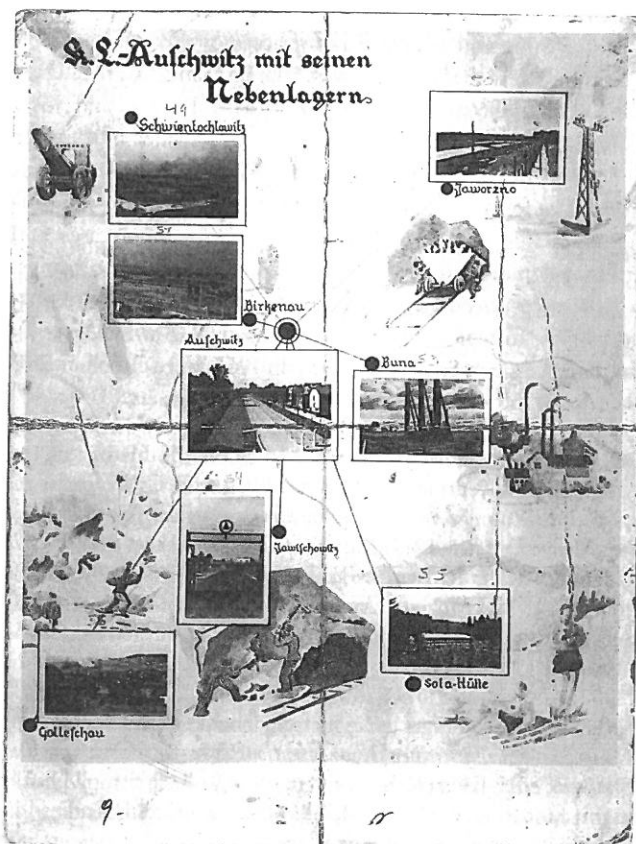
There are no estimates of how many prisoners of the Buna-Aussenkommando died between April 1941 and July 1942. The estimate of the number of prisoners who died and were killed from October 1942 onward, based on survivor accounts, fluctuates between 23,000 and 40,000.¹⁵ Many died at the construction site in work accidents, often because of the absence of safety measures. The majority died of cachexia, as a consequence of malnutrition, overwork, and untreated diseases. At the instigation of IG Farben managers, prisoners were selected for the gas chambers in Birkenau when their work ability decreased and in cases of longer-term diseases or if they became invalids. Routine selections took place in the morning at the gate of the camp when the prisoners marched to work, in the prisoner infirmary, or at the roll-call square. The camp commandant, protective custody camp leader, SS members responsible for labor allocation, the SS camp physician, and according to a surviving prisoner physician, also several civilians from IG Farben all took part in the selections.¹⁶ Selections started in the infirmary as soon as more than 5 percent of the inmates were ill. The average prisoner survived for three to four months in Monowitz.

In the face of everyday destruction, one of the major tasks of the camp resistance was to save lives. To that end, it worked to procure extra food and medication and generally tried to improve the prisoners' situation. It also conducted political education. An international network, mainly consisting of Poles and Jews from Germany and Austria, led the resistance. They took over important posts in the camp administration from which they could gather information and influence developments.

At the IG Farben factory, prisoners approached civilians, forced laborers, and POWs secretly to exchange information. Sabotage prolonged completion of the factory. The electricians' Kommando, for example, successfully caused a short circuit of the turbines during a test run. According to Walter Petzold, a former prisoner, the resistance also prevented IG Farben from starting synthetic fuel production during the so-called Day of National Work on May 1, 1943. Three days earlier, prisoners had caused an explosion of the high-pressure station, and in the vehicle park, prisoners destroyed 50 trucks and tractors through looting.¹⁷

After attempts to escape, the prisoners had to stand for roll calls for many hours as punishment. Prisoners who were captured again faced hanging. The camp inmates were forced to watch the cruel execution scenes.

The first major air raid on factory buildings at Monowitz took place on August 20, 1944, by bombers of the U.S. 15th Air Force. According to Siegfried Pinkus, a prisoner of Monowitz, about 75 inmates were killed, and more than 150 were slightly or severely injured.¹⁸ Nevertheless, many prisoners appreciated the raids, which scared the SS, demolished



"Auschwitz Concentration Camp with Its Subcamps," 1944, depicting Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Auschwitz III-Monowitz (called "Buna"), and, clockwise from top: Schwientochlowitz, Jaworzno, Sola-Hütte, Jawischowitz, and Golleschau. Prisoner Myszkowski captioned the images, which were compiled for the Auschwitz photo album by SS-Hauptsturmführer Bernhard Walter and SS-Untersturmführer Ernst Hoffmann for presentation to the commandant.

USHMM WS # 25680, COURTESY OF YVA

war production facilities, and brought their liberation closer. Further air raids followed on September 13 as well as on December 18 and 26, 1944, and the last on January 19, 1945.

On January 18, 1945, Monowitz was evacuated. About 800 to 850 sick prisoners, too exhausted to leave, stayed behind. Many of the approximately 10,000 prisoners from Monowitz were forced to go on the death march.¹⁹ Many thousands died from exhaustion, exposure, and starvation or were beaten to death or shot by the SS when unable to continue to march. The death march west went via Mikolów to Gleiwitz, where the surviving prisoners were loaded on open cattle cars and transported to concentration camps in the Reich. Many ended up in Mittelbau, where they were forced to work underground in German rocket production. The prisoners who stayed back in Monowitz were liberated by the 60th Army of the Red Army's First Ukrainian Front on January 27, 1945.

The crimes committed at Monowitz were documented in detail for the first time during the U.S. Military Tribunal at Nürnberg in Case 6 from 1947 to 1948, in which 24 top managers of IG Farben were, among other things, accused of plundering and despoliation and of using the slave labor of civilians, POWs, and concentration camp inmates. Five managers were sentenced to terms of between six and eight years for the exploitation and enslavement of camp inmates at Auschwitz. Ten defendants were acquitted. One defendant was released during the trial proceedings for health reasons. Four of the 13 IG Farben managers who were sentenced as war criminals were released immediately, and the others, before they served their full sentences.

Shortly after World War II, several members of the SS were sentenced to death by Allied Military Tribunals for crimes committed in concentration camps. Among them were the former Lagerführer of Monowitz, SS-Obersturmführer Vinzenz Schöttl, in the Dachau trial of 1945, as well as the former camp physicians of Monowitz, SS-Obersturmführer Friedrich Entress and SS-Hauptsturmführer Helmuth Vetter, in the Mauthausen trial in 1946. A French Military Tribunal at Rastatt sentenced the former commandant of Monowitz, Schwarz, to death in 1946 for crimes committed at Natzweiler.

Under Allied control, IG Farben was split up into the successor firms Badische Anilin und Sodafabrik (BASF), Hoechst, Bayer, Casella, and IG Farbenindustrie in Liquidation. Norbert Wollheim was the first survivor to claim compensation in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) against IG Farbenindustrie in Liquidation. The so-called Wollheim-Verfahren began in January 1952 and was finally closed in 1957 with the participation of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. A private settlement was reached out of court. A sum of 30 billion Deutsche Mark (DM) was paid as compensation for slave labor in the IG Farben factories at Monowitz, Heydebreck, Fürstengrube, and Janinagrube. IG Farbenindustrie in Liquidation was thereby able to insist that compensation was paid voluntarily, without any legal claim by the survivors. Many survivors were not informed in time and therefore failed to meet the application

deadline set in the agreement. The agreement of the Wollheim case became a model for the compensation of former slave laborers in subsequent cases against German industry.

Only a few perpetrators went to trial in the 1950s and 1960s in the FRG and German Democratic Republic (GDR) for crimes committed in Monowitz. Bernhard Rakers, former Kommandoführer and Rapportführer in Monowitz, was accused of murder in several trials from 1950 onward, for shooting prisoners during the death march. The trials, which took place before the Landgericht (state court) Osnabrück, ended with a sentence of lifelong imprisonment. In the GDR, the former SS-Lagerarzt of Monowitz, Horst Fischer, was arrested in June 1965 in Spreenhagen near Frankfurt an der Oder. Before the Supreme Court of the GDR, he was accused of taking part in selections of many thousands of prisoners. Fischer confessed to the crimes, which several witnesses had confirmed, and was sentenced to death on March 25, 1966. He was executed the same year.

In the first Auschwitz trial, which ran from December 1963 to August 1965 before the court in Frankfurt am Main, the former Sanitätsdienstgrad (SDG) of Monowitz, Gerhard Neubert, was released from trial for health reasons. In the second Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, in 1966, Neubert received a sentence of three and a half years for accessory to murder in 35 selections. In the third Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, in August 1966, Erich Grönke, Heinrich Bernhard Bonitz, and Josef Windeck were accused of murder. Bonitz, former block elder and Kapo in Monowitz, was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment. The former camp elder of Monowitz, Windeck, was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment for murder in 2 cases and attempted murder in 3 cases. The preliminary proceedings, which were opened by the public prosecutor in Frankfurt, against the former camp elder of the hospital (*Krankenbau*) Stefan Buthner (formerly Budziaszek), in 1966, were closed in 1975 because of the witnesses' contradictory testimonies.

SOURCES The most important studies on the history of the Monowitz concentration camp are by Bernd C. Wagner, *IG Auschwitz: Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung von Häftlingen des Lagers Monowitz 1941–1945* (Munich, 2000); and Piotr Setkiewicz, *Z dziejów obozów IG Farben Werk Auschwitz 1941–1945* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2006); as well as Setkiewicz's valuable studies in German, "Ausgewählte Probleme aus der Geschichte des IG Werkes Auschwitz," *HvA* 22 (2002): 7–147, and "Häftlingsarbeit im KZ-Auschwitz III-Monowitz: Die Frage der Wirtschaftlichkeit der Arbeit," in *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager—Entwicklung und Struktur*, ed. Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann (Göttingen, 1998), 2:584–605. Additional studies on Monowitz include Karl Heinz Roth, "IG Auschwitz: Normalität oder Anomalie eines kapitalistischen Entwicklungssprungs?" *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* 4:4 (1989): 11–28; Peter Hayes, "Die IG Farben und die Zwangsarbeit von KZ-Häftlingen im Werk Auschwitz," in *Konzentrationslager und deutsche Wirtschaft*, ed. Hermann Kaienburg (Opladen, 1996), pp. 129–148; and Joseph Robert White, "IG Auschwitz: The Primacy of Racial Politics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2000). For a valuable early study

on the infirmary in Monowitz by a former camp physician, see Antoni Makowski, "Organisation, Entwicklung und Tätigkeit des Häftlings-Krankenbaus in Monowitz (KL Auschwitz III)," *HvA* 15 (1975): 113–181. In English one of the first studies on IG Farben's involvement in the exploitation of slave labor is the book of the former chief of the patent and cartel section of the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice, Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of IG Farben* (New York, 1979), pp. 111–127; with corrections to Borkin's errors, see the chapter on Auschwitz in Peter Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben and the Nazi Era*, 2nd ed. (1987; Cambridge, 2000), pp. 347–368. On the decision to establish Monowitz as the first camp inside an industrial complex, see Shmuel Krakowski, "The Satellite Camps," in *Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum (Bloomington, 1994), pp. 50–60. See also the author's "Die IG Farbenindustrie und der Ausbau des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1941–1942," *Sozial Geschichte: Zeitschrift für historische Analyse des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts* 21:1 (2006): 33–67. On the controversy concerning the role the provision of slave labor played in the decision of IG Farben to build a chemical plant at Monowitz and to install the camp on the factory's premises, see Peter Hayes, "Zur umstrittenen Geschichte der IG Farbenindustrie AG," *GuG* 18 (1992): 405–417; Gottfried Plümpe, "Antwort auf Peter Hayes," *GuG* 18 (1992): 526–532; Thomas Sandkühler and Hans-Walter Schmuhl, "Noch einmal: Die IG Farben und Auschwitz," *GuG* 19 (1993): 259–267; Franciszek Piper, *Arbeitseinsatz der Häftlinge aus dem KL Auschwitz* (Warsaw, 1995), p. 239; Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, pp. 37–58; and Florian Schmaltz and Karl Heinz Roth, "Neue Dokumente zur Vorgeschichte des IG Farbenwerks Auschwitz-Monowitz," *1999* 13 (1998): 100–116. On the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt am Main, see Florian Schmaltz, "Im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft, Politik und Justiz—Das historische Gutachten Jürgen Kuczynskis zur Rolle der IG Farben und des KZ Monowitz im ersten Frankfurter Auschwitz-Prozess," in "Gerichtstag halten über uns selbst . . ." *Geschichte und Wirkung des ersten Frankfurter Auschwitz-Prozess*, ed. Irmtrud Wojak (Frankfurt am Main, 2001), pp. 117–140. On British prisoners of war as witnesses to the ordeal of Monowitz prisoners, see Joseph Robert White, "'Even in Auschwitz . . . Humanity Could Prevail': British POWs and Jewish Concentration-Camp Inmates at IG Auschwitz, 1943–1945," *HGS* 15:2 (Fall 2001): 266–295; and on U.S. and Soviet bombing raids on IG Farben Auschwitz, see his "Target Auschwitz: Historical and Hypothetical Responses to German Attack," *HGS* 16:1 (Spring 2002): 54–76.

A small but good selection of documents in English translation are in *TWC*, vols. 7–8. For a full documentation of Case 6, in German and English, see NARA, RG 238, M892, Reels 1–113, Records of the *United States of America versus Carl Krauch, et al.* (Case 6), August 14, 1947–July 30, 1948. These sources are completed by documents collected by the prosecution in the series of Nuremberg Industrialists (NI series) in T-301, Reels 1–163, Records of the Office of the United States Chief Council for War Crimes, Nuremberg. The Auschwitz garrison orders have been published in Norbert Frei et al., eds., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000). On SS personnel, see also Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, ed., *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS* (Warsaw, 1997).

Further sources on the development of the IG Farben factory at Auschwitz can be found in the company archives of IG Farben successors Bayer Leverkusen, BASF (Ludwigshafen), and the Hoechst archives. Besides the great collection of testimonies of survivors, the APMO keeps the documents of the SS-Zentralbauleitung Auschwitz with many relevant sources on the development of the construction of the concentration camp at Monowitz. In the BA-BL, the files of the WVHA (NS 3), IG Farbenindustrie (R 8128), and Reichsamt für Wirtschaftsausbau (R 3112) are, among other finds, the most important ones. The first Auschwitz trial at Frankfurt is well documented on DVD: F-B-I and Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, ed., *Der Auschwitz-Prozess* (Berlin, 2004). The files of the following Auschwitz trials are kept by F-B-I. Among the numerous holdings on Monowitz at USHMMA is RG 50.042*0032, Oral history interview of Norbert Wollheim, February 18, 1992. For a description of the Buna-Aussenkommando that built the camp in Monowitz, see the famous book by Wiesław Kielar, *Anus Mundi: Five Years in Auschwitz*, trans. Susanne Flatauer (Harmondsworth, 1980). Among the many testimonies and biographies of survivors, a very famous one is Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York, 1996). Recently, the earliest report by Primo Levi and co-author, prisoner physician Leonardo De Benedetti, originally prepared for Soviet investigators and published in an Italian medical journal, has appeared in English. See Levi and De Benedetti, *Auschwitz Report*, ed. Robert S.C. Gordon and trans. Judith Woolf (New York, 2006). Two other impressive and detailed testimonies of survivors are Hans Frankenthal, *The Unwelcome One: Returning Home from Auschwitz*, ed. Andreas Plake, Babette Quinkert, and Florian Schmaltz and trans. John A. Broadwin (Evanston, IL, 2002); and Bert B. Linder, *Condemned without Judgment: The Three Lives of a Holocaust Survivor* (New York, 1995). A good description of the Arbeitserziehungslager inside camp Monowitz was written by the former camp elder, Siegfried Halbreich, *Before—During—After* (New York, 1991).

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NOTES

1. NI-1240, Göring to Himmler, February 18, 1941.
2. BA-B, R 5/3056, Bl. 480, Reichsbahndirektion Oppeln an Reichsverkehrsministerium, February 28, 1942; IG Auschwitz, Wochenbericht Nr. 33 für die Zeit vom 5. bis 11.1.1942, NI-15109.
3. APMO, D-AuIII Monowitz/4, Tygodniowe sprawozdania IG Farben, t. 2, p. 104, IG Auschwitz, Wochenbericht Nr. 22, October 27, 1941.
4. NI-11132, Protokoll der 16. Baubesprechung am 6.3.42 in Ludwigshafen, March 28, 1942.
5. Case No. 6, *U.S. v. Krauch* (IG Farben Case), in *TWC*, 8:480.
6. NI-14287, Affidavit of Martin Robbach, January 21, 1948; and Bernd C. Wagner, *IG Auschwitz: Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung von Häftlingen des Lagers Monowitz 1941–1945* (Munich, 2000), p. 333.
7. APK, RK 2910, p. 19, Mildner (Staatspolizeileitstelle Kattowitz) an den Regierungspräsidenten in Kattowitz, February 11, 1943.

8. APMO, Oświadczenia, t. 6, s 829, Syg. Ośw/Posner/14, p. 6; Wagner, *IG Auschwitz*, p. 105; report on Auschwitz-Monowitz (Buna) by Curt Posner, n.d.

9. Standortbefehl 53/43, signed Liebehenschel, November 22, 1943, in Norbert Frei et al., eds., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle Konzentrationslager Auschwitz 1940-1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000), p. 367.

10. BA-BL, SSO Heinrich Schwarz (RuSHA and SSO). See Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, ed., *Auschwitz in den Augen der SS*, (Warsaw, 1997), p. 243.

11. Standortbefehl 53/43, November 22, 1943, in Frei et al., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle*, p. 366.

12. Standortbefehl 54/43, December 1, 1943, in *ibid.*, p. 370.

13. Standortbefehl 29/44, November 25, 1944, in *ibid.*, p. 514.

14. Standortbefehl 53/43, November 22, 1943, in *ibid.*,

p. 367; and APMO, D-Au-I-1/53, Microfilm Nr. 1041, p. 311, Kommandantur Konzentrationslager Auschwitz III - Kommandanturbefehl 1/43, December 2, 1943.

15. NI-7967, Affidavit of Erwin Schulhof, June 21, 1947; NI-12069, Affidavit of Gustav Herzog, October 21, 1947; NI-12070, Affidavit of Stefan Budziaszek, October 27, 1947; NI-11081, Affidavit of Dr. Moses Zlotolow, September 2, 1947.

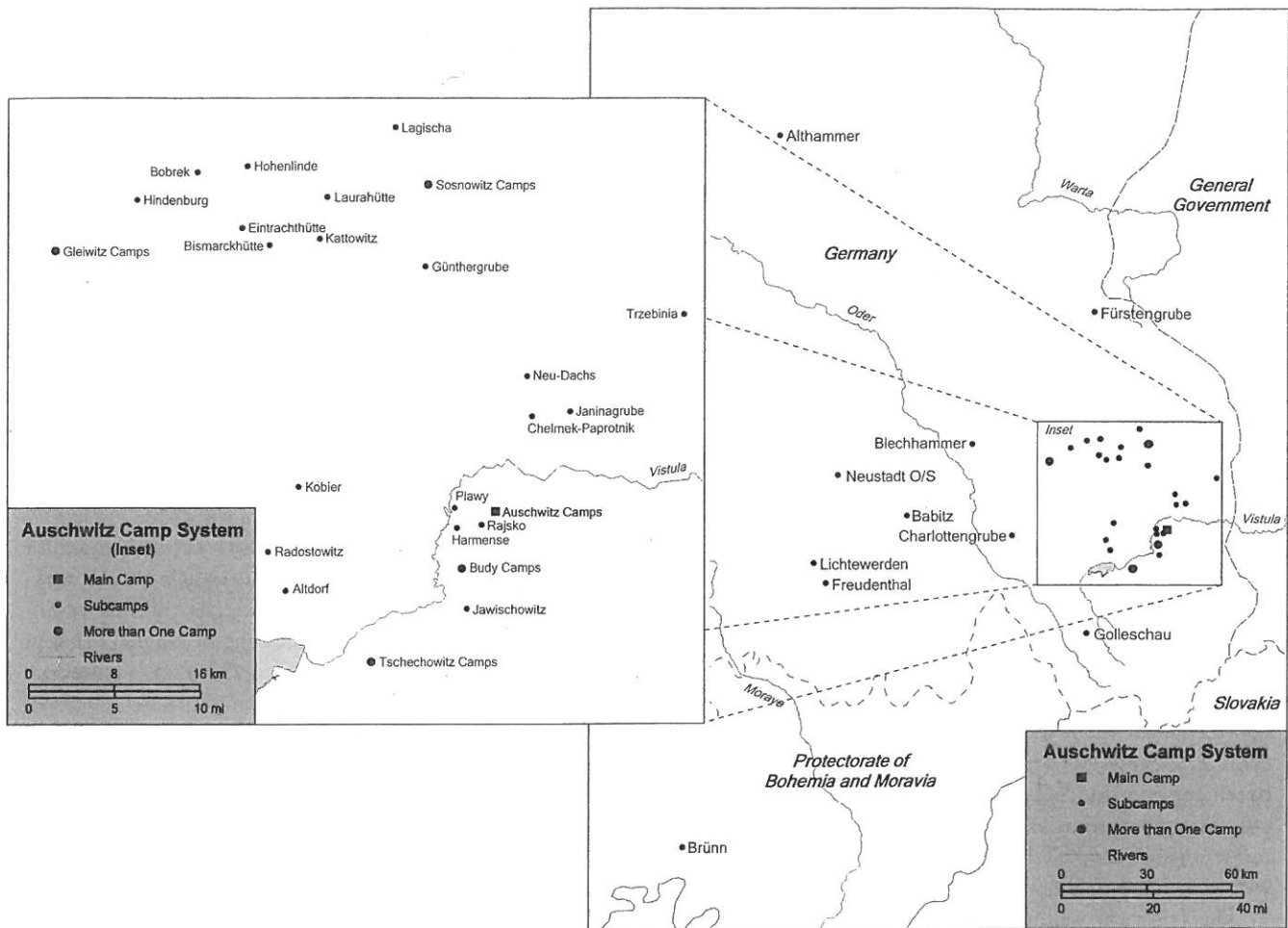
16. NI-4830, Affidavit of Dr. Rudolf Vitek [Rudolf Weisskopf], March 3, 1947.

17. F-B-I, Frankfurt am Main, Landgericht Frankfurt am Main, 4 Js 444/59, Vernehmung von Walter Petzold (Berlin) am 10.2.1960, p. 2.

18. NI-10820, Siegfried Pinkus to USMT Nürnberg, August 29, 1947.

19. See F-B-I, Bestand Wollheim Verfahren 2/3 0 406/51, statement Josef Löwenstein, December 4, 1952, p. 11.

AUSCHWITZ SUBCAMP SYSTEM



The process of creating subcamps subordinate to the Auschwitz main camp got off to a slow start and then accelerated rapidly as the war economy's demand for labor increased, as was the case with other concentration camp complexes. The first 4 subcamps were formed at industrial plants away from the central camp in 1942. Five more were formed in 1943, and 19 more in 1944, at steelmills, mines, and other industrial plants. Besides the subcamps established at industrial plants, there were also a dozen or so other subcamps established at farms, forestry businesses, and other workplaces. Some of them existed for a short time—sometimes seasonally or for the time that a specific job was being done. They were formed from the very beginning of the main camp's existence.

Auschwitz had a total of about 40 subcamps, including those established at industrial plants. The definite majority of prisoners living in the subcamps (approximately 95 percent, sometimes almost 100 percent) were Jews. That percentage is due partly to the fact that Jews constituted a large part of the Auschwitz population overall (approximately 70 percent in 1944) and partly to the fact that non-Jews were sent to concentration camps in Germany, while until the spring of

1944 Jews were sent to Auschwitz subcamps located on the borderlands between Poland and Germany (under the policy, in effect until the spring of 1944, that the Reich was to be free of Jews).

Until November 21, 1943, the subcamps at industrial plants were under the commander of the Auschwitz main camp. When the Auschwitz camp split into three camps, they were under the commandant of Auschwitz III-Monowitz. SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz was the commandant of that camp, which oversaw all the Auschwitz subcamps until the camp was disbanded.

Each subcamp was headed by a superintendent (Schutzhaftlagerführer) whom the commandant appointed. He was responsible for keeping the camp premises, facilities, and equipment in proper condition; provisioning the prisoners; scheduling their labor assignments; and overseeing the productivity and proper supervision of the prisoners. Some camp superintendents also held the post of guard company commander.

The subcamp superintendent was aided by a noncommissioned officer (Rapportführer) who was responsible for

conducting roll calls and keeping prisoner population records and who supervised the prisoner block superintendents (Blockführer). An SS man usually held the post of labor assignment superintendent (Arbeitseinsatzführer). There were also the posts of kitchen superintendent and medical orderly (Sanitätsdienstgrad, SDG). The latter supervised the infirmary, also called the camp hospital (*Häftlingskrankenbau*). His supervision over the infirmary was actually administrative in nature: SS orderlies were not qualified to treat prisoners, who were attended to by prisoner doctors. The infirmaries were very meagerly equipped, and the assortment and quantity of medicine brought in from the pharmacy at Auschwitz I was completely inadequate. The SS doctors who visited the subcamps from time to time were not interested in treating the prisoners. All they did was remove chronically ill prisoners and those unfit to work from the subcamps and send them either to the camp hospital at the Buna (Monowitz) subcamp or to Birkenau or directly to the gas chambers to die. Depending on the prisoner population at a subcamp, they would select upward of a dozen to several dozen—or even several hundred prisoners at a time.

The political department (Politische Abteilung) at the central camp at Auschwitz set up subsidiaries at several subcamps. The other subcamps were supervised directly by the political department at the central camp at Auschwitz (SS-Unterscharführer Federnel and SS-Rottenführer Broad). The political department was interested in anything concerning prisoner escapes from camp, forbidden communications between prisoners and the civilian population, distribution of political information among prisoners, sabotage, and other infractions of the rules. The subcamp superintendent dealt with minor breaches of order or discipline.

The prisoners were put to work at outside companies—those that did not belong to the SS—only upon the request of such companies. Any requests by companies seeking the allocation of prisoner labor had to be addressed to the DII office at the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA). Before making a final decision on the time, place, and number of prisoner laborers, it considered the camp management's proposition as to lodging and supervision capabilities and the ruling of the proper arms inspectorate as to the urgency and importance of production where prisoners were to be put to work.

WVHA contracts with companies hiring prisoner labor set forth such things as the type of labor and fees to be charged as well as accommodation, food, and clothing conditions. Basically, besides the prisoner labor fees, the company doing the hiring was responsible for all costs associated with accommodation of prisoners outside the concentration camp. Therefore, the companies were required to erect a proper camp near the workplace, including barracks for the prisoners and the SS men, warehouses and kitchens, and to outfit those premises with the proper equipment, furnishings, sanitary facilities, as well as a security fence and watchtowers. On the other hand, the SS authorities covered the costs of feeding and clothing the prisoners and provided prisoner supervision.

Besides SS men, the prisoners were sometimes guarded by soldiers from the military formations for which a specific plant was producing goods or services. For example, the prisoners who were put to work at the Eintrachthütte works manufacturing anti-aircraft guns were guarded by soldiers from the Luftwaffe. The female prisoners who were put to work manufacturing ammunition at the Donnersmarck steelmill (Auschwitz/Hindenburg subcamp) were guarded by Wehrmacht soldiers, just as at the subcamps at Charlottengrube, Sosnowitz, Golleschau, and Laurahütte. At some camps, there were civilian plant guards (Werkschutz) that guarded the prisoners.

Due to the shortage of SS guards, their supervision was chiefly limited to guarding the fences, gates, and passages to prevent prisoner escapes. Work discipline was constantly monitored by prisoners—Kapos (prisoner foremen) and “head laborers” (Vorarbeiter)—and civilian staff were in charge of supervising workmanship.

Prisoners usually worked in detachments of several people, including civilian workers. The practice was either to put several trained prisoners under the supervision of a civilian skilled worker or to assign one or two prisoners to help several workers; the prisoners brought them raw materials, transported finished pieces, cleaned and maintained the machines, and kept the workstations in order. The system, which was a piecework arrangement, doubtless kept the civilian personnel interested in maintaining prisoner discipline and productivity.

In the majority of subcamps, the primary company that took on prisoner labor leased prisoners out to its subcontractors. The number of such companies reached several dozen in the case of the largest subcamps.

As a rule, the prisoners' working conditions were very hard. Although prisoners were put to work in very diverse branches of industry, such as mining, steelmaking, chemicals, and textiles, over half of them labored at various types of construction projects and did mainly heavy construction work: excavating earth, site leveling, and transporting materials. There was little mechanization, and the prisoners had to work quickly and without protective measures.

Prisoners who were put to work directly in manufacturing were somewhat better off: they were not exposed to adverse weather, and the SS men and Kapos tended to be more lenient.

At some subcamps, prisoners were put to work removing unexploded bombs from bombarded industrial plants. Removing unexploded bombs from the local refinery was the main occupation for prisoners at the Auschwitz/Tschechowitz I (*Bombensucherkommando*) subcamp.

Although the subcamps were mainly built in the immediate vicinity of the workplaces, at some subcamps prisoners had to walk several kilometers back and forth every day to work.

The working hours of prisoners laboring in industrial establishments were basically unlimited. The companies regulated both the length of the workday and the prisoners' schedule, and that is why there is such diversity in the system

of labor assignments and working hours. Prisoners were put to work in systems of one, two, or three shifts, and working hours ranged from 8 to 12 hours per day.

Prisoners had only one or two free Sundays a month. Usually, however, as in their free time on weekdays, they did various kinds of work keeping the camp in order, repairing and cleaning clothing, and so on.

Practically speaking, considering their trips back and forth to work, the roll calls that went on and on despite orders to the contrary by higher SS officials, the waits for meals, and other activities, the time for rest was limited to a few hours each day.

Treatment at the different subcamps varied considerably. The nature of the work was a key factor. Work in the open air under constant watch by the SS men and Kapos presented more opportunities for beating and abusing prisoners than work operating machines, where the production process itself set the rhythm and pace to a large extent. The type of civilian supervision was also significant to the prisoners' situation. In general, civilian workers and lower-level supervisors were kinder toward prisoners, while mid- and upper-level supervi-

sors were often just as bad as the SS and Kapos in their mistreatment of prisoners.

Besides beating, the regular replacement of prisoners was designed to be a significant factor in maintaining productivity at the proper level; prisoners who had used up their strength were replaced with stronger ones. At any rate, such rotation was included in the terms and conditions of the agreements between the SS and the companies that took on prisoner labor.

Some companies provided the prisoners with extra food on their own or rewarded prisoners with food for outstanding work. However, bonus vouchers were the most common material incentive—and also the least effective. For the underfed prisoners, the vouchers, which were mainly good for such low-value products as snails in vinegar, rutabaga, camp soup, toiletries, letter paper, thread, and other such odds and ends, had almost no value at all.

SOURCES For information about the subcamp system, readers should refer to the source descriptions for the main camps and for the individual subcamps.

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ALTDORF

The Pless (Pszczyna) Forestry Management Office (Oberforstamt) deployed a 20-prisoner forestry detail at Altdorf (Stara Wieś) from October 1942 to March 1943. The camp was located in the basement of a house. When the subcamp was dissolved, the prisoners, all of whom were Jewish, were transferred elsewhere in the Auschwitz complex. The Oberforstamt Pless established similar camps at Kobier (Kobiór) and Radostowitz (Radostowice). In a special commandant order of November 2, 1942, concerning "offenses with the use of motor vehicles," SS-Obersturmbannführer Rudolf Höss referred to these camps as the "Pless forest detachments" (Plesser Forstkommandos) but did not list them by name.¹

SOURCES This entry is based upon Irena Strzelecka and Piotr Setkiewicz, "The Construction, Expansion and Development of the Camp and Its Branches," in Aleksander Lasik et al., eds., *The Establishment and Organization of the Camp*, vol. 1 of Wacław Długoborski and Franciszek Piper, eds., *Auschwitz, 1940–1945: Central Issues in the History of the Camp*, trans. William Brand, 5 vols. (Oświęcim: APMO, 2000), p. 130. Strzelecka and Setkiewicz cite Anna Zięba, "Podobóz Altdorf" (unpub. MSS, n.d.), available at APMO. Additional information about Altdorf can be gleaned from "Sub-Camps of Auschwitz Concentration Camp," www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl. This camp is listed in ITS, *Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer SS (1933–1945)*, 2 vols. (Arolsen, 1979), 1:13.

The forest detachment reference is reproduced in Norbert Frei et al., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000).

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NOTE

1. Quotation in Rudolf Höss, Kommandantursonderbefehl, Betr.: "Verstöße bei Benutzung von Kraftfahrzeugen," November 2, 1942, reproduced in Norbert Frei et al., eds., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslager Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000), p. 192.

ALTHAMMER

The Germans established the Althammer subcamp in the town of Stara Kuźnia (Althammer) in September 1944. The prisoners lived in brick barracks in which the Germans had earlier confined Italian prisoners of war from Badoglio's army. The first group of 30 prisoners arrived at Althammer from Auschwitz in a truck in mid-September 1944.¹ Additional groups arrived later, and the prisoner population rose steadily; the camp held 486 prisoners on January 17, 1945.² The prisoners were almost exclusively Jews primarily from France, Poland, Hungary, and the Netherlands. In addition, there were a few German prisoners, one Pole, and one Gypsy in the subcamp. They served in various positions in the prisoner administration.

SS-Oberscharführer Hans Mirbeth was the subcamp's commandant. Like other subcamps, Althammer was under the administration of Auschwitz III. In this connection, the subcamp was inspected by that camp's commander, SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz, and by SS-Untersturmführer Dr. Hans König.³ Since there was no Political Branch on site, SS men from the Auschwitz Political Branch would come to the subcamp when prisoners escaped and conduct investigations on the spot. Food and medicine were also brought into the subcamp from Auschwitz.⁴

The job of the first group of 30 prisoners was to enclose the barracks with a double fence of barbed wire and erect four watchtowers at the corners.⁵

The prisoners' chief place of work was the Walter thermal power plant construction site in Stara Kuźnia. To prevent prisoners from escaping, the entire construction site was fenced with barbed wire, and a cordon of guard stations surrounded it as well. The prisoners did such jobs as bricklaying and transport work. A large group of prisoners worked digging sewage ditches, which meant that the prisoners often had to stand in water without rubber boots. Several dozen other prisoners were also put to work building a railway siding. For a time, some prisoners were employed digging up potatoes. As necessary, others were used to unload railroad cars. Still other prisoners were put to work around the camp, in the SS men's kitchen; in the prisoners' kitchen; cleaning the camp rooms, yards, paths, and bathhouse; and building a new kitchen.

Living, working, and sanitary conditions were better than at Birkenau but still extremely unhealthful. The prisoners received food that was inadequate in both quality and quantity. They did not even get the food rations provided for in camp standards.⁶ Also, their clothing was not adapted to the working conditions or the climate; the uniform consisted of a striped suit and wooden shoes. An infirmary was established for the sick and those unable to work, under the supervision of orderly SS-Sturmmann Kisel. Care was minimal, however, and prisoners who stayed in the infirmary for too long were taken away to the Auschwitz main camp.

Strict discipline prevailed in the camp. The SS treated the prisoners brutally. Even against standing orders to keep roll-call times to a minimum at Althammer, roll calls were often drawn out, and the prisoners were subjected to searches and persecution. If the guards found any contraband on prisoners, especially food, cigarettes, or paper put under their shirts as protection from the wind, they would beat the prisoners with whips or rubber bats. Similar treatment was the norm at the work site as well. There were also instances when the SS men would take prisoners who were too weak to work productively to the forest and shoot them. The subcamp's commandant Mirbeth set the example in tormenting prisoners. Not only did he beat them, but he also murdered them (he shot several prisoners and choked one). The bodies of those who died from abuse and exhaustion were stored in the camp latrine, after which they were taken away to Auschwitz II to be burned.⁷

The Germans shut down the subcamp and evacuated the prisoners in January 1945 due to the approach of the Soviet army. On January 18 or 19, approximately 350 prisoners were led out of the subcamp on foot and escorted to Gliwice (Gleitwitz). From there they were taken to different camps within Germany. Some found themselves in places such as Mittelbau or Bergen-Belsen. On January 25, SS men selected several dozen of the approximately 150 sick people left in the subcamp and escorted them out of the camp in an unknown direction. The rest were left under the supervision of the local Selbstschutz (local paramilitaries). They were liberated by Soviet forces a few days later.

SOURCES Records pertaining to the Althammer camp may be found in the APMO Affidavits Collection, accounts of Mieczysław Francuz, Israel Lejbisz, Joanna Mryka [or Mryki], Jan Juraszczyk and Ludwik Cipa; *Fahrbefehle; Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderung*; Auschwitz concentration camp staff trial records; SS-Hygiene Institut Records; Nummernbuch.

The following published sources also contain information on Althammer: Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Althammer," *HvA* 13 (1971): 141–158; Aleksander Drożdżyński, "Mały spokojny obóz," *ZO* 8 (1964).

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia [Affidavits Collection], account of former prisoner Mieczysław Francuz.

2. APMO, *Materiały Ruchu Oporu* [Resistance Movement Materials], vol. 3, book 208, p. 212.

3. APMO, *Fahrbefehle* dated September 22, 1944, and November 18, 1944.

4. APMO, *Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderung* dated November 22, 1944, in which the "collection of corpses and delivery of medicine" was listed as the purpose of a trip to Althammer and Eintrachthütte.

5. Living and working conditions and prisoner treatment have been depicted based on the accounts of former Althammer subcamp prisoners Mieczysław Francuz and Israel Lejbisz, the memoirs of former Althammer prisoner Aleksander Drożdżyński, as well as the accounts of the following residents of nearby towns and workers who had contact with prisoners: Joanna Mryka [or Mryki], Jan Juraszczyk, and Ludwik Cipa, on file at ANMA.

6. ANMA, Akta SS-Hygiene Institut, segr. 56/531-532 [Records of the SS-Hygiene Institut, File 56/531-532]. Results of a test of a sample of soup from the Althammer subcamp.

7. ANMA, *Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderung* dated November 22, 1944.

BABITZ

The SS created the Babitz subcamp on the site of the village of Babice, which had been evacuated in April 1941. Prisoners coming in from the Auschwitz concentration camp in labor detachments demolished some of the village buildings, and the material thus acquired was used to build the buildings of

the farm that the SS designated "Wirtschaftshof Babitz." The farm's task was to cultivate the surrounding lands and raise cattle. It was under the charge of Joachim Caesar, the director of all camp farms.¹ Initially, numerous male and female prisoner detachments (Aussenkommandos) from the Auschwitz camp as well as Birkenau bred the animals and did the farming.

The SS established the subcamp in March 1943 with approximately 60 male and 50 female prisoners in the prewar school building and neighboring wooden barracks. The female prisoners lived in the school building, the male prisoners, in the barracks. The building and barracks were surrounded by a barbed-wire fence that was not electrified. At the corners of the fence there were elevated watch platforms where SS men stood guard. The first group of prisoners consisted mostly of Jews from 20 to 30 years old. However, they were killed a short time later (within six weeks), and about 200 Poles, Greek Jews, and Russians were brought in to replace them.²

The female prisoners lived in the classrooms called *sztubas*, from 12 to 40 in a room, depending on the size. They each slept alone on straw-filled mattresses on bunks with three blankets. The building's windows had been partially bricked up or secured with barbed wire. The rooms were cleaned daily, and the prisoners had no hygienic problems, as they had enough cold water from a well in the yard, and they also got warm water in the evening. The rooms were heated in the winter. There were permanent brick toilet facilities outside the building, while a portable wooden toilet was brought into the building at night. There was a dispensary in the building where female prisoners sick with noninfectious diseases could stay. A Russian prisoner took care of patients at the dispensary. Every so often, an orderly (Sanitätsdienstgrad, SDG) would come from the main camp to conduct a sanitary inspection of the prisoners of the Babitz subcamp. The dispensary was supplied with medicine, but in an inadequate amount. In 1944, the woman prisoners who worked raising cows were given medical examinations.³ The school building also had an office for the SS men, as well as for the women prisoners' supervisor (Aufseherin). The mess for SS personnel was located in an addition to the school building.

Food for the prisoners was brought in from the Birkenau camp. They got a meal three times a day: only bitter black coffee in the morning. For lunch they had a soup based on rutabaga, cabbage, or potatoes or sometimes what were called *Pellkartoffeln*, potatoes cooked in their skins. In the evening, there was a piece of bread (250 grams, 8.8 ounces) with some margarine, sometimes a slice of sausage or jam, and coffee.⁴ Because of the nature of the work being done, at this camp it was possible to "appropriate food" in the form of potatoes and sugar beets. The female and male prisoners could also receive food packages from the outside (which were not taken by the guards of prisoner-functionaries here). In the winter, the female prisoners dressed in striped clothing and illegally obtained sweaters; in the summer, they got gray and blue linen dresses as well as aprons. They wore white kerchiefs on their heads.

They got underwear from the Birkenau women's camp, which they would wash on-site during typhus epidemics.

The prisoners from the Babitz subcamp only did work on that farm where they were assigned to respective detachments and specific jobs. Work lasted all day, with a break for lunch, which they ate in their rooms. The male prisoners were divided up into two detachments: one raised and maintained the horses, and the other worked the soil, using horse-drawn farm implements. The hardest work that the female prisoners did was plowing. When the horses were taken away in 1944 for the army's needs, women were harnessed to the plows. When there was slack in the fieldwork, the male prisoners were sent to demolish the still-standing village buildings, dig ditches, and level ground.

The female prisoners were divided up into four labor detachments, each of which had a designated SS man, a detachment commander, who was responsible for the work assigned to the prisoners. They included SS-Unterscharführer Ernst Kalesse (formerly of Mauthausen, he arrived at Auschwitz in February 1942 and stayed until the camp's evacuation in January 1945), SS-Unterscharführer Georg Paul Sauer, and an SS man of Ukrainian origin called Czarny (Blackie) who tormented the Polish women. SS sentries guarded each detachment. The first detachment, numbering 15 women, raised the cows, of which there were 30, plus two bulls. The cows' milk was tested at the SS-Hygiene Institut laboratory in Rajsko and transported to the camp dairy. There were 25 women, mainly Ukrainians, in the second detachment. They worked exclusively with the compost and manure, which they heaped in the winter and spread on the fields in the spring and autumn. In the other two detachments, the women worked in the field producing potatoes, rape, cabbage, and beets; in the winter they also pulled down buildings in Babice. Those latter two detachments were the most numerous, with 50 and 90 prisoners, respectively. Besides Poles and Ukrainians, there were also Russians among the female prisoners at Babitz. Women from the Birkenau camp were also sent to work on the land every day.

An SS-Oberscharführer named Rosenoff was the commandant of the Babitz subcamp. SS-Aufseherin Erna Kuck, called Kurka (Chicken) by the prisoners, was the first supervisor; she came to Auschwitz from Ravensbrück in October 1942. She was kindly disposed toward the women and knew how to stand up for them, for which she was dismissed in 1944. After her, that post was filled by Johanna Bormann, who was strict and demanding toward the women.⁵

The location of the Babitz camp facilitated prisoner contacts with the civilian population. Among the Poles living in the vicinity of the subcamp, there was an organized group of women who provided regular help to the prisoners in the form of food, medicine, and news from their families. There were two escapes from the Babitz subcamp. In the summer of 1943, a female prisoner named Lodka escaped successfully. The other one, which two Russian women organized in the summer of 1944, unfortunately failed. They managed to get to Kraków but were caught there, and although they were not

identified as fugitives from Auschwitz (they had removed the camp numbers from their arms), they were put in the Ravensbrück concentration camp.⁶

At the end of July 1944, the female prisoners were moved to the Birkenau women's camp. The male prisoners remained at Babitz until the Auschwitz concentration camp was evacuated on January 17, 1945.

SOURCES Material on this camp may be found in Anna Zięba, "Wirtschaftshof Babitz, Nebenlager beim Gut Babice," *HvA* 11 (1970): 73–87. APMO holds the following records: Zespół Oświadczenia (Collected Affidavits, Accounts of Stanisław Kajtoch, Zofia Knapczyk, Stanisław Kłyczek, Halina Hertig, Tadeusz Jedrysik, Bolesław Staroń, Anna Zdanowska-Wiśniewska, Zofia Bondyra-Cendrowska, Janina Obtułowicz-Sarnowska, Teresa Wicińska, Anna Kot, Maria Zychowicz); Zespół Opracowania (Collected Studies); and files on Auschwitz concentration camp staff members from 1940 to 1945 (compiled by Dr. Aleksander Lasik).

Helena Kubica
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. Auschwitz-Birkenau National Museum Archives (ANMA). Zespół rozkazy komendantury, Commander's headquarters order No. 5/42, December 3, 1942, Docket D-Au I-1/78.
2. ANMA, Zespół Oświadczenia, vol. 29, pp. 5–6, account of former prisoner Bolesław Staroń.
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 47, p. 89, vol. 12, pp. 36–37, vol. 35, pp. 102–109, accounts of former prisoners Anna Zdanowska-Wiśniewska, Zofia Cendrowska, and Janina Sarnowska.
4. *Ibid.*, vol. 47, p. 89, account of former prisoner Anna Zdanowska-Wiśniewska.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 37, vol. 47, p. 90, accounts of former prisoners Zofia Cendrowska and Anna Zdanowska-Wiśniewska.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. 12, pp. 38, 91.

BISMARCKHÜTTE [AKA KÖNIGSHÜTTE]

The SS established an Auschwitz subcamp in September 1944 in Chorzów-Batory (Bismarckhütte), a southern section of the city of Chorzów (Königshütte), at the Bismarckhütte steel mill. Approximately 200 Jewish prisoners, who had been deported originally to Auschwitz from different Nazi-occupied countries, were placed there. At least 45 of them were brought to Bismarckhütte from Auschwitz's Blechhammer subcamp.

Immediately following the subcamp's establishment, prisoners were put to work expanding it and doing all sorts of routine jobs. At the steel mill, which belonged to the Berghütte concern, prisoners apparently began working only in November 1944. They were escorted to work by several armed SS men with dogs; one of the escorts was SS-Unterscharführer Franz Monkos. The prisoners worked in both the steel mill's upper and lower plants, in such jobs as the handling and shipping of different materials, earthmoving, and generally every kind of support job not requiring any particular skills.

Approximately 40 prisoners were put to work in Bismarckhütte's mechanical department, operating the machines. Since before the war, the department's output was reserved for military needs; it made armor plate and parts for anti-aircraft guns. Foremen prisoners kept watch over the inmates at work, and SS men often made inspections. Sometimes they tormented the prisoners, especially during the short dinner break when prisoners were issued a watery soup.

According to surviving minutes of the supervisory board meeting of the Königs-und-Bismarckhütte AG company dated December 8, 1944, the management intended on putting prisoners to work immediately on building a new "Vergütere" division, which would allow an increase in production of anti-aircraft gun barrels.

No one has been able to determine the subcamp director's name. Bruno Brodniewicz, marked No. 1 of the transport to Auschwitz from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on May 20, 1940, in a group of 30 criminal prisoners, served as camp elder (Lagerältester). The details of the prisoners' living conditions at the Bismarckhütte subcamp are not known. They probably were not much different than those that prevailed throughout the Auschwitz camp complex.

The Bismarckhütte subcamp was shut down on January 18, 1945. SS-Oberscharführer Klemann of Hamburg was the commandant of the evacuation transport headed toward Gleiwitz (Gliwice). In Gleiwitz, the prisoners of the Bismarckhütte subcamp and prisoners from the other Auschwitz subcamps were loaded onto open railroad cars and taken away to the Dora concentration camp, from where they were taken to Niedersachswerfen to work on building a mine tunnel. A few of them lived to see their liberation on May 4, 1945, during an evacuation march toward Hagenow.

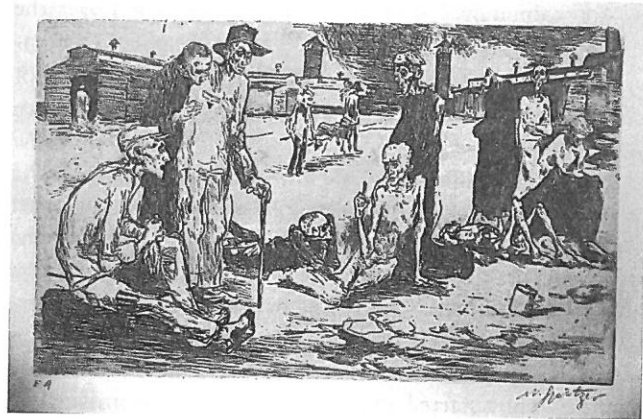
SOURCES Information on the Bismarckhütte subcamp may be found in Irena Strzelecka, "Podobóz 'Bismarcksmarckhütte,'" *ZO* 12 (1970): 145–158 (German version: "Das Nebenlager 'Bismarcksmarckhütte,'" *HvA* 12 [1971]: 145–159).

Relevant archival records may be found in APK or APKat, Berghütte Collection Catalog No. 1497; APMO, Collected Affidavits (accounts by former prisoner Józef Bruner, residents of Chorzów-Batory and neighborhood, including Edmund Belka, Karol Dyla, and Jerzy Dziadź).

Irena Strzelecka
trans. Gerard Majka

BLECHHAMMER

The Germans established a subcamp of Auschwitz on April 1, 1944, when they placed the Jewish forced labor camp near Blechhammer (now Blachownia Śląska) under the command of the Auschwitz III-Monowitz concentration camp.¹ Initially, there were about 3,000 men and around 200 women in the camp; in the following months, over 1,000 Jewish prisoners were sent to the subcamp. A total of approximately 4,500 male and female prisoners from 15 European countries went through the subcamp.² Blechhammer was the second-largest



"Square in Front of the Barracks," by Auschwitz-Blechhammer prisoner Walter Spitzer, circa 1943–1945.

USHMM WS # 27540, COURTESY OF APMO

Auschwitz subcamp, after Monowitz, as far as prisoner population was concerned.

The camp occupied an area of almost 4 hectares (10 acres).³ It was fenced in by a concrete wall almost 4 meters (13 feet) high with concrete watchtowers. The prisoners occupied about 25 living and hospital barracks. The camp also had toilet, washroom, workshop, warehouse, and bathhouse barracks.

The prisoners were guarded by SS men who belonged to the Auschwitz III 7th Guard Company, commanded by SS-Hauptsturmführer Otto Brossmann and his deputy SS-Untersturmführer Kurt Klipp.⁴

Living conditions at the Blechhammer subcamp were similar to those prevailing in other subcamps of the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁵ The prisoners' wooden barracks were greatly overcrowded; there were about 1.4 square meters (15 square feet) of space per person. The prisoners slept on two- or three-decker bunks. Because there were not enough toilets, washrooms, or bathhouses, the use of those facilities was limited. Camp clothing was also inadequate. Any attempts to augment it illegally met with severe punishments. Walking in wooden shoes was especially onerous for the prisoners. Camp food was also inadequate. Almost all the surviving punishment reports referring to Blechhammer prisoners have to do with illicit food dealing.⁶

The camp hospital was in two barracks and was supervised by SS orderlies, who were in charge of administrative and cleaning work. They treated the patients and prisoner doctors brutally. They would beat sick people waiting to be admitted to the hospital for treatment, then chase them out of the building. Not infrequently, they would also beat the prisoner doctors. The average patient population in the autumn and winter was about 100 people. As in other subcamps, the hospital was where selections took place. Those who were found to be unfit for work or further treatment were taken away to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, which often ended in their being put to death in the gas chamber. Selections were also conducted in the living quarter barracks and on the way back from work.

Approximately 250 prisoners died in the camp over the nine and a half months it existed.⁷ The bodies of dead prisoners were burned in the camp's own crematorium.

The prisoners were put to work building a synthetic gasoline factory owned by Oberschlesische Hydrierwerke AG (Upper Silesia Synthetic Gas Works) in Blechhammer. To the sounds of the camp orchestra, every day SS men would escort them to the work site almost five kilometers (three miles) away and put them under the supervision of civilian workers and prisoner-foremen. The SS men themselves would surround the entire construction site in a cordon until work was over and the prisoners in the respective detachments were counted. They started a search if a prisoner was missing. At that time, they tormented the prisoners, making them do punitive exercises in an attempt to force them to disclose the fugitive's escape route or hiding place.

The prisoners were divided into a few dozen detachments of 100 to 200 persons, which were assigned to the respective construction companies.⁸ The labor the prisoners performed was typical construction work: excavating for foundations, building roads and structures, and transporting building materials. In the latter instance, they used prisoners to pull the wagons instead of horses or tractors. Eight prisoners would be harnessed to a wagon. They used physical coercion to force the hungry and weak prisoners to work. The prisoner-foremen supervising the prisoners during work never parted from their bats, which they put to use often. The prisoners worked all day, from dawn to dusk, for about 10 to 12 hours. They also worked at the construction site every other Sunday. On alternate Sundays, they were put to work at various jobs within the camp.

After the bombing of the Hydrierwerke plant, Jewish prisoners were used to remove duds, during which many of them met with fatal accidents. Prisoners also died in the bombing raids themselves, as they were not allowed to enter the bomb shelters.

Strict discipline prevailed in the camp. Not only were prisoners beaten randomly at work; they were also given what were called "regulation punishments." These included whipping (from 5 to 25 lashes), punitive labor on Sundays, and confinement in a special bunker.⁹ There were also executions by hanging in the camp; that is how the SS would execute prisoners for acts regarded as sabotage, among other offenses.

The Germans began evacuating the prisoners on January 21, 1945, in connection with the Russian winter offensive. Approximately 4,000 prisoners were driven on foot to Gross-Rosen, which was reached 10 days later.¹⁰ Weak prisoners who did not keep up in the march were shot along the way. Prisoners estimate that approximately 800 people were killed on the way. Mass graves of several dozen bodies each were found along the evacuation route after liberation.¹¹

SOURCES APMO contains the following relevant records: Punishment Reports and Orders; Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of Aron Goldfinger, Luzer Markowicz, Emanuel Luftglas, Aba Sztulberg, Gita Brandsztetter-Sztulbergowa, Abram Szeftel, Lucjan Radzik, Erwin Lagus, and Carl Demerer;

Kommandanturbefehle KL Auschwitz III; Materials, Catalog Nos. 597, 598, 599; Materials of the camp resistance movement; Nummernbuch; Fahrbefehle; Häftlingspersonalbogen; Prämienscheine. See also Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Blechhammer," *HuA* 10 (1967): 19–39.

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, Materiały Ruchu Oporu/123, vol. 20, list of male transports, Nuremberg Document NO KW 2824.

2. APMO, Nummernbuch; akta SS-Hygiene Institut; Häftlingspersonalbogen; "Arbeitseinsatz" prisoner employment lists.

3. APMO, Neg. No. 10168. Blechhammer. Werkluftschutzplan—Oberschlesische Hydrierwerke.

4. APMO, Kommandanturbefehle KL Auschwitz III, May 22, 1944, and November 11, 1944.

5. Living and working conditions and prisoner treatment have been depicted based on accounts and other stories of former Blechhammer subcamp prisoners in the archives of the APMO: Aron Goldfinger, Luzer Markowicz, Emanuel Luftglas, Aba Sztulberg, Gita Brandsztetter-Sztulbergowa, Abram Szeftel, Lucjan Radzik, Erwin Lagus, and Carl Demerer.

6. APMO, Punishment Reports and Orders Collection (Strafmeldungen und Strafverfügungen).

7. APMO, Nummernbuch: 248 deaths were noted among Blechhammer subcamp prisoner numbers (176512–179567 and 184349–184891).

8. Some of the company names are listed in the punishment reports. APMO, Punishment Reports and Orders Collection (Strafmeldungen und Strafverfügungen).

9. APMO, Punishment Reports and Orders Collection (Strafmeldungen und Strafverfügungen).

10. APMO, D-AuIII-3a/78 women's employment list dated December 30, 1944 (157 people). Resistance Movement Materials, vol. 3, books 208, 212. Prisoner population on January 17, 1945 (3,858 people).

11. APMO, Sygn. Mat. 597, 598, 599. Reports of exhumations in the towns of Łąka and Prudnik.

BOBREK

Following Allied air raids on its factory in Berlin-Siemensstadt at the beginning of September 1943, Siemens began to plan the relocation of its operations at "Germany's largest electronics factory" (Alan S. Milward) to more secure areas. At the beginning of 1944, the Armaments Ministry planned for the Siemens-Schuckertwerke AG (SSW) to have 100,000 square meters (over 1 million square feet) of space, including 3,000 square meters (32,300 square feet) in a former phosphate factory near Auschwitz.¹

Auschwitz, as an "SS collection camp," was an object of interest in July 1943 for the Siemens Central Factory Administration. The reason for the interest was the "100,000 strong unutilized labor force." In the same month, the SSW had negotiated with the SS-Central Building Administration-Auschwitz on the construction of a "short wave vermin

destruction installation.” The aim was to disinfect large quantities of prisoners’ clothes by exposing them to short-wave radiation. The installation commenced operation in July 1944 in the collection and laundry center at the main camp.

The phosphate factory had been compulsorily acquired by the Treuhandstelle Ost (Eastern Trust Company). It was now bought by the 37-year-old senior Siemens engineer, Kurt Bundzus, who was in charge of the relocation. The plant was located on the edge of the village of Bobrek, about three kilometers (two miles) to the northeast of the goods railway station at Auschwitz. From there to Birkenau was a distance of eight kilometers (five miles). The site itself had an area of 47,000 square meters (506,000 square feet), the southern boundary of which bordered on the River Weichsel.

In November 1943, Bundzus and three other Siemens employees from Berlin examined the suitability of concentration camp prisoners for work in the factory. They chose 120 prisoners, who were either skilled tradesmen or had business qualifications.²

There was a planned increase in the use of the number of prisoners. A planning program prepared by Bundzus on January 3, 1944, for discussions with the SS-Central Building Administration on the “expansion of the labor camp on the site of the SSW small construction facility—Auschwitz” envisaged the expansion of the subcamp so as to hold 1,000 concentration camp prisoners.³ The first stage of construction was conceived as including an SS guard house, a “kitchen facility for 200 prisoners, including troughs,” as well as washing and toilet facilities.

The chosen concentration camp prisoners were mostly Jews. They were transferred to Barracks No. 11 in the camp B II d for men, known to the prisoners as a “punishment detachment.” Barracks No. 13, in which the prisoners who worked in the crematorium were sometimes quartered, and Barracks No. 11 together formed part of the punishment detachment and were separated from other barracks by a wall. The engineer, George Preston, who was 30 in 1944, stated: “We were told that we were not sent there to be punished but to recover. We were to get better food and to wait until Siemens summoned us to work.”⁴ The block elder of the punishment detachment was the German Polish prisoner Emil Bednarek. He was convicted as one of the defendants in the post-1945 Frankfurt Auschwitz trial.⁵ The prisoners saw him as an “unpredictable sadist” because, as with the SS, he victimized the prisoners and sometimes beat them to death.⁶ Eight to 12 of the prisoners chosen for Bobrek were the subject of a selection by the SS on January 1, 1944. They are said to have escaped death because they were chosen for the “Siemens Detachment.”⁷

Between January and May 1944, the concentration camp prisoners were taken daily by truck from Birkenau to the factory at Bobrek. At first they had to reconstruct the factory and build the subcamp. At the beginning of January 1944, the Siemens Detachment probably had 213 male and 38 female concentration camp prisoners, the latter from the female camp in Birkenau.⁸ Among them were 24 youths aged between 11 and 18.⁹

In May 1944, the prisoners were transferred to the Bobrek subcamp, where, according to the then-43-year-old Nikolaus Rosenberg, “the conditions were somewhat better than in the gypsy camp.”¹⁰ Rosenberg had been transferred from the camp where the Sinti and Roma (Gypsies) were held to the Siemens Detachment. “There were five men to a bunk. Each had a straw sack as a base, a pillow filled with straw, and two blankets. In addition, each of us had cutlery, a spoon, and a hand towel, which was terrific as up to now we had had to eat with our hands from a communal, unbelievably filthy trough. We really had no chance to wash at all.”¹¹ On the factory grounds, there was probably a vegetable garden from which the prisoners occasionally got extra nourishment.

The Bobrek subcamp was formally administered by Auschwitz III-Monowitz. It was guarded by 20 SS men under the command of SS-Unterscharführer Anton Lukoschek.

The male prisoners were primarily engaged by Siemens in manufacturing machine tools. At bench vices, presses for hand spindles, as well as turning machines, grinding machines, planes, and milling machines, the prisoners manufactured lapping machines and sections for the construction of electric motors and parts for electric switches. According to Bundzus, the prisoners were intended to produce “parts and technical accessories for the mass production of electronic products,” but according to the SS, it was possible that the production of parts for night fighters was envisaged.¹² The female prisoners were required for the kitchen, cleaning, and the assembly of tapping machines.

The prisoners worked 10 hours a day. The Siemens workers determined that the youths should work 8 hours a day. The prisoners were trained by Siemens workers from Berlin. According to Rosenberg, who prior to his imprisonment was an engineer in Budapest, “the Siemens-Schuckert-officials were . . . relatively human and treated the Jewish prisoners with good intentions, sometimes closing their eyes when an exhausted prisoner could no longer work. They were well



Auschwitz-Bobrek prisoners work at the Siemens factory on aircraft parts. In the background Engineer Jungdorf converses with a foreman, circa 1944.

USHMM WS #95270, COURTESY OF HENRY SCHWARZBAUM

informed. When a prisoner was mistreated outside the factory by either a female SS warden or a Kapo, the SSW people reported the incident to the proper authority, with the result that the mistreatment ceased. No one was beaten inside the factory."¹³ Paul Schaffer, who was age 19 in 1944, stated that once he was threatened with a transfer back to Birkenau, when he produced an item that was 10 millimeters (.4 inches) short.¹⁴

The businessman Erich Altmann, who was age 40 in 1944, stated that Siemens workers brought their families to Bobrek. Their deployment was "protection from the front and the bombing. Work was ranked third in priority. . . . We were warned daily: 'Allow yourselves time to do the work. Work slowly and precisely, not quickly and imprecisely.' As everyone had time, private jobs were done."¹⁵ According to Altmann, the prisoners exchanged or gave for food presents such as "rings, cigarette ends, wallets, combs, metal boxes, watch cases, lighters, arm bands, necklaces, and many other things."¹⁶

The Bobrek subcamp was dissolved on January 17, 1945. On January 18, 1945, the Bobrek prisoners, together with others from Auschwitz, were forced to march for about 70 kilometers (43 miles) through the cold and the snow to the Gleiwitz II subcamp. Numerous weakened prisoners died or were shot by the SS. When the prisoners who survived the death march arrived in Gleiwitz, a bloody fight started with other inmates for a dry place in a barrack: "The camp was turned into an absolute hellhole; everybody was beating whomever they could with whatever they could find," describes Gilbert Michlin, at this time almost 19 years old. "Everybody was trying to hold on to or find a little bit of warmth and rest."¹⁷ From Gleiwitz the male prisoners were transported on January 21 in open coal wagons by rail via Prague to Buchenwald. Some, such as Schaffer, managed to escape. The female prisoners were taken to Mittelbau. Two days after their arrival, they were taken to Bergen-Belsen.

In February 1945, two Siemens Berlin workers arrived at Buchenwald. For Marcel Tuchman, who turned 21 in 1944, and his father, Ignaz, members of the prisoner detachment, their arrival in the catastrophic conditions appeared to be a "miraculous rescue." Eighty-eight of the 110 to 130 remaining Bobrek prisoners in Buchenwald on February 16, 1945, were taken by train to a station in Berlin and then by subway close to the Sachsenhausen subcamp in Berlin-Siemensstadt.¹⁸

According to Rosenberg, "The Siemens-Schuckert officials noticed our miserable physical condition when we arrived. As a result, they gave us a week of rest before we had to work. This did not help us a lot as we had to spend each day outside where it was very cold. Also the food was inadequate."¹⁹

On April 3, 1945, the SS transported the Bobrek prisoners to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where they were deployed in removing rubble from the city of Oranienburg.²⁰ They were transferred back to Siemensstadt on April 13. Siemens at this time was preparing to evacuate its installations to southern Germany. The concentration camp prisoners together with the machines were transported by train via Dresden in the direction of Hof. Their destination was a disused

porcelain factory in Arzberg in the Fichtelgebirge. Here they were to resume production. The transport was stopped at Meiben in Sachsen because the area around Hof had already been liberated by the U.S. Army. The SS took the prisoners back to Berlin and then on to Sachsenhausen. From there, they were forced on a death march in the direction of the Baltic. They were liberated on May 2, 1945, in Crivitz near Schwerin.

SOURCES In 1947 Erich Altmann published his memoirs, *Im Angesicht des Todes: 3 Jahre in deutschen Konzentrationslagern Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Oranienburg* (Luxemburg, 1947). In 2002 Paul Schaffer published *Le soleil voilé* (Paris, 2002), with an introduction by Simone Veil (from 1979 to 1982 the first female president of the European Parliament), who was with Schaffer as a forced laborer in Bobrek. See also Gilbert Michlin, *Of No Interest to the Nation: A Jewish Family in France, 1925-1945*, with an afterword by Zeev Sternhell (Detroit, 2004) and ". . . warum es lebenswichtig ist, die Erinnerung wachzubehalten." *Zwangsarbeit für Siemens in Auschwitz und Berlin. Dokumentation einer Begegnung mit ehemaligen KZ-Häftlingen*, ed. Zwangsarbeit erinnern e.V., Red.: Thomas Irmer (Berlin: Metropol 2006).

In 1980 Erwin Wittwer, who as head of SSW machine tool production had been many times in Bobrek, privately published his memoirs, *Berufliche Erinnerungen* (1980). He included in his memoirs a series of photographs of the factory and the prisoners at work. In 1995 the head of the AS-M, Wilfried Feldenkirchen, published *Siemens 1918-1945* (Munich, 1995). For the National Socialist period, he referred to sources from the Siemens "Temporary Archive." Documents on the Bobrek subcamp are held in the Siemens Temporary Archive (Zwischenarchiv), which is not open for independent researchers. In addition to the archives in the Auschwitz Memorial (in the 1990s, documents from the Moscow Archives on the SS-Central Building Administration were made accessible), there are LA-B (denazification proceedings, Hanns Benkert), the HHStA-(W) (Frankfurter Auschwitz Trials), and the BA-B.

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NOTES

1. See the statement by the Siemens senior engineer, Kurt Bundzus, at the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, in Hermann Langbein, *Der Auschwitz-Prozess: Eine Dokumentation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 1:65; questioning of Kurt Bundzus, HHStA-(W), 4 Ks 2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others, 137th day of proceedings, February 18, 1965; Formblatt Verlagerung SSW (Reporting Period 9.9.43-30.5.1944), BA-B, R3/252, bl.6; and Schreiben Beauftragter Verlagerung Elektroindustrie an Treuhandstelle Ost v. 26.11.1943, Betr.: Ausweichplanung Siemens-Schuckert-Werke, LA-B, Entnazifizierungsverfahren Hanns Benkert.

2. See questioning of Ignatz Tuchmann, LA-B, Entnazifizierungsverfahren Hanns Benkert, file "Verhandlungen Hanns Benkert," Teil 1, pp. iii/10; statement by the Siemens engineer, Kurt Bundzus, at the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, in Langbein, *Auschwitz-Prozess*, 1:65; statutory declaration by

the Siemens foreman Georg Hanke, dated June 27, 1947, LA-B; and statement by Georg Hanke, HHStA-(W), 4 Ks 2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others, 137th day of proceedings, February 18, 1965; as well as Erich Altmann, *Im Angesicht des Todes: 3 Jahre in deutschen Konzentrationslagern Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Oranienburg* (Luxemburg, 1947), p. 73; Gilbert Michlin, *Of No Interest to the Nation: A Jewish Family in France, 1925–1945* (Detroit, 2004), p.70; and Erwin Wittwer, *Berufliche Erinnerungen* (1980), p. 39.

3. Programm zur Besprechung mit SS-Zentralbauleitung in Auschwitz zwecks Ausbau des Arbeitslagers auf dem Gelände der Fa. Siemens-Schuckert-Werke AG Kleinbauwerk Betrieb Auschwitz v. 3.1.1944, as well as a handwritten list of iron requirements, April 1944, APMO, Au/BW 1/6/25.

4. Statement by George Preston, cited by Langbein, *Auschwitz-Prozess*, p. 809; see also statements by George Preston and Josef Zimmermann, HHStA-(W), 4 Ks 2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others, 140th day of proceedings, March 4, 1965.

5. See HHStA-(W), Proceedings 4 Ks 2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others.

6. See statements by Paul Schaffer, Erich Altmann, George Preston, and others, in Langbein, *Auschwitz-Prozess*, p. 809. See Teresa Cegłowska, “Strafkompanien im KL Auschwitz,” *HvA* 17 (1985). See also statement by Pinchas Schwarzbaum, March 4, 1965, HHStA-(W), 4 Ks 2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others, 140th day of proceedings.

7. Altmann, *Angesicht des Todes*, p. 81; see also Schwarzbaum and Tuchmann (as well as note 2); and a letter by Leo Schwarzbaum, December 18, 1946, LA-B, BPA, IV L—2/6/270/1, Nr. 1708.

8. See also Kitty Hart, *Return to Auschwitz. The Remarkable Story of a Girl Who Survived the Holocaust* (New York, 1982), p. 77.

9. See statutory declaration by Siemens production engineer, Karl Jungtow, June 20, 1947, LA-B, BPA of the SED Berlin, IV L—2/6/27071, Nr. 1412; as well as Altmann, *Angesicht des Todes*, p. 98. Cf. Fanciszek Piper, “Die Ausbeutung der Arbeit der Häftlinge,” in *Auschwitz 1940–1945: Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, ed. Franciszek Piper et al. (Auschwitz, 1999), 2:138. On age, see the Siemens transport lists, YVA, GCC 10/25.

10. Tuchmann (see note 2). See statements by Erich Altmann, March 5, 1965, and George Preston, March 4, 1965, HHStA-(W), Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others.

11. Nikolaus Rosenberg, “Zwangsarbeiter für Siemens-Schuckert: Erlebnisse eines Budapester jüdischen Ingenieurs 1944–1945,” *Wien Library*, P.IIIb, No. 116.

12. See statement by Kurt Bundzus, February 18, 1965, HHStA-(W), 4 Ks&2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others, 137th day of proceedings; also letter by Pohl to Himmler, dated February 22, 1944, Betr.: Einsatz von Häftlingen in der Luftfahrtindustrie, StAN, KV Prosecution Document PS-1584.

13. See Altmann, *Angesicht des Todes*, p. 97; Interrogation of George Preston (see also note 4); statements by Pinchas Schwarzbaum, March 4, 1965, and Erich Altmann, March 5, 1945, HHStA-(W), 4 Ks 2/63, Criminal Proceedings against Mulka and others, 140th day and 141st day of proceedings.

14. See Paul Schaffer, *Le soleil voilé* (Paris, 2002), p. 108.

15. Altmann, *Angesicht des Todes*, p. 100. Rosenberg also refers to the Siemens employees. See Rosenberg, “Zwangsarbeiter.”

16. Altmann, *Angesicht des Todes*, p. 100.

17. Michlin, *Of No Interest to the Nation*, p. 91.

18. See transport lists, “Transport Siemens” (88 prisoners), February 16, 1945, YVA, GCC 10/25; as well as the statement by Karl Jungtow, June 20, 1947, LA-B, BPA, IV L—2/6/270/1, Nr. 1412.

19. Rosenberg, “Zwangsarbeiter.”

20. See Michlin, *Of No Interest to the Nation*, p. 98.

BRÜNN

Brünn, a subcamp of Auschwitz that the SS established in the city of Brno (Ger. Brünn) in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, was the farthest away from the parent camp at Auschwitz.

Since the records are not complete, it has not been determined who ordered the formation of the Brünn subcamp. However, the prisoners there worked to finish the building belonging to the SS and Police Engineering Academy, where the SS was carrying out experiments with arms and equipment; thus the subcamp’s formation probably came about at the order of the highest SS authorities, who were eager to supplement the German army’s military equipment.

Fragments of camp records and those of the trial of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss contain references to the existence of the Brünn subcamp, without providing the date when it was formed. Former prisoners recounted, however, that the first transport of 251 prisoners arrived at Brno station on October 2, 1943; the number of prisoners is documented in the list of the Hygiene Institut der Waffen-SS in Auschwitz (“251 Häftlinge nach Brünn kommandiert”).¹ From there the prisoners were taken to an unfinished multistory building belonging to the SS and Police Engineering Academy and placed in several already-finished rooms on the building’s second floor, which were tightly secured and guarded by German police. A high fence and watchtowers secured the building on the outside.

Most of the prisoners were Poles whom the Germans had brought to Auschwitz concentration camp from various cities such as Katowice, Kraków, Lublin, and Poznań or other concentration camps such as Ravensbrück and Gross-Rosen. Approximately 70 percent of the transport were prisoners who had been at the Auschwitz concentration camp just a few weeks; the rest were prisoners who had been there a few years. The SS eventually returned most of these prisoners to the main Auschwitz camp when they became unfit for work—although from there the camp authorities usually shipped them out to other subcamps—and the Germans shot at least 1 prisoner. At least 20 new prisoners arrived at Brünn, but that influx did not make up the losses: there were only 36 prisoners in Brünn when it closed on January 17, 1945. (The arrival date of that transport could not be established. According to prisoner accounts,

however, toward the end of 1944 a small group of inmates who had been arrested in Warsaw after the outbreak of the armed uprising were transferred from Auschwitz to Brünn.)

Alois Freiseisen, Austrian criminal prisoner (BV) No. 15472, was the camp elder (*Lagerältester*) until late autumn 1944. Upon his release from camp, Roman Kachel, Polish political prisoner No. 136079, filled that position. Polish political prisoner Dr. Czesław Jaworski, No. 31070, was the subcamp's doctor, while Eugeniusz Niedojadło, Polish political prisoner No. 213, was the nurse. German prisoners served as the labor squad foremen.

Officers from Brno's German police garrison served as the sentries guarding the subcamp.

SS-Hauptscharführer Gerhard Palitzsch, who brought the first prisoner transport to Brünn, was commandant from the day the subcamp was established until early February 1944. SS-Unterscharführer Rieger succeeded him in February 1944. SS-Oberscharführer Walter was the subcamp's third commandant, from the end of February 1944 to January 19, 1945. (Palitzsch was arrested at the Brünn subcamp in February 1944 in connection with the looting of a large amount of property of the people murdered at Auschwitz and his relationship with a female Jewish prisoner. His further fate is unknown, and information on the other camp leaders is unavailable.)²

On their first day in the subcamp, prisoners were already broken up by trade specializations and formed into detachments: carpenters, cabinet makers, bricklayers, glaziers, metalworkers, and electricians. These prisoners did all the interior finishing work in the Academy building. Czech firms did the specialist work, but the names of these companies remain unknown. Prisoner-foremen and the foremen of each firm supervised the prisoners' work.

Prisoners with no trade skills were put to work on earthmoving projects: leveling the site around the building, building an access road, digging sewage ditches, and making breaches in the rock to build ammunition warehouses. Those were the hardest jobs, out in the open, with the supervising foremen terrorizing the prisoners.

Later on, a small group of prisoners were put to work keeping the chemical laboratory equipment, which had been brought in from Kiev, in order. The inventory number stickers on each item attested to that. The goal was to prepare the laboratory to begin work associated with arms production and synthetic fuels, using German personnel.

Several prisoners were also put to work sorting type fonts that had been thoroughly mixed up when the poorly packed print shop had been shipped from Berlin to Brno. The manual printing machine had six printing tables with drawers containing the mixed-up type fonts that had to be arranged in sets according to typeface and size. The prisoners arranged approximately 60 type-font sets so that the print shop could be started up.

In the spring of 1944, a detachment was formed with 20 prisoners who were put to work on the nearby Einhorn estate. The estate belonged to a German officer. The prisoners

worked on erecting outbuildings and repairing farm equipment.

The food rations at the Brünn subcamp were smaller than at the main Auschwitz camp. Since there was no kitchen on site, food was brought in from the Špilberk prison in the city of Brno. Breakfast consisted of only coffee. For dinner, prisoners received one liter of soup made of water with a small amount of barley or potatoes, very rarely with some fat or meat added. Sometimes the soup was thickened with dried beet leaves. Once a week prisoners would additionally get a slice of bread and a piece of horsemeat sausage. Hunger was a constant in the camp.

The illnesses from which prisoners most frequently suffered were starvation, diarrhea, vitamin deficiency ulcerations, and injuries caused by job accidents and beatings by the foremen. Since there was only a dispensary in the subcamp, serious cases of illness had to be sent to the hospital in the city of Brno, but the camp authorities were afraid that prisoners might escape, and therefore they were treated at the Špilberk prison hospital if necessary.

Even though the Germans attempted to enforce a ban on any contact between the Brünn prisoners and Czech civilian workers, bilateral communications were very quickly established. Both the managers as well as the civilian employees of the companies doing the work at the Academy would bring the prisoners food, with the knowledge that hunger was rampant in the subcamp. Likewise, Czech inmates from Špilberk, also working at the Academy, shared their meager food rations with the prisoners. Doctors from Brno hospital also helped the prisoners as much as they could by providing medicine to the subcamp.

The evacuation of the prisoners of the Brünn subcamp began in mid-April 1945. (The exact date of the evacuation of the subcamp could not be established. In their accounts, former inmates describe it as follows: "about four weeks before Germany capitulated"; "early spring 1944"; "toward the end of April 1944.") The Academy personnel evacuated with the prisoners, taking along laboratory equipment and arms. The evacuation train traveled for over a dozen days and only arrived at Traunstein in Upper Austria on April 28, 1945. All the Academy equipment and the prisoners of the Brünn subcamp were transported and housed at a munitions factory near Bergen.³

The prisoners were liberated by American forces on May 3, 1945.

SOURCES The following secondary works contain information on this camp: Czesław Wincenty Jaworski, *Wspomnienia z Oświęcimia/Oświęcim—Brno—Monowice* (Warsaw, 1962); Emeryka Iwaszko, "Podobóz Brünn," *ZO* 18 (1983): 223–244; Danuta Czech, *Kalendarz wydarzeń obozowych* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz National Museum Publishing, 1992).

Material on this camp is available in the following APMO records: *Proces Hössa* (Höss Trial), vol. 21; *Proces Załogi Oświęcimskiej*, vol. 39; *Materiały Ruchu Oporu*, vols. III, VII; and accounts of former prisoners Władysław Gazda, Stefan Gregor, Jan Hyla, Florian Jurowski, Józef Kołodziejek, and

Fritz Wendler. See also the testimony of Eugeniusz Niedojadło, "Podobóz Brno—Ucieczka przed Bogerem," *PL* 1 (1966).

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NOTES

1. SS Collection—Hygiene Institute, document group number D. Hyg. Inst./33 binder 20^a p. 626/20^a NI 106118, APMO. The number is also documented in Eugeniusz Niedojadło, "Podobóz Brno: Ucieczka przed Bogerem," *PL* 1 (1966): 109; and the accounts of former prisoners Stefan Gregor and Fritz Wendler, APMO, Declarations Collection, vol. 46, p. 105; vol. 77, p. 168.

2. Niedojadło, "Podobóz Brno," pp. 109–110; and accounts of former prisoners Stefan Gregor, Florian Jurowski, and Józef Kołodziejka, APMO, Declarations Collection, vol. 46, pp. 4–5; vol. 47, p. 74; vol. 48, p. 49.

3. Accounts of Stefan Gregor, Władysław Gazda, Jan Hyla, and Fritz Wendler, APMO, Declarations Collection, vol. 46, p. 109; vol. 75, p. 178; vol. 77, p. 62, 171.

BUDY

The Budy subcamp operated within the limits of the hamlet of Bór from April 1942 (with a pause in the autumn–winter period of 1942 to 1943) until the Auschwitz concentration camp was evacuated. (The men's subcamp and women's subcamp that were formed later were actually situated within the limits of the hamlet of Bór, while the subcamp's tree nurseries, greenhouse, and part of the farm buildings were in the neighboring village of Budy. However, camp records list both camps under the name Budy.) The Germans expelled the population of both Bór and Budy in March 1941, demolished many of the buildings using prison labor from Auschwitz, and began to set up a centralized farm and prison camp on the land. The first group of 40 male prisoners arrived in April 1942. Labor arrangements varied for the next year or so, but by the spring of 1943 the Germans had established the men's and women's subcamps on a permanent basis.

The men's camp and farm consisted of 19 structures by April 1943, including barns, stables, storehouses for machinery and fertilizer, workshops, and barracks for the SS staff and prisoners; the prisoners' quarters and the tool shop were fenced off from the rest of the compound. Ten watchtowers, where the guards served duty throughout the day, overlooked the camp. This subcamp, like the other Auschwitz agricultural and animal camps, was under the charge of SS-Obersturmbannführer Joachim Caesar, director of Oświęcim camp farms. SS-Oberscharführer Herman Etinger was commandant of the men's camp in Budy, and SS-Unterscharführer Bernhard Glaue succeeded him in April 1943.

The prisoner barracks were heated in the winter, and there was a toilet and sickroom in each. The prisoners slept on three-decker bunks with straw mattresses and blankets. Food was brought in from the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp daily. In the evening, the prisoners were issued dry provisions for the next day.

The prisoners living in the Budy subcamp were of various nationalities: Poles; Frenchmen; Belgians; Czechs; Russians; a few Germans; Gypsies; and Polish, Czech, and Greek Jews. Prisoners from outside the subcamp who worked in Harmęże, on the fish farm in Pławy, or in the forest in Nazieleńce, also slept in the prisoner barracks.

The prisoners, like those in the main camp, wore striped camp clothing or civilian clothes with squares cut out on the back and a piece of striped cloth or material painted in colored stripes. There were 167 prisoners on April 25, 1943, and 388 a year later on March 23, 1944. Prisoners worked 12 hours a day, from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. They were put to work in the fields (they sowed grain and grew beets for fodder) and also raised pigs, cows, and horses. The attitude of the SS men and foremen toward prisoners, especially Jews, was cruel. They were beaten and killed during work for the slightest offenses. The bodies of those killed were carted in from the work sites in the evening to Budy, and their names were entered in the records with a false cause of death.¹

The SS also established a women's subcamp in Budy with the installation of 200 women, mostly Poles and German prisoner-functionaries, in a separate compound on April 5, 1943. Later there were also Russians, Ukrainians, Yugoslavians, Czechs, and Jews there.² SS-Oberaufseherin Elfriede Runge was the camp commandant.

The prisoners in the women's camp were divided into several detachments depending on the type of work they did. The largest one was the detachment that did farmwork. It ranged in size from 120 to 150 women. Regardless of the weather, the detachment did all kinds of farmwork, from planting vegetables to harvesting them and fertilizing the soil. When there was no fieldwork, they cleaned the ponds, dug ditches, and demolished and dismantled houses in Bór. One detachment was employed making compost. The compost heap was made of layers of sod, manure, and human ashes from the crematorium. Each detachment had its own commander—an SS man—and a foreman. Armed SS men brought the prisoners to the work site and escorted them back to the camp.

Initially, the hygiene and sanitary conditions in camp were appalling. The situation changed for the better upon implementation of an order by Auschwitz concentration camp commandant Rudolf Höss dated May 27, 1943, and because of an inspection of the Budy women's camp by Rapportführerin Drechsel.³ Sundays were set aside for delousing and mending clothing and underwear. SS-Aufseherin Elisabeth Hasse, subcamp commandant after Runge, ordered mandatory washing in the camp. For that purpose, instead of dinner, water was heated in the kettles every Saturday, with which the women got to wash themselves. That was the way it remained as long as the Budy women's camp existed. Hasse, born on December 24, 1917, arrived in Auschwitz in October 1942. She was commandant of the female detachments at the Rajska subcamp, then at Budy until 1944. Later, she took the job of Arbeitsdienstführerin at the Birkenau women's camp, a post she held until the camp was evacuated.

The prisoners slept two per bunk, covering themselves with one blanket. The barrack was not heated. Everyone was dressed alike in striped clothing, dark aprons, and white kerchiefs on their heads. Underwear was changed once a month.

Food for the prisoners was prepared on-site. They would get their first meal only around noon at the work site: herbal tea and a portion of bread with some margarine or jam. Upon returning from work in the evening, they would get soup made from rutabaga, rye, and nettles. Dry provisions were supplied by the Birkenau women's camp.

The prisoners could receive packages from outside, although either they did not get them in one piece or the products in them were ruined because they had been held by the prisoner foremen.⁴ When Hasse left in 1944, SS-Aufseherin Johanna Bormann took over as camp commandant. She was a very severe and demanding person who punished every offense by prisoners but also looked after the kitchen, and for that reason the food improved and the prisoners were not robbed by the German prisoner foremen so often. Bormann, born on September 10, 1893, in Brinkenfelde (East Prussia), was a clerk by trade. She had been sent to Auschwitz on May 15, 1943, from Ravensbrück. She was commandant of the Budy women's camp until December 1944. Then she took the job of SS supervisor at the Auschwitz subcamp in Hindenburg (later Zabrze) until the camp was evacuated. She was later sentenced to death for her crimes in the Bergen-Belsen trial.

The prisoners were physically and mentally exhausted by the hard labor, hunger, and beatings. There were even instances of suicide among them.⁵

In the autumn of 1944, the women prisoners were taken away to camps within Germany, while the men were evacuated from the subcamp on January 18, 1945.

Due to the Budy camp's location on the edge of evacuated areas as well as those partially inhabited by Poles, there were frequent communications between the prisoners and the population. Heedless of the consequences (many families were arrested and sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp), people provided the prisoners with various forms of assistance. They would plant food and medicine at prisoner detachment work sites, help prisoners communicate with relatives, give help to runaways, and provide civilian clothes. That is also why at least 10 male and female prisoners escaped from the Budy camp, 9 of them successfully.

SOURCES See Anna Zięba, "Wirtschaftshof Budy," *ZO* 10 (1967): 84–100 (German version: "Wirtschaftshof—Budy," *HvA* 10 [1967]: 67–85).

APMO holds the following relevant records: Oświadczenia [Affidavits], accounts of former prisoners Stanisław Zyguła, Józef Warchał, Ryszard Nalewajko, Raisa Diemczenko (Mendigalevov District), Stanisława Kowalska, Rużena Smolíkova-Maryškova, Wanda Koprowska, Eugenia Kurzelowa, Janina Ślimak, Aniela Koczur Stelmachowa, Eugenia Piwek, Alicja Zarytkiewicz; accounts of the villages (hamlets) of Bór, Budy, Nazieleńce: Anna and Józef Moroń, Maria Cyna, Zofia Wawro, Hermina Czuwaj, Sylwester Marusza. Proces

Hössa, testimony of: Rudolf Höss, Józef Stawowczyk, Ignacy Barcik; Rozkazy Komendantury; Zespół Opracowania Syg. Opr./Lasik/299, files on Auschwitz concentration camp staff members from 1940 to 1945, compiled by Dr. Aleksander Lasik.

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NOTES

1. APMO, Oświadczenia (Affidavits), 69: 4, account of resident of village of Nazieleńce Józef Moroń.

2. *Ibid.*, 22: 139–140, account of former prisoner Wanda Koprowska; 36: 98, 105, accounts of former prisoners Janina Ślimak and Eugenia Kurzelowa.

3. *Ibid.*, Zespół Rozkazy komendantury, commander's headquarters Order No. 19/43, dated May 5, 1943.

4. *Ibid.*, Oświadczenia (Affidavits), vol. 36, account of former prisoner Eugenia Kurzelowa.

5. *Ibid.*, 36: 100, account of former prisoner Janina Ślimak.

CHARLOTTENGRUBE

By 1943, the management of Reichswerke Hermann Göring (RWHG) had already begun negotiations with the administration of the Auschwitz concentration camp about putting prisoners to work in the company's Charlottengrube mine. The two sides reached an agreement on September 19, 1944. At that time, the first transport of 200 Auschwitz prisoners—Jews from Hungary or Romania—was brought to Rydułtowy (Rydułtau) and put to work at Charlottengrube. They were placed in a camp for forced laborers or prisoners of war (POWs), which had been in existence for some time, although the name of that camp has not been determined. An additional transport of approximately 600 to 700 prisoners from Auschwitz, including many Slovakian Jews, arrived in Rydułtowy around October 7, 1944. Later on, the SS also began putting prisoners into a camp behind the slag heap at Charlottengrube, on the road heading in the direction of Radoszowa (Radoschau), the northwestern quarter of town. The residents of Rydułtowy called it "Judenlager," "Berlin," or "Lager behind the Heap." Administratively, both sites were part of the same subcamp.

The Charlottengrube subcamp, like other Auschwitz subcamps at industrial plants, was under the command of the Auschwitz III-Monowitz concentration camp. The subcamp commandants were, in turn, SS-Oberscharführer Alfred Tschiersky and Kirchner (also spelled Kirschner or Kürschner). Tschiersky, born January 2, 1896, in Berlin, was a violin maker by profession and in September and October 1944 served as commandant at Charlottengrube; later he belonged to the staff of the Laurahütte subcamp. Kirchner served as commandant from November 1944 to January 1945 and was an extraordinarily zealous SS man. His treatment of the prisoners was brutal, as his punishment reports to the management of Monowitz indicate. The subcamp's staff was the SS guard detachment (Wachkommando) belonging to the Monowitz

concentration camp 8./SS-Totenkopf Wachkompanie (8th Guard Company). There were 54 SS men in the Wachkommando at the beginning of December 1944.

The transports of autumn 1944 were most probably the largest. The rest of the transports brought prisoners into the subcamp chiefly to replace those who had died of hunger and overwork. There were approximately 1,000 to 1,100 prisoners living at the subcamp in mid-October 1944; the population decreased in the following months due to the high death rate. With few exceptions, the prisoners brought to Rydułtowy were Jews. They came from almost every European country occupied by the Third Reich. Many came from Jewish intellectual communities.

Prisoners' living conditions were basically the same in both sections of the Charlottengrube subcamp. The prisoners' food was severely inadequate and no better than at Auschwitz, as regards both quality and quantity. The SS men terrorized the prisoners, who never knew when and for what they would be punished.

According to a surviving report of the Rybnik Bergrevieramt (Rybnik District Mining Agency) for the Breslau Oberbergamt (Wrocław Superior Mining Agency) dated December 11, 1944, approximately 50 percent of the prisoners put to work in the "Eleonora" bed (department I) at the Charlottengrube mine lost their fitness to work in the space of two months.¹ The situation was similar in the other departments. Dr. König, an SS doctor, conducted selections every so often at the camp hospital; prisoners found to be unfit for labor were taken away to the gas chambers at Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Additionally, several hundred prisoners died in the subcamp over its four months of existence. The bodies were buried at the Rydułtowy cemetery or were taken to Birkenau with the prisoners whom König had "selected." Construction began on a small crematorium at the Judenlager in late autumn 1944, but it was never completed.

Most of the prisoners put in the subcamp worked in the local mine, almost half of them underground and the rest on the surface. Representatives of RWHG personally selected prisoners at Auschwitz. Then SS men and Wehrmacht soldiers escorted the prisoners on the way to work at the mine and on the way back to the camp. There was no set limit to the time the prisoners worked underground; it was often prolonged to a dozen hours or more per day. Privileged prisoners, representatives of the mining concern (foremen, overseers, and managers), and SS guards supervised the prisoners constantly. Criminal prisoner foremen and some mine foremen beat and tormented the prisoners every step of the way, sometimes fatally.

In the mine, the prisoners loaded coal into conveyor troughs, moved the troughs, and arranged supporting timbers. Other prisoners transported materials (wood, rails, cables) to the headings, operated the conveyor belts in the galleries, or tidied the galleries. Prisoners had to match the output of the local miners; thus they were forced to maximum exertion. Many prisoners had accidents working underground, and there were also suicides. On the mine's surface, prisoners un-

loaded and transported the materials needed to do the underground work, carted coal onto the railway siding, cleaned the mine grounds, sorted coal, or labored in the mine workshops. A large group of prisoners also worked on the construction of the Charlotte electric power plant. SS men, foremen, Wehrmacht soldiers, and sometimes SA men guarded the prisoners at workstations on the surface. The prisoners were treated inhumanly, as they were underground.

Some groups of prisoners were put to work outside the mine, for tasks like installing water and sewer pipes in the vicinity of the subcamp or at the sawmill owned by the Karl und Reinhold Wieczorek company.

Some prisoners availed themselves of the help of Rydułtowy residents, both employees of Charlottengrube and people not associated with it. Despite the threat of severe punishment, some Rydułtowy residents handed prisoners various food products, above all bread and coffee, or planted them at the prisoners' work sites. Several prisoners managed to escape from Rydułtowy. The fugitives were helped by Poles—mine workers who provided them with civilian clothes or enabled them to leave their work posts illegally. A few prisoners joined miners in acts of sabotage, destroying mine equipment (for instance, they would damage the motors of the shaker conveyers, or the underground rails), so as to impede the Nazi's operation of the mine.

Evacuation of the subcamp began around January 19, 1945. Columns of prisoners under escort by SS men were led out of the subcamp westward. On the way, SS men shot at those who fell behind. After a day's march, the prisoners reached the town of Kreuzendorf (later Krzyżanowice) beyond the Oder River, where they spent the night. Then, for reasons that still have not been determined, they were sent back from there to Rydułtowy and thence to Wodzisław Śląski (Loslau) on about January 22. From Wodzisław, they were taken away to Mauthausen concentration camp in open railway cars.

At Wodzisław, approximately 50 prisoners from Rydułtowy were driven into a railway car in which there were already prisoners being evacuated from Auschwitz concentration camp, among them August Korzuch. After the war, he related the event as follows: "The prisoners who were brought in were dressed in striped denim and looked like skeletons. Their physical and health condition was much worse than that of the prisoners being evacuated from Oświęcim. I do not believe any of them lived to our arrival at Mauthausen. The transport lasted several days. On the way, we would throw the bodies of our companions, dead of emaciation, out of the car. I think it was precisely the bodies of prisoners from Rydułtowy that we were throwing from the car first."²

At the Mauthausen concentration camp, the prisoners were divided into four groups, which were sent to the Gusen II, Ebensee, Melk, and Ebensee Wels II subcamps. Only a few prisoners managed to survive until liberation.

There is no record that either the SS men in charge of Charlottengrube or the managers and foremen of RWHG were punished for their offenses.

SOURCES Information on the Charlottengrube subcamp can be found in Andrzej Strzelecki, "Podobóz Charlottengrube w Rydułtowach, ZO 17 (1985): 41–89 (German version: "Das Nebenlager Charlottengrube in Rydułtowy," *HvA* 17 [1985]: 41–90). Records pertaining to this camp are held in the following locations: APKat, Charlotte Mine Records, Catalog No. 102; Zespół Okręgowy Urząd Górniczy w Rybniku (Rybnik District Mining Agency Collection) sygn. 86, 92, 1631, 1654; APMO, microfilm (No. 260) with correspondence (originals in Moscow) between the management of the Charlottengrube subcamp and that of the Monowitz concentration camp; APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of former prisoners Eugen Michal, Ernest Mlynski, Leopold Mlynski, Koloman Wiener, and others; APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of residents of Rydułtowy and environs (Stanisław Brückner, Wilhelm Frydrych, Jan Grycman, Henryk Pozimski, and others).

Andrzej Strzelecki
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. Report of the Rybnik District Mining Agency of December 11, 1944, in the Katowice National Archives [APKat], OUG Rybnik Catalog No. 1654 book. 393 (copy at APMO).

2. Account of former prisoner August Korzuch, APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, vol. 52, book 139.

CHEŁMEK-PAPROTNIK [AKA CHEŁMEK]

The town of Chełmek lies eight kilometers (five miles) from Oświęcim (Auschwitz) on the Oświęcim-Trzebinia railway line.

The Chełmek subcamp was one of the external detachments of the Auschwitz concentration camp in the Chełmek-Paprotnik area. It was formed in order to clean the ponds from which Chełmek's Bata shoe factory, under German control, was to draw water for industrial purposes. That would considerably decrease the costs of taking water from the Przemsza River, which was farther away from the factory.

Surviving camp records do not provide the exact date on which the detachment was established. It was probably established in October 1942. An order from the Auschwitz concentration camp commander's headquarters dated November 2, 1942, attests to this, as it already mentions the Chełmek detachment.¹ This is also confirmed by entries in the Auschwitz morgue register, in which 10 separate shipments of bodies—47 in total—are shown as arriving from Chełmek between November 7 and December 3, 1942.²

The detachment numbered about 150 prisoners, of whom most were Jews from various countries. That makeup of the detachment is supported by the fact that out of the 47 dead Chełmek detachment prisoners whose numbers were listed in the Auschwitz morgue register, as many as 45 people had been brought by Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) transports, mainly from transit camps for Jews from Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Yugoslavia. The prisoners who died in the Chełmek detachment, and whose numbers were noted in

the mortuary register, came from the following countries: 6 from Holland, 1 from France, 1 brought in a mixed transport (as of November 7, 1942), 10 from Holland, 2 from Belgium, and 3 from France (as of December 3, 1942).

The prisoners lived in a primitive shed, heated by one small stove in the winter that did little to protect the inhabitants from the harsh weather. The prisoners slept on three-level board beds and never had enough blankets. Next to the shed was the latrine, which could be used only during the day. At night the shed was locked, and a barrel was placed inside for waste. The prisoners emptied it in the morning. They washed outside—over a trough with spigots that supplied water from a nearby ditch—always with cold water and without soap. They took a bath once a week at the Bata factory. The sanitary and hygienic conditions were all the more appalling because the prisoners worked entire days in slime and mud. There was a little pharmacy in the shed, but it was never fully stocked with basic medicines. A room was added onto the shed to accommodate a mortuary.

The prisoners worked on three connected ponds, about one and one-half kilometers (one mile) from the subcamp. The first of them, lying nearest the Bata factory, was where the prisoners worked; they were removing the silt and rushes and clearing tree roots. They reinforced the dike surrounding the pond with silt and mud. They also worked in the nearby Jazdówka quarry, where the stones for reinforcing the dikes were taken.

Food for the prisoners was provided by the Bata factory. The daily food ration consisted of one liter (one quart) of black coffee, one-half liter (one pint) of soup, and a piece of dry bread.

The hard labor and hunger caused a high death rate. Sick and dead prisoners were taken away to Auschwitz, from whence new prisoners were brought in to keep up the detachment's population. As previously mentioned, entries in the camp morgue register attest to prisoner mortality, as 47 bodies were listed in November 1942 as having been brought in from the Chełmek detachment, and 15 were listed on December 3, 1942. That day, 26 sick prisoners were also brought to Auschwitz.³

The hunger caused extraordinary weight loss and psychological breakdowns among the prisoners. One prisoner, the Austrian Ernst Toch (No. 70231), recalls in his report that in a moment of extreme emotional breakdown, he turned to one of the SS men at the work site and asked him to shoot him. The guard said that he would, on the condition that the prisoner made it look like he was attempting to escape. Toch made his way toward the latrine at the edge of the forest adjoining the pond that the prisoners had cleaned out. Then the guard set the dogs on him. They dragged him to the ground and began gnawing at his thighs.

SS-Oberscharführer Josef Schillinger and SS-Unterscharführer Wilhelm Emmerich served as the commandants (Emmerich took over for Schillinger after October 23, 1942, when a Jewish woman who had just arrived from Bergen-Belsen shot both men, Schillinger fatally). There

were six SS men and police dogs that helped them guard the prisoners.

The Chełmek detachment was shut down on December 9, 1942. On that day the prisoners were trucked to Auschwitz. That is proven by a truck transport departure order stating that the detachment's shutdown was the reason for the trip. According to the reports of members of the local population, the prisoners were taken from Chełmek as soon as the frosts began.⁴

The Chełmek subcamp detachment was shut down even though the pond-cleaning work had not been finished. The shutdown was not because of the approaching winter, because if that had been the case, they would have started up the work again in the spring of 1943, and that did not happen.

SOURCES The one published account with information on this camp is Emeryka Iwaszko, "Aussenkommando Chełmek: Kommando zewnętrzne Chełmek," *ZO* 12 (1970): 47–55. The nationalities of the deaths at Chełmek are recorded in Danuta Czech, *Kalendarz wydarzeń obozowych* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz National Museum Publishing, 1992), entries for November 7 and December 3, 1942.

Information on Chełmek can be found in the following records: *Proces przeciw członkom załogi obozu oświęcimskiego przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym w Krakowie*, vol. 40; Chełmek—materiały różne—Sygn. D-Au III—/Chełmek.

Emeryka Iwaszko
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. Kommandantur Sonderbefehl of November 2, 1942. Staff Members' Trial collection, 40: 17, APMO.

2. Leichenhallebuch—D-Au I-5/4, p. 8, APMO.

3. Trip orders for a car from KL Auschwitz to Chełmek. *Fahrbehl* no. 3 of December 3, 1942, D-Au I-4/62, APMO; report of the former prisoner Ernst Toch.

4. Trip orders for a car from Auschwitz to Chełmek—*Fahrbehl* no. 9 of December 9, 1942. The destination given was "Chełmek—Einziehung des Arbeitskommandos." D-Au I-4/55, APMO. Witness reports by Rozalia Szymutko, Anna Wanat, and Mieczysław Niedzielski.

EINTRACHTHÜTTE

The Germans established a subcamp of Auschwitz in Zgoda (Eintrachthütte), the southern part of the city of Świętochłowice (Schwientochlowitz) in Upper Silesia, on May 26, 1943.¹ The German arms company Oberschlesische Maschinen- und Waggonfabrik AG (Osmag) of Katowice (Kattowitz) initiated the subcamp's establishment. On May 4, 1943, Director Gömmer, the company's representative, negotiated with officials from the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) branch D II in the matter, at which time they set forth the terms for hiring out prisoners. The terms were confirmed in a letter from WVHA D II to Osmag Werk Eintrachthütte dated May 7, 1943.²

The first group of 30 prisoners was moved from Auschwitz to the Eintrachthütte subcamp in a truck on May 26, 1943. Their job was to prepare the camp for more prisoners.³ The main group of prisoners, numbering 500, arrived from Auschwitz by freight train on June 7, 1943.⁴ More transports followed, so the prisoner population grew steadily; it was approximately 700 in late 1943 and reached a peak of around 1,370 in August 1944.⁵ On January 17, 1945, shortly prior to evacuation, there were 1,297 prisoners in the camp.⁶ Most prisoners were Jews from places such as France, Hungary, Slovakia, Bohemia, Greece, Poland, the Netherlands, and Belgium. In comparison to other subcamps, where Jews definitely predominated, Poles constituted a sizable group, and there were Russian prisoners of war (POWs) as well.

The Eintrachthütte arms works was the prisoners' chief workplace, where they manufactured anti-aircraft guns. Prisoners produced parts on machines (lathes, borers, grinders) and assembled the guns. They also worked maintaining machines and equipment and operating hoists and overhead cranes.⁷

Around 200 to 300 prisoners worked in what was called the Baukommando (construction detachment), knocking down unneeded old factory buildings and cleaning up the site.

When the camp first came into existence, a considerable number of prisoners worked building the barracks, barbed-wire fence, and watchtowers. Some prisoners were regularly employed inside the camp in the kitchen, canteen, infirmary, warehouses, and repair shops, and as barbers, as well as barrack and room foremen.

The SS ran the camp strictly and brutally. Any communications with civilian workers—getting food from them or even speaking to them—was prohibited. Inmates were not allowed to eat, smoke cigarettes, leave their machines, fall asleep, or have any money or valuables with them at the work site. Even for trivial offenses, the SS men and prisoner foremen beat prisoners, often until they lost consciousness and not infrequently to death. There were also instances when the SS men shot prisoners for talking to civilian workers, and they would shoot at prisoners for getting near windows—SS guards would get several days' leave for shooting a prisoner at a window, which qualified as preventing an escape.

Sometimes summary punishments were meted out to prisoners at work or in camp following denunciations by German civilian supervisors. Prisoners were punished in the camp by whipping, food deprivation, or additional labor on free Sundays (alternate Sundays were days off).

The work went on in two shifts, a day and a night one of 12 hours each. Prisoners received no pay for their labor. Only from time to time would the factory issue vouchers worth a few Reichsmark (RM) to the prisoners. One could buy things at the camp canteen with them, but it did not have the most sought-after food products. The prisoners' food was severely inadequate and no different from the typical fare of concentration camp prisoners.

An infirmary was set up in the subcamp for sick prisoners who were incapable of working; it was staffed by prisoner

doctors. But the infirmary lacked basic drugs and equipment. For instance, there was no scalpel to perform any surgical procedures. Simple dental procedures, usually extractions, were performed in the camp dentist's office.

Every so often the SS men would hold prisoner selections on the assembly ground. The weak and injured were pulled out of the ranks and transported to Auschwitz.

Every week several prisoners would die from the exhausting labor, insufficient food, lack of proper medical care, and abuse. Their corpses were taken away to Auschwitz to be cremated.

The fees that the factory paid—6 RM for a day of a skilled worker's labor and 4 RM for that of an unskilled one—were transferred to the national treasury via the SS's bank account.⁸

Even before prisoners arrived at the factory, all the civilian employees had been notified that any communications with prisoners, or giving them food or cigarettes, was strictly forbidden, and they would be sent to a concentration camp themselves or even get the death penalty for violating that order.

In spite of that, Polish workers helped prisoners, especially Poles (although there are also examples of help for Jews and Soviet POWs), by passing along illegal correspondence, secretly supplying them with food and medications, and even providing assistance in escapes. The largest escape was on July 3, 1944, when nine prisoners, one Pole, one Jew, and seven Russians, got out through a tunnel dug under the fence.⁹ The Germans arrested two local residents for aiding the prisoners: Maciński, a Polish pharmacist, who was put into Auschwitz, where he perished, and Magdalena Szymik, a Polish worker who was interrogated at Auschwitz and freed.

Because of the Red Army's rapid advance in January 1945, the camp was shut down, and approximately 1,200 prisoners were evacuated. Everyone able to be evacuated was loaded into freight cars and taken to the Mauthausen concentration camp. Many prisoners died in the course of the four-day trip, which they had to endure standing because of the enormous crowding.

Upon liberation, several dozen prisoners who had been left in the camp were taken to hospitals in Świętochłowice and Katowice.

SOURCES APMO contains the following relevant records: Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts by Fryderyk Skalec, Alfred Panic, Hieronim Kolonko, Jerzy Rogocz, Wiktor Konkol, Zygmunt Gajda, Władysław Rutecki, Leon Witt, Tadeusz Krupa, Alojzy Kleta, Leonard Chładzyński, Józefa Zintel, Waław Krzyżyński, Teodor Morys, Erwin Smieja, Alfred Swoboda, and Tomasz Dobiosz; Arbeitseinsatz; Akta Procesu Hössa; Fahrbefehle; Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderung; Meldunki i zarządzenia karne; Kommandantur-Befehle; Akta SS-Hygiene Institut; Nummernbuch; Kartoteka więźniów Mauthausen; Meldeblatt; Telegramy o ucieczkach. Also, Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach APKat holds records in collections BH-2405, -2484, -2511, and -2515. See also Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Eintrachthütte," *HvA* 17 (1985): 133–137.

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerhard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, sygn. D-AuI-3a, account of prisoner labor for May 26–31, 1943; Zespół Oświadczenia (Affidavits Collection), accounts by former Eintrachthütte subcamp prisoners Alfred Panic and Fryderyk Skalec.

2. APKat, BH-2511, pp. 28–29 (microfilm at APMO)—letter from WVHA to Osmag dated May 7, 1943.

3. APMO, Catalog No. D-AuI-3a, monthly employment list of Auschwitz male and female prisoners; Affidavits Collection, accounts by former prisoners Alfred Panic and Fryderyk Skalec.

4. APMO, Catalog No. D-AuI-3a/318, letter from Auschwitz political unit director to various camp offices dated June 5, 1943.

5. APKat, BH-2405, pp. 11, 24–26, statistical reports of the Osmag and Ost-Maschinenbau companies.

6. APMO, *Materiały Ruchu Oporu* (Resistance Movement Materials), vol. 3, books 208, 212.

7. Prisoner working and living conditions have been depicted based on the accounts of former prisoners Fryderyk Skalec, Alfred Panic, Hieronim Kolonko, Jerzy Rogocz, Wiktor Konkol, Zygmunt Gajda, Władysław Rutecki, Leon Witt, Tadeusz Krupa, Alojzy Kleta, Leonard Chładzyński, Józefa Zintel, Waław Krzyżyński, Teodor Morys, and those of workers Erwin Smieja and Tomasz Dobiosz. ANMA [or APMO], Affidavits Collection.

8. APKat, BH-2511, pp. 28–29, letter from WVHA to Osmag dated May 7, 1943.

9. APMO, Catalog No. AuI-1/334–337, Meldeblatt No. 13 dated July 15, 1944, published by the State Police Unit in Wrocław. The document listed the escaped prisoners' names and descriptions.

FREUDENTHAL

An Auschwitz subcamp was formed in the town of Bruntal (Freudenthal) in the Czech Sudeten Mountains. The fragmentary surviving records do not provide the exact date on which it was established, but it probably came into being in October 1944. The first mention of the Freudenthal camp is in the daily work rolls of female prisoners from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz camp for October 14 to December 30, 1944.¹

The Freudenthal camp was located on the southeastern edge of town, about 198 meters (650 feet) from the train station, on the grounds of the factory belonging to the German company Emmerich Machold.

The camp commandant was an SS man with the rank of SS-Oberscharführer, while the commander of the 21-person guard detachment assigned to guard the camp was SS-Hauptscharführer Paul Ulbort, born on April 13, 1893.² Starting October 1944, he was the chief of the Freudenthal subcamp's guard detachment, which was part of the 8th Guard Company headquartered at Auschwitz III-Monowitz. Three female German SS guards (Aufseherinnen) also belonged to the camp staff. One of them was Erna Bodem, a Sudeten German. Bodem, born in Zwodau on October 10, 1919, was a farm laborer by occupation and entered service in the SS in 1943. After serving as a supervisor at the Lublin concentration

camp, she was at Auschwitz II-Birkenau from late April 1944 until October 10, 1944, before her transfer to the Freudenthal subcamp, where she stayed until May 3, 1945.

Guard duty was served by older soldiers or those unfit to serve on the lines, men from regular army formations who were enlisted into the SS after several weeks of training. They served 24-hour guard duty in shifts in the four guard stations around the camp and at the entrance, reinforced the guards at the factory's main entrance, and also escorted the women to and from work.

The Emmerich Machold textile factory, which did knitting, weaving, and made clothing, had at that time shifted over to war production to meet the Wehrmacht's needs. The women employed there sewed such things as uniforms for German soldiers.

In October 1944, the SS selected a group of 300 female Jewish prisoners, mainly Hungarian and Czech, from the transit camp for Jewish women (Sector BIIc) at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, and sent them to the Freudenthal subcamp.³ The camp population probably remained at a constant level throughout the camp's operation (there were 301 prisoners as of October 19, 1944). The only number that changed was that of the working prisoners and those unfit to work because of sickness or emaciation. For example, on any given workday in October there were from 4 to 5 prisoners unfit for work; in November, that number grew to 11 or 12 persons a day; in December, it rose to 35 or 36 sick women in the camp hospital per day.⁴ We can assume that the number of sick people and those unfit to work grew over the following months as a result of the cold conditions, hunger, and exhausting labor.

The women wore the striped camp clothing they had received in Birkenau prior to being transported to Freudenthal.⁵

The prisoners were liberated on May 6, 1945, by Russian forces.⁶ The entire SS staff probably abandoned the camp several days before the Russians entered. Just after war operations ceased, the Emmerich Machold factory burned; therefore, practically no company records from before May 1945 survived on-site in Bruntal.⁷

Records at the International Tracing Service (ITS) show that the prisoners from the Freudenthal subcamp were also subhired for work by Freudenthaler Getränke GmbH, belonging to the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) Amt W III/2. Getränke specialized in the manufacture of vitamin juices.⁸ The fact that the corporation was hiring Auschwitz concentration camp prisoners from the Freudenthal subcamp was also confirmed by former Auschwitz concentration camp commander Rudolf Höss in his testimony given after the war in Kraków, in which he states: "The Freudenthal camp was located in the Sudeten Mountains. It had been established there for construction purposes, particularly the expansion of a company making vitamin juice for the provisions of forces stationed in Norway. Later, prisoners of that camp were also going to work in the company's factories, which were operated by the SS on its own account.

In my time the camp numbered approximately three hundred prisoners."⁹ However, a study of the records collected at the Auschwitz-Birkenau National Museum Archives does not confirm that statement.

Erna Bodem was tried in Kraków in 1948 and sentenced to four years in prison. There is no record that any of the other camp or industry personnel associated with Freudenthal were prosecuted.

SOURCES There are no published sources on this camp. Primary sources on Freudenthal may be found in APMO (microfilm collection; daily list of occupations of the female inmates at Auschwitz III-Monowitz; collection on the Höss trial; correspondence) and in ITS and its catalog.

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NOTES

1. APMO, Catalog No. D-Au III-3a/1, p. 342.
2. APMO, Microfilm No. 261/16. Report on the activity of the guard company at the Freudenthal camp dated December 1, 1944, sent to the superior authorities at Monowitz concentration camp, by its commander SS-Hauptscharführer Paul Ulbort.
3. APMO, Correspondence, syg. Kor. IV-3/4672-4676/3620/90, letter to the Museum from the former inmate Magda Kessler, née Klein, dated May 15, 1990.
4. APMO, daily list of occupations, pp. 432-509.
5. APMO, Vol.: IV-3/4672-4676/3620/90, letter by the former inmate Magda Kessler.
6. Ibid.
7. APMO, Vol.: I-8523/92/2669/86, correspondence with historian Dr. Franciszek Spurny of the Regional Museum in Šumperk, dated September 19, 1986.
8. Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS (1933-1945). Internationaler Suchdienst (Arolsen 1979), p. 18.
9. APMO, Proces Hössa, 21: 41.

FÜRSTENGRUBE

The Fürstengrube subcamp was organized in the summer of 1943 at the Fürstengrube hard coal mine in the town of Wesoła (Wessolla), now part of the city of Mysłowice (Mysłowitz), approximately 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) from Auschwitz. The mine, which IG Farbenindustrie AG acquired in February 1941, was to supply hard coal for the IG Farben factory being built in Auschwitz. Besides the old Fürstengrube mine, called the Altanlage, a new mine (Fürstengrube-Neuanlage) had been designed and construction had begun; it was to provide for greater coal output in the future. Coal production at the new mine was anticipated to start in late 1943, so construction was treated as very urgent; however, that plan proved to be unfeasible.¹

In the period before the Auschwitz concentration camp prisoners were sent to work at Fürstengrube, the mine employed Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), Jewish slave laborers, and forced laborers from the USSR, in addition to its regular

staff. Negotiations in July 1943 between Auschwitz Commandant Rudolf Höss and representatives of IG Farbenindustrie AG and Fürstengrube GmbH led to an agreement to build a new camp for approximately 600 prisoners—increasing to 1,200 then to 1,300 later—from Auschwitz.²

Mainly Jews built the new camp; they lived in the mine's forced labor camp for Jews, which was under the so-called Organisation Schmelt; that camp was called Lager Ostland. The Jewish prisoners from that camp were taken away even before the prisoners were moved from the Auschwitz concentration camp. The camp report for August 1943 no longer mentions the number of Jews employed.³ The prisoners moved from Auschwitz then continued the subcamp's construction and expansion.

In early September 1943, the SS began moving prisoners, probably including a few German prisoner foremen, from Auschwitz to the Fürstengrube subcamp, which appears as "Lager Süd" on mine maps. On September 4, 1943, the Auschwitz labor office reported that 129 prisoners were working at the Fürstengrube subcamp; by July 1944 that number had risen to approximately 1,200, 85 to 90 percent of whom were Jews. Polish Jews were the most numerous group, but Jews from Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Greece were also present. Starting in the spring of 1944, there were also several dozen non-Jewish Polish prisoners at Fürstengrube.⁴

For the first three months the subcamp was under the direct charge of Auschwitz headquarters; then after November 22, 1943, under Auschwitz III-Monowitz. Effective May 22, 1944, the 3rd Guard Company of Auschwitz III took charge of the guard duty.⁵ SS-Hauptscharführer Otto Moll was named the subcamp's first commandant; he served in that position until March 1944. SS-Oberscharführer Max Schmidt succeeded Moll until the subcamp was shut down in January 1945. The SS staff at the beginning of 1944 consisted of 47 SS men and grew to 64 at the end of the year.

Prisoners from Auschwitz who went to the Fürstengrube subcamp were mostly put to work extracting coal in the old mine and building the new one.⁶ Prisoners working in the old mine were divided up into three shifts: morning (5:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.), day (1:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.), and night (9:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M.). Work at the mine was especially difficult and dangerous because of the low galleries and the abundance of water. Prisoners did not receive the required protective clothing, and they were constantly vulnerable to beatings and abuse from the mine's civilian staff as well as prisoner-foremen. The prisoners building the new mine faced equally brutal and exhausting work. They worked in one shift, a day shift, doing all sorts of construction and assembly jobs in groups of painters, bricklayers, welders, metalworkers, and assemblers. Additionally, when the shifts were over, many of the prisoners then had to work to expand the camp.

Only very sick prisoners were admitted to the camp infirmary. SS doctors conducted periodic selections there and among the other prisoners as well; prisoners who were no

longer able to work were moved to the Birkenau hospital sector (BIIf).⁷ The rotation of prisoners was significant, as new prisoners replaced those who had been selected. For example, from May 8 to 14, 1944, as many as 42 Fürstengrube prisoners entered the hospital sector of Birkenau.⁸

In spite of the hard conditions and fight for survival, despite the beatings and persecution, there were some poor substitutes for cultural life at the subcamp in the form of band concerts and plays.⁹ Some prisoners secretly drew portraits of their fellow inmates.

Only a few escapes and escape attempts from the Fürstengrube subcamp are known. Gabriel Rothkopf, a Polish Jew, escaped during the night of December 18–19, 1943, while returning from work at the old mine.¹⁰ In response, Commandant Moll personally shot a randomly selected group of prisoners in front of their fellows and left their bodies on the assembly ground until the next shift returned.¹¹ Ivan Potekhin, a Russian prisoner, escaped on April 15, 1944.¹² In the spring of 1944, a group of prisoners dug a tunnel from a barrack, but during an inspection five German Jews were apprehended in it; they were later hanged.¹³ In June 1944, Commandant Schmidt shot a Russian prisoner who intended to escape from the subcamp.¹⁴ In late August 1944, yet another Russian prisoner was shot; he had attempted to escape in a freight car leaving the new mine construction site.¹⁵ The escape attempt of a Polish prisoner named Górewicz, working in the forge, also ended with his execution.¹⁶

Polish miners on the site helped a group of Polish prisoners by smuggling messages, food, and news of the situation on the fronts. However, the camp's political branch got word of the activity, probably in late August 1944. The prisoners were sent to Auschwitz I, and after approximately two months of interrogation, they were brought back to Fürstengrube and hanged on October 10, 1944.¹⁷

In September, November, and December 1944, the Polish and Russian prisoners were moved to the Flossenbürg, Buchenwald, and Mauthausen concentration camps. As of January 17, 1945, 1,283 prisoners, chiefly Jews, remained in the subcamp.¹⁸ On January 19, having burned the camp's records, the SS led approximately 1,000 prisoners out of the camp, headed for Gliwice (Gleiwitz) via Mikołów.¹⁹ Severe cold and icy roads made the march difficult, and SS men killed anyone who fell out. On the evening of January 20, 1945, the Fürstengrube prisoners reached the Gleiwitz II subcamp, where they joined prisoners from Auschwitz III-Monowitz as well as some other subcamps. The next day, January 21, the SS loaded approximately 4,000 prisoners into open railway cars bound for Mauthausen. The authorities at Mauthausen did not accept the transport, however, as the camp was overcrowded, but sent the train on to Mittelbau-Dora, where it arrived on January 28. Out of 4,000 prisoners, only about 3,500 survived the seven-day trip.

On January 27, 1945, at about 4:00 P.M., a dozen or so SS men entered the Fürstengrube subcamp and killed most of the remaining prisoners; some they shot, and some burned to

death when the SS set their barracks on fire. Only the sudden arrival of Soviet troops forced the SS to flee, thus sparing a few of the prisoners. A mine employee who was present afterward reported that they buried 239 bodies.²⁰ About 20 prisoners survived the massacre. One of them, former prisoner Rudolf Ehrlich, testified to these events on May 9, 1945, before the Investigation Commission for German Nazi Crimes at Auschwitz.²¹

In a U.S. Military Court trial in Dachau from November 15 to December 13, 1945, Otto Moll, the first commandant of the Fürstengrube subcamp, was sentenced to death by hanging.²² The sentence was executed on May 28, 1946.

SOURCES The following secondary source contains additional information: Tadeusz Iwaszko, "Podobóz 'Fürstengrube,'" *ZO* 16 (1975): 71–151.

APMO holds materials in the Fürstengrube GmbH collection, as well as accounts of former Fürstengrube subcamp prisoners. Additional material is in APKat, Pszczyna Division, in the Fürstengrube GmbH collection. Also helpful is the account of Leo Klüger, *Laché, denn morgen bist Du tot. Eine Geschichte vom Überleben* (Munich: Piper, 1998).

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trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. "Fürstengrube GmbH," notes and correspondence, in APMO, Fürstengrube GmbH collection.
2. Note dated July 28, 1943, in APMO, D-AuIII/Fürstengrube/1a, book 46–47.
3. APKat, Pszczyna Division, Fürstengrube GmbH collection, Catalog No. 50.
4. See, for example, account of former prisoner Jan Ławnicki, in APMO, Oświadczenia [Affidavits], vol. 60, book 99.
5. Standortbefehl No. 53/43 in APMO, D-AuI-1; Kommandantur-Sonderbefehl KL Auschwitz III dated May 22, 1944, in APMO, D-AuIII-1/63.
6. Account of former prisoner Paul Halter, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 54, book 41–43.
7. Account of former prisoner Ervín Hekš, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 70, book 124.
8. APMO, H-Krankenbau B.II.f K.L.AuII Zugänge von Aussenlagern von 8 Mai 1944 bis 14 Mai 1944, chart, in APMO, D-AuII-5/2, book 28.
9. Accounts of former prisoners Paul Halter and Marian Waliński, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 54, book 35, vol. 40, book 55.
10. Telegram about the escape of prisoner Gabriel Rothkopf dated December 20, 1944, in APMO, IZ-8/Gestapo Łódź/3a, vol. 4, book 547, 548.
11. Accounts of former prisoners Paul Halter, Józef Łabudek and Jan Ławnicki, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 54, book 36, vol. 50, book 94, vol. 60, book 107.
12. Telegram about the escape of prisoner Iwan Potechin, in APMO, D-AuI-1/1a, vol. 2, book 374.
13. Accounts of former prisoners Marian Waliński, Józef Łabudek, Stanisław Łapiński, Paul Halter, and Jan Ławnicki,

in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 40, book 54–55, vol. 50, book 93, vol. 54, book 20, vol. 54, book 36, vol. 60, book 107.

14. Accounts of former prisoners Jan Ławnicki and Jan Skotnicki, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 60, book 108, vol. 57, book 51.

15. Account of former prisoner Jan Skotnicki, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 57, book 88.

16. Account of former prisoner Henryk Kowadło, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 21, book 71.

17. Accounts of former prisoners Jan Skotnicki, Leonard Chładzyński, Paul Halter, and Józef Łabudek, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 57, book 88, vol. 61, book 54, vol. 54, book 37, vol. 50, book 94.

18. Smuggled message of the Resistance Movement at Auschwitz concentration camp dated January 17, 1945, in APMO, Materiały Ruchu Oporu, vol. 3, book 212.

19. Accounts of former prisoners Ludwik Frąszczak, Józef Tabaczyński, and Józef Łabudek, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 41, book 65, vol. 44, book 62, vol. 50, book 95.

20. Account of former mine employee Piotr Olej, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 41, book 59.

21. Record of testimony by former prisoner Rudolf Ehrlich, in APMO, Proces Hössa, vol. 1, book 123–128.

22. Rept. of Dachau concentration camp trial, in APMO, Dpr. [trial log] Dachau/1.

GLEIWITZ I

The Gleiwitz Reichsbahnausbesserungswerk (Reich Railways Repair Works, RAW), also called the Wagenwerk, initiated the establishment of the Gleiwitz I subcamp in Gleiwitz (later Gliwice) and financed the subcamp's construction and outfitting. The first prisoner transport was sent to the camp in March 1944. A dozen or so prisoners, mostly carpenters, arrived to prepare the subcamp for subsequent transports. When the first barracks were put up (some of which had most probably been moved from the Krakau-Plaszow concentration camp), several dozen Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians were transferred to the subcamp from Auschwitz I. They were largely skilled tradesmen who had been employed until then in the Union-Werke detachment. Because there are no sources, we cannot determine the arrival dates, numbers, or ethnic composition of the other prisoner transports. The only source providing the number of prisoners at the Gleiwitz I subcamp is a list made by the secret prisoner resistance movement organization. Because of it, it is known that at the last roll call on January 17, 1945, there were 1,336 prisoners at the subcamp. We can therefore state that Gleiwitz I was the largest Auschwitz subcamp in Gliwice and was a large subcamp in comparison to other camps in the Auschwitz concentration camp system.

The subcamp's first commandant was SS-Hauptscharführer Otto Moll, born on March 4, 1915, in Hohenschönenberg, a gardener by trade and the former chief of the crematoriums and gas chambers at Auschwitz II-Birkenau who had come to Auschwitz in 1941 from the Gusen subcamp at Mauthausen. In May 1944, he resumed that earlier post in order to assist in

the murder of the Hungarian Jews, but he returned to Gleiwitz I in late summer and probably served as commandant until mid-December. His deputies were SS-Oberscharführer Jansen (former muster officer of the Melk subcamp of Mauthausen) and SS-Oberscharführer Richard Stolten (beginning July 17, 1944). The staff included several dozen SS men from the 6th Guard Company of Auschwitz III-Monowitz, as well as SS-Oberscharführer Josef Klehr as SS medical orderly.

The surviving camp records list more detailed information on approximately 250 Gleiwitz I subcamp prisoners, most of whom were Jews who arrived in Auschwitz in 1943–1944 from concentration camps in Lublin-Majdanek and Krakau-Plaszow; from the Drancy and Westerbork transit camps; from the Białystok and Łódź ghettos; and from Bohemia, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Italy. They underwent selections on the ramp at Birkenau; many of those found fit to work eventually went to the subcamps, including Gleiwitz I. The prisoner foremen were predominantly German.

The prisoners lived in several wooden barracks located about 2 kilometers (1.25 miles) from the Wagenwerk. Separate quarters were assigned to Jews, Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians. Former prisoners stress in their accounts that the food in the subcamp was even worse than what they had received at Birkenau. Many prisoners eventually succumbed to hunger and overwork. Most prisoners worked in small groups scattered throughout the Werkhalle, an enormous repair house approximately 4 hectares (9.9 acres) in area, doing general repairs to freight and tank cars under the direct supervision of civilian foremen and workers. There was a sign on each car specifying the quota of work to be done. Since the quotas were high and the foremen strictly enforced them, the prisoners had to work very strenuously. Initially, all prisoners worked the one day shift, but in the late summer of 1944 a night shift was introduced. Work on each shift lasted 12 hours, sometimes longer. There were even instances when some Werkhalle groups stayed at their workstations for about a week, sleeping in the cars for a few hours each day. Additionally, some prisoners worked in the metal shop, boiler house, and forge, building a road near the Wagenwerk, or at the airport near the brickyard. And for many prisoners, the end of the workday at the Wagenwerk did not mean they were through working. Some of them had to clean the toilet pits or bring stones and turf from several kilometers away to cover the slopes near the subcamp.

Treatment was harsh and capricious. Civilian and prisoner foremen and SS guards and officials alike abused the prisoners, either at the workplace or in the camp. Prisoners who could not keep up the brutal pace or who fell asleep were beaten; some were killed. Moll personally carried out executions, some for a minor breach of regulations, some for no apparent reason at all.

A camp hospital opened at Gleiwitz I only in the autumn of 1944. Up until then, there was only a dispensary, where prisoners could get first aid. Klehr conducted selections of the

sick several times. Prisoners requiring extended treatment were taken away along with the corpses of the dead to Birkenau, where they perished in the gas chambers. Selections were also conducted outside the camp hospital, during roll calls, in the bathhouse, or in the barracks. Moll, Klehr, or the SS doctor from Monowitz decided whether prisoners would live or die. In October 1944, about 50 severely emaciated prisoners were picked during a selection and taken away from the subcamp shortly afterward.

Despite the rigorous control by the SS men and prisoner foremen, illegal contacts did occur at the Wagenwerk between prisoners and the civilian workers employed there. Some workers would secretly hand food to prisoners or leave it at designated spots, most often in the railroad cars. With their collaboration, prisoners could sometimes feign work or even sleep, and in several instances Polish prisoners were able to establish illegal communications with their families. There were also a number of individual prisoner escapes, with or without worker support, some of which were presumably successful, while others resulted in hangings or shootings.

Eleven Russian prisoners escaped without any outside help on the night of August 15, 1944, through a tunnel. Monowitz commander SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz came to the subcamp with several SS officers from the political branch to conduct an investigation. Shortly afterward, all the Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian prisoners were moved from the Gleiwitz I subcamp to Birkenau and then included in a prisoner transport to Neuengamme. Two of those 11 escaped Russians were captured and brought back to the subcamp. Although they could barely stand due to beating, they had to walk through the subcamp's streets several times with signs on their chests saying: "Hurrah! We are back again." They were hanged during a special assembly, which not only Gleiwitz I subcamp prisoners had to attend but those from neighboring Gleiwitz II as well. Just before his execution, one of the Russians managed to shout out: "Do not forget us, avenge us!"

The Gleiwitz I subcamp was shut down on January 18, 1945. Before escorting the prisoners out of the subcamp, the SS men selected several dozen sick, lame, and extremely emaciated prisoners, whom they led behind the barracks and shot. SS men also shot any prisoners who could not keep up during the evacuation march and threw the bodies into roadside ditches. The route of that death march led through Auschwitz's Blechhammer subcamp. In the early hours of January 21, 1945, the Gleiwitz I prisoners left Blechhammer, and in early February they reached Gross-Rosen. Shortly thereafter a group of about 200 Gleiwitz I prisoners were taken away from Gross-Rosen to Nordhausen. The rest were sent to Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen and their subcamps in different transports.

A small group of Gleiwitz I prisoners, taking advantage of the overall chaos that prevailed at Blechhammer, stayed at that subcamp. Some of them perished when the barracks were



A post war oil painting by Holocaust survivor David Friedmann representing the death march from the Gleiwitz I subcamp to Blechhammer. USHMM#WS 27689, SOURCE UNKNOWN

shelled by SS men; others managed to escape and reach Allied lines.

Otto Moll was sentenced to death at the Dachau trial on December 13, 1945, and later executed.

SOURCES There are several published sources that contain information on Gleiwitz I: Edmund Całka, "Polacy z Gliwickiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej," ZG 2 (1964): 117–131; Edmund Całka, "Hitlerowskie obozy w Gliwicach i w powiecie," ZG 4 (1966): 121–133; Irena Strzelecka, "Arbeitslager Auschwitz I," ZO 14 (1972): 65–94 (German version: HvA 14 [1973]: 75–106); Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Podobozy oświęcimskie w Gliwicach," ZG 13 (1978): 119–167; Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Zatrudnienie więźniów oświęcimskich w przemyśle Gliwic," ZG 9 (1972): 15–37; Mel Mermelstein, *By Bread Alone. The Story of A-4685* (Los Angeles: Crescent Publications, 1979).

Archival materials may be found in the APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts by former prisoners Emil Heran, Mieczysław Ruzga, Leon Trzeźniower, Antoni Głogowski, Martin Klein-Viggo, Leon Opatowski, Michał Popczyka, Ryszard Wojtusik, Czesław Niżnik, Melvin Mermelstein, Józef Szymczak, Lew Polakowand, Szulim Zang, and others; as well as accounts of other witnesses such as former forced laborer Helena Chmielewska and Józef Klos, a longtime employee of today's Rolling Stock Repair Works in Gliwice.

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GLEIWITZ II

In the initial years of World War II, Deutsche Gasrusswerke GmbH of Dortmund, West Germany, began building a carbon black factory in Gleiwitz (later Gliwice). On the company's initiative, two forced labor camps were then established near the factory grounds, one for foreign workers (*Fremdarbeiterlager*), predominantly Poles, and a camp for Jews (*Judenlager*) that appeared in records as armaments camp (*Rüstungslager*)

Degussa, Gleiwitz-Steigern, or as forced labor camp (*Zwangsarbeiterlager*) Degussa, Gleiwitz-Steigern Deutsche Gasrusswerke. There were approximately 600 Jews in the latter camp in 1943, including about 200 each of men and women from Silesia, brought to Gleiwitz in the spring of 1943 from transit camps in Sosnowitz (Sosnowietz) and Gogolin.

On May 3, 1944, the SS took over the Rüstungslager and placed it under Auschwitz III-Monowitz, with the designation Gleiwitz II. At that point there were 245 women in the camp, including approximately 200 Silesian Jews who had arrived in the spring of 1943; shortly after Monowitz took over control of the camp, these women received tattooed prisoner numbers from the general Auschwitz prisoner series. A major women's transport, probably numbering about 100 persons, mostly Hungarian Jews, arrived in the summer of 1944. In November, the population of women prisoners was 371, and that number remained unchanged until evacuation. The population of the men's portion of the camp was 261 Jewish prisoners in May 1944; on January 17, 1945, there were 740.

The entire staff changed with the reorganization. SS-Oberscharführer Becker became the new commandant, with SS-Unterscharführer Lukaszek his deputy. On September 15, 1944, SS-Oberscharführer Konrad Friedrichsen, on detail from the Neu-Dachs subcamp, replaced Becker; then on January 5, 1945, SS-Hauptscharführer Bernhard Rackers, previously the muster officer in Monowitz, took over the post. The subcamp staff consisted of about 70 SS men from the 6th Guard Company of Monowitz.

When Monowitz took over the camp, some of the women prisoners lost heart completely. Two or three days after the female prisoners were tattooed, 18-year-old Bela Londer of Sosnowiec committed suicide, as did teenager Melania Borenstein a few days after her. Unable to reconcile themselves to the new situation, they jumped out of the fourth floor of the factory building.

The reorganization did not change the nature of the women's work, but discipline tightened, and there were fewer opportunities to communicate with the civilian and forced laborers. The female prisoners worked at the Gasrusswerke in three shifts. A large percentage worked directly in production, that is, in operating the Verdampfer machines that processed anthracite, sulfur, and oil into carbon black. The temperature in the production halls ranged from 60 to 71 degrees Celsius (140 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit), but despite the heat the women worked in overalls tightly buttoned up to their necks. The fumes rising from the boiling oils attacked the eyes and settled in the lungs. Poor lighting and dust made working difficult. The production hall windows were tightly covered at night because of blackout regulations. On average, every prisoner produced about 4 to 5 kilograms (9 to 11 pounds) of carbon black per hour, operating one machine, and in the process also produced several kilograms of oily waste at 299 degrees Celsius (570 degrees Fahrenheit). Several women suffered serious burns

while pouring this waste into a special tank on the factory grounds.

Some of the female prisoners worked in the packing department, where the carbon black was delivered in huge pipes from the production halls. The women weighed and packed the carbon black in large paper sacks. The greasy carbon black, which was hard to wash off, sprinkled down on them the entire time they worked and coated their bodies.

The male prisoners worked on expanding the factory, in machine repair and maintenance, sorting building materials in the factory yard, and at the nearby Borsig Koks-Werke (Borsig Coke Works).

The overall living and working conditions were similar to those prevailing throughout the Auschwitz complex. Civilian foremen, mostly Germans from Dortmund, pushed the workers hard and sometimes beat them. The SS guards and prisoner foremen were, if anything, worse. The prisoners suffered every day from hunger, hard labor, and bad treatment. Friedrichsen was especially strict; he personally searched the women prisoners and had them punished severely if he found them in possession of any food or other contraband.

In the summer of 1944, the prisoners founded an underground organization to keep up the spirits of the despairing women, conduct sabotage, and try to mitigate the civilian foremen's hostile behavior (through such things as intervening with Dr. Schenk, the Gasrusswerke engineering director).

On January 18, 1945, the women and men prisoners were ordered to prepare to leave camp. Several female and male prisoners took advantage of the confusion brought on by the evacuation and escaped, hiding on the factory grounds in such places as sewage pipes.

According to the accounts of former female prisoners, the women and men were evacuated from the subcamp at the same time. A strong escort of SS men commanded by SS-Hauptscharführer Rackers convoyed the columns of prisoners traveling on foot. After about 19 kilometers (12 miles) they stopped the prisoners and drove them into a barn to spend the night, but the terrible crowding made sleep impossible. Due to the approach of the Red Army, the prisoners were turned back toward Gleiwitz the next day and spent another night in the outskirts of the city. On the third day, the prisoners were loaded onto open railway cars for the trip into the Reich.

Former prisoner Anna Moszkowicz describes the conditions. She relates how the prisoners stood packed together the entire trip. The ones who got to be along the walls of the car were considered luckier as they could lean against the wall. At night the prisoners lay down on one another to sleep as best they could. The bread had been completely crushed and there was no water, so they licked the snow off their arms. There was no possibility of attending to bodily functions and many of the women went mad along the way. During a night stop at an unidentified place in Moravia, the local inhabitants rushed to the prisoners' aid. Heedless of the presence of armed SS men, they tried to get food and water to the railway cars. They managed to toss still-hot bread into some of the cars—but there were casualties. When prisoner

Stanisława Müller (a nurse at the subcamp) leaned out of the car for a cup of water for the fainting people, SS-Hauptscharführer Rackers shot her. As the journey continued, few women prisoners managed to escape along the way. After about 10 days, the transport arrived in Oranienburg. The men were sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, the women to Ravensbrück and its subcamp at Neustadt-Glewe.

Two of the camp's leaders were put on trial for their crimes. Konrad Friedrichsen, born June 9, 1906, in Hamburg, a merchant by trade, and assigned to the Neu-Dachs subcamp in August 1944, and to Gleiwitz II on September 15, 1944, was tried in 1947 before the Kraków District Court and on January 22, 1948, was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment. Bernhard Rackers, born on March 6, 1905, in Sögel and prior to his assignment to Gleiwitz II a detachment commander and then muster officer at Monowitz, was sentenced to life in prison by a jury in Osnabrück.

SOURCES There are several sources that refer to Gleiwitz II: Edmund Całka, "Oświęcim nad Kłodnicą," NG 11-19 (1962) (series of articles); Edmund Całka, "Polacy z Gliwickiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej," ZG 2 (1964): 117-131; Edmund Całka, "Hitlerowskie obozy w Gliwicach i w powiecie," ZG 4 (1966): 121-133; Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Zatrudnienie więźniów oświęcimskich w przemyśle Gliwic," ZG 9 (1972): 15-37; Irena Strzelecka, "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz II," ZO 14 (1972): 95-114 (German version: "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz II," HvA 14 [1973]: 107-127); Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Podobozy oświęcimskie w Gliwicach," ZG 13 (1978): 119-167.

Archival records may be found in APKat, Zespół VOH sygn. 8, 780, 1274, 1287/7, 1288; APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts by former female prisoners Anna Markowiecka, Anna Moszkowicz, Judit Csongor Barnabasne (Varga in camp); testimony of former female prisoner Franciszka Zajdman; and trial records of Gleiwitz II SS men.

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GLEIWITZ III

The organization of Auschwitz's Gleiwitz III subcamp started in the spring of 1944. At the end of 1944, the first prisoner transport was brought to a section of the Gleiwitzer Hütte in Gleiwitz (later Gliwice), which the Zieleniewski Works occupied after its evacuation from Kraków, and was put in one of the barracks erected near the former foundry building. Both the Gleiwitzer Hütte and Zieleniewski-Maschinen und Waggonbau GmbH, Kraków, were under the Vereinigte Oberschlesische Hüttenwerke AG concern (Oberhütten or VOH). During World War II, VOH, like other German companies, exploited the cheap manpower of thousands of forced laborers, prisoners of war (POWs), and beginning in mid-1944, Auschwitz concentration camp prisoners as well.

SS-Hauptscharführer Karl Spieker was the commandant of Gleiwitz III until the camp was dissolved. His assistants

were SS-Unterscharführer Moritz and SS-Rottenführer Zahorodny. He had several dozen SS men under him from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz 6th Guard Company. Gleiwitz III, like the other Auschwitz subcamps in Gleiwitz, was inspected by SS officers, Auschwitz representatives, on several occasions, and by Monowitz commander SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz on September 16, 1944. The "prisoner government" was mainly composed of German criminals who treated their fellow prisoners brutally.

At least three prisoner transports arrived in Gleiwitz III from late July to mid-August 1944. The first consisted mainly of Polish Jews who arrived in Auschwitz on July 27, 1944, from the Pustków labor camp; prisoners from Lublin-Majdanek who arrived in Auschwitz on July 28 or August 6, 1944, made up the second transport. Several dozen Polish prisoners from Monowitz arrived in the subcamp on August 15, as did several dozen prisoners from the Terezin ghetto in the autumn. There were approximately 600 prisoners in the subcamp at the end of October and 609 just before evacuation.

The prisoners lived in a brick barrack with a basement and central heating. Living conditions at Gleiwitz III were better than those in Auschwitz II-Birkenau main camp, but the food was the same, if not worse. Sick prisoners or the bodies of those who had died of starvation were often taken away from the subcamp infirmary to Birkenau.

The SS men's behavior toward prisoners was characterized by brutality and sadism. They would beat prisoners or make them do punitive exercises for the smallest offense, or often for no reason at all. The prisoner foremen generally treated the prisoners as badly as the SS men did.

Camp conditions drove some prisoners to total nervous breakdown or apathy. For example, Libelt, a prisoner from Lvov, who had lost hope of living to see freedom, did not observe the basic rules of caution in assembling machines at the Gleiwitzer Hütte. When a Polish worker pointed this out to him, he replied: "What are you worried about, there will be one Jew less."¹

Some Gleiwitz III prisoners were put to work outside the Gleiwitzer Hütte until the autumn of 1944; later almost all prisoners worked in the steel mill in a separate area occupied by the Zieleniewski Works. Work always lasted 10 to 12 hours per day.

Immediately after the subcamp was established, one of the prisoner commandos was sent daily to the area of the nearby cemetery to do digging and drainage work. Other groups unloaded and loaded building materials at different locations in the city or aircraft parts at the nearby airport. A dozen or so prisoners worked constructing two buildings across from the Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium. In the part of the Gleiwitzer Hütte that VOH had given to the Zieleniewski Works, prisoners worked at such places as the railway sidings, where they unloaded machines, equipment, and unfinished parts brought from Kraków, including parts for naval mines. They also repaired the industrial buildings and laid foundations for machines under the direction of civilian foremen. In the last

quarter of 1944, some of the machines were put into operation, and they started manufacturing train wheel assemblies, anti-aircraft gun carriages, naval mines, and shells of various types. (Aerial bomb production was designated by the code names SD-1, SD-70, and SF 76-77 in correspondence.)

After production had started up and prisoners had been trained to work at the machines, they were put to work in various departments of the Works doing such things as operating lathes, drills, borers, millers, planers, benders, and pneumatic hammers. The largest prisoner commandos worked in the machine and assembly shops. Prisoners were also put to work in the forge and the warehouses, installing electrical and sewage lines, paving surfaces between buildings, and building a sewage settling tank. Prisoners were escorted to their respective workstations by SS men and plant guards (*Werkschutz*), who supervised them during work along with German civilian foremen. Some of these supervisors behaved properly toward the prisoners, while others persecuted them. The workers employed at the Zieleniewski Works were told that the prisoners were bandits and that if they gave them any help at all, they would join the prisoners in the subcamp.

Despite these threats, prisoners and some civilian workers cooperated to relieve the prisoners' plight to some extent. Under favorable circumstances prisoners would attempt to "organize" some extra food, and during work they would communicate with friendly Polish workers, foremen, and engineers from Kraków as well as Gleiwitz residents. These outside contacts would secretly provide prisoners with food, cigarettes, and medicine, and sometimes they helped in getting smuggled messages to families and friends. A few prisoners risked escape, but all known attempts ended in failure.

On January 19, 1945, Gleiwitz III was evacuated. SS men escorted the prisoners westward in a column. The march lasted several days. When the prisoners got to the left bank of the Oder River, they were turned back and sent back east via Koźle to the Blechhammer subcamp, which in January 1945 was one of the concentration points for the thousands of prisoners evacuated from the other Auschwitz subcamps at that time. Some of the prisoners from Gleiwitz III were soon added to the columns of prisoners being evacuated toward Gross-Rosen; others were kept at Blechhammer. Several dozen Gleiwitz III prisoners escaped, availing themselves of the general confusion. Some other prisoners lived to see freedom in Blechhammer.

SOURCES Several published sources contain information on Gleiwitz III: Edmund Całka, "Oświęcim nad Kłodnicą," NG 11-19 (1962) (series of articles); Edmund Całka, "Polacy z Gliwickiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej," ZG 2 (1964): 117-131; Edmund Całka, "Hitlerowskie obozy w Gliwicach i w powiecie," ZG 4 (1966): 121-133; Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Zatrudnienie więźniów oświęcimskich w przemyśle Gliwic," ZG 9 (1972): 15-37; Andrzej Strzelecki, "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz III," ZO 14 (1972): 115-135 (German version: "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz III," HVA 14 [1973]: 129-150); Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej

Strzelecki, "Podobozy oświęcimskie w Gliwicach," *ZG* 13 (1978): pp. 119–167.

Records pertaining to Gleiwitz III may be found in these repositories: APKat, Zespół VOH sygn. 8, 780, 1274, 1287/7, 1288; APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of former prisoners Karol Grot, Oskar Hala, Majer Roth, Samuel Roth, Leon Zygała, and others; accounts of former Zieleniewski Works employees Kazimierz Lipnowski, Czesław Pieczara, Kazimierz Seremet, and others.

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NOTE

1. Account of former prisoner Kazimierz Lipnowski, in APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia (Affidavits Collection), vol. 75, book 37.

GLEIWITZ IV

In June 1944, 80 prisoners from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz concentration camp, mostly Russians and Poles, were placed in a barrack on Wehrmacht land near the Keithkaserne and Schlagetterkaserne barracks in Gleiwitz (later Gliwice). Under the supervision of SS men, the prisoners built a second barrack and fenced in both barracks, after which they were taken back to Monowitz. This is how the Gleiwitz IV subcamp was established.

A transport of approximately 50 prisoners, mainly Jews, arrived from Auschwitz II-Birkenau between August 22 and 24, 1944. In late August and the first half of September, several more transports of Jewish prisoners arrived and were put to work expanding the camp. Some of them had been deported to Auschwitz from the Łódź and Terezin ghettos. According to the account of former prisoner Marian Zelman, there were approximately 700 to 800 prisoners in the subcamp in September 1944; that number dropped to 444 on the eve of evacuation.

SS-Unterscharführer Otto Arthur Lättsch was the commandant of Gleiwitz IV until October 1944, when he became the muster officer, and SS-Oberscharführer Grobert (aka Grübner) took over as commandant. By August 1944, there were 16 SS men in the subcamp staff. That number later grew to several dozen. Some guards wore Wehrmacht uniforms with SS badges; they were probably Wehrmacht drivers who had brought their vehicles in for conversion to a wood-burning propulsion system at the *Holzgas* (wood gas) works next to the subcamp and who had been delegated to the subcamp for that time. Those guards rotated frequently. Guards from the Organisation Todt (OT) also watched prisoners at many work locations, primarily at construction sites.

Most Gleiwitz IV prisoners were put to work expanding the Keithkaserne and Schlagetterkaserne barracks, in the Holzgas shops, and in the port on the Gleiwitz canal. In November or December 1944, many prisoners cleared bombed sites in the city of Gleiwitz of rubble. The Heeresbauverwaltung Gleiwitz, the army's construction office, was probably in

charge of the barrack expansion. Prisoners were put to work in the barracks and the adjoining grounds constructing several buildings and air-raid shelters, cleaning up rubble, and repairing damaged property. At the Holzgas shops, prisoners used special pressurized guns to paint vehicles in military camouflage colors, all the while breathing paint fumes because they lacked proper protective masks. At the port on the Gleiwitz Canal, prisoners built railroad tracks and reloaded various materials, such as vehicles being sent to the Holzgas shops.

The conditions under which Gleiwitz IV prisoners lived were not much different than those in the other Auschwitz subcamps. Clothing and certain foods were brought in from the Auschwitz concentration camp. Meals were often prepared from food that Gleiwitz residents threw away. Because of the combination of hard work and poor nutrition, extreme emaciation became the rule.

The SS behaved brutally toward the prisoners, and Lättsch set the tone. He is known to have shot at least five prisoners—in one case, he shot three men for warming themselves at a fire where a barrel of tar was being heated—and to have beaten many others, sometimes fatally. He also ordered punitive exercises, as in the case of prisoners who had passed information about the camp to local residents; Lättsch sentenced them to several hours of exercise, during which the guards so abused them that several died. His successor, Grobert, was somewhat less cruel, because he wanted to obtain the greatest possible amount of work from the prisoners. During roll calls, the SS men would verbally and physically abuse the prisoners for little or no reason, and both SS and OT men were responsible for killing prisoners at the work sites.

Dr. Nicolaus Sebestyén, a prisoner from Hungary, was in charge of the infirmary, which contained about 20 to 30 sick patients on average. Most of these prisoners were extremely emaciated, sick with colds, suffering from starvation, diarrhea, or ulcerations and injuries. Since there was a shortage of medicine and bandages, the prisoner doctors were unable to provide effective help.

SS doctors came to the subcamp from Auschwitz every few weeks to conduct selections among the prisoners; Lättsch took part in these as well. In all, approximately 200 prisoners were selected as unfit to work and were sent away to the gas chambers at Birkenau. Sometimes the bodies of prisoners who died at the subcamp were sent back with those selected, to be burned in the crematorium.

The prisoners tried to improve the inhuman conditions of their existence in various ways. Ten or so Jewish prisoners from the Łódź ghetto, continuing the underground activity they had begun back in the ghetto, formed a secret organization at the subcamp. Its members helped one another and provided aid to their unorganized comrades. There were also prisoners who risked escape, like Józef Gębala in July or August 1944. Taking advantage of a guard's inattention, he walked away from his workplace, changed into civilian clothing he had prepared in advance, and jumped over the wall around the barracks, getting out to freedom. Others were not

so lucky; one group of Russians and Poles was sent to Birkenau after the Germans learned of their escape plans.

On the night of January 18–19, 1945, the SS evacuated about 380 prisoners from the subcamp; 57 sick prisoners stayed behind, locked in the infirmary. At daybreak, Lätsch, OT foreman Gustav Günther, and several other Nazis set the barrack on fire and shot at the prisoners jumping out the windows. Only prisoners Dąbrowski and Rosenfeld survived, by hiding among their comrades' bodies.

The prisoners evacuated from the subcamp were taken toward the town of Kieferstädtel (later Sośnicowice). Several kilometers later they were turned back to Gleiwitz and then sent to the Blechhammer subcamp; the march lasted two or three days. Along the way, SS men shot about 50 prisoners who could not keep up with their comrades. Several thousand prisoners evacuated from other Auschwitz subcamps were already at Blechhammer. The Red Army was approaching, and there was a great deal of confusion; under those circumstances, several Gleiwitz IV prisoners managed to escape. Some Gleiwitz IV prisoners were evacuated from Blechhammer via Gross-Rosen to the Buchenwald concentration camp, while others lived to see the liberation of Blechhammer.

Lätsch was tried for his crimes after the war. Born on November 26, 1905, in Lichtenberg, and a driver by training, prior to being assigned to Gleiwitz IV he was block commander of Barrack 11 at Auschwitz, where he conducted executions at the Wall of Death. In 1947, the Supreme National Court of Justice in Kraków sentenced him to death.

SOURCES Several publications contain information about Gleiwitz IV: Edmund Całka, "Oświęcim nad Kłodnicą," NG 11–19 (1962) (series of articles); Edmund Całka, "Polacy z Gliwickiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej," ZG 2 (1964): 117–131; Edmund Całka, "Hitlerowskie obozy w Gliwicach i w powiecie," ZG 4 (1966): 121–133; Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Zatrudnienie więźniów oświęcimskich w przemyśle Gliwic," ZG 9 (1972): 15–37; Andrzej Strzelecki, "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz IV," ZO 14 (1972): 137–154 (German version: "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz IV," HvA 14 [1973]: 151–169); Irena Strzelecka and Andrzej Strzelecki, "Podobozy oświęcimskie w Gliwicach," ZG 13 (1978): 119–167.

The following archival collections contain relevant documents: APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of former prisoners Aleksander Schimon Fischer, Józef Wrześniowski, Marian Zelman, and others; accounts of Gliwice residents Eugeniusz Franik, Hubert Grziwok, Teofil Jonda, and others.

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GOLLESCHAU

The town of Golezów (Golleschau) is near the Polish-Czech border, over 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) southwest of Oświęcim (Auschwitz). Before the war broke out, a cement plant was located there, belonging to a company with Austrian capital. In 1939, the factory came under German control, and engineer

Richard Goebel was named director of the Golleschauer Portland-Zement Aktiengesellschaft O/S in 1942. From then on, the SS administered the plant (Ostdeutsche Baustoffwerke GmbH) as part of the W II section in the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) hierarchy.

The first Auschwitz prisoners arrived at the Golleschau subcamp in early August 1942;¹ they were mainly skilled workers: bricklayers and carpenters, whose job it was to change the building adjoining the factory production hall into living quarters for the prisoners. It was a three-story building with the kitchen and infirmary on the ground floor; the washrooms and toilets were on the second floor. The prisoners slept on three-decker bunk beds set up in the remaining rooms on the second and third floors.

Several dozen more prisoners were brought to Golleschau in mid-August 1942 and numbered 241 by the end of the month (160 were already working in the cement plant's quarries). Several small transports followed; from May 1943 to the spring of 1944, the camp had an average of 450 to 500 prisoners. In the summer and autumn of 1944, yet more transports arrived, including Hungarian Jews and 298 Jews from the Theresienstadt ghetto and from Łódź.² As a result, in late summer the total camp population exceeded 1,000 prisoners (up to 1,059 in late October 1944);³ it stayed at a similar level until the evacuation.

Surviving records regarding the initial months of the subcamp's existence show that Jews were already the most highly represented ethnic group among the prisoners. For example, we know that on July 10, 1943, out of the 415 prisoners in the camp there were 15 Poles, 4 Germans, and 1 Russian,⁴ while the rest of the prisoners were Jews (mainly Polish, French, Czech, and Greek), among whom part-Jewish residents were sometimes listed (*Juden-Mischlinge*).⁵ Beginning in April 1944, precise figures on the number of Jews in camp started to appear systematically in the reports signed by the Golleschau camp commandant (Lagerführer); the percentage of them at that time was (until January 1945) up to 95 percent.

The prisoners were put to work at the cement plant doing different types of auxiliary work requiring a great deal of physical effort: laying railroad tracks, crushing stone, sifting coal, packing cement in paper sacks (where the air was filled with dust), doing carpentry work, operating the lime-burning furnaces, building a cable railway, and making barrels. A few prisoners were put to work on the subcamp premises: in the kitchen, laundry, and warehouse. The most difficult situation was in the commandos working in the cement plant's four quarries (Steinbruch I–IV), where prisoners were chiefly used to load crushed stone onto freight cars.⁶ As the factory management estimated, "five Jews ought to load three freight-cars during one shift."⁷ In those commandos, an especially great number of accidents occurred as a result of which many injured prisoners were sent back to the camp at Birkenau. Many prisoners also wound up in the infirmary due to brutal beatings by the Kapos; for example, in his report of December 7, 1944, SS orderly (Sanitätsdienstgrad, SDG) Kaufmann said that Kapo Jakob Weissmann had beaten six prisoners who

had to stay in the hospital for many days.⁸ The foremen employed by the cement plant also beat the prisoners;⁹ they harassed and mocked them. One foreman, Paul Czysz, used to say to prisoners that “whether you work or not, you stinking Jews will go to the crematorium and come out the smoke-stack.”¹⁰

The prisoners were guarded at work by several dozen or so SS men (51 noncommissioned officers and privates in August 1944)¹¹ who initially belonged to the Auschwitz Guard Battalion Third Company and later to the Auschwitz III-Monowitz Battalion Second Company. Besides the SS men, over a dozen armed members of the plant security staff (Werkschutz) also guarded the prisoners.

The subcamp commandants were Erich Picklapp (dismissed from his office because of complaints by the factory management for his “unprofessional treatment of the prisoners”), followed by SS-Oberscharführer Hans Mirbeth and SS-Oberscharführer Horst Czerwinski.¹² Former prisoners remember all three and most of their subordinates as particularly brutal and ruthless. Some of the prisoner-functionaries behaved in similar fashion, especially including Michael Eschmann and Josef Kierspel, the camp elder (Lagerälteste) at the Golleschau subcamp. As in the other sections of Auschwitz, Germans were favored when picking prisoner-functionaries and sometimes Poles as well. A dozen or so Mischlinge also played a significant role, of whom several were appointed Kapos.¹³

Due to the hard labor, accidents, beating, malnutrition, and diseases, prisoners quickly lost strength and were sent to the camp infirmary as unfit to work. The infirmary directors were SDG Herbert Scherpe, succeeded by Hans Nierzwicki, Franz Woyciechowski, Herbert Jörss, and Hans Kaufmann, who, however, were not very interested in the fate of the patients. A prisoner, Dr. Henryk Rutkowski, was in charge of treatment, aided by the cement plant doctor, Dr. Erwin Paździora,¹⁴ as well as seven doctors and male nurses (all Jews).¹⁵ However, in practice they could rarely help the people under their care, not only because of the insufficient medication and medical instruments but primarily because of the shortage of beds in the ward for bedridden patients.¹⁶ Even Auschwitz’s chief garrison physician, SS-Hauptsturmführer Eduard Wirths, noted with disapprobation in a letter to the SDG at Golleschau that “the prisoners brought here in the latest patient transport were in disastrous condition. . . . When they were asked, the prisoners explained that their bandages had not been changed for 10 days.”¹⁷ In reply, Scherpe provided a series of “objective” reasons for that state of affairs, also explaining that the prisoners were unable to bathe for three weeks because of a breakdown in the water supply system.

The most seriously ill patients were successively taken to the camp hospital at Monowitz or to the BIIf hospital camp at Birkenau, where a significant percentage of them fell victim to selections for the gas chambers. The few surviving transfer lists show that in 1944 alone almost 200 sick prisoners had been taken away from the subcamp. However, the actual fig-

ure must have been considerably higher. The Golleschau subcamp prisoner record book¹⁸ contains 2,348 names, giving rise to the conclusion that since approximately 130 prisoners were killed or died at Golleschau (9 prisoners shot while escaping,¹⁹ 10 dead due to accidents, 4 suicides, 1 “shot,” and 110 who died, probably in the camp infirmary), and about 1,000 were evacuated in January 1945, the rest, being unfit for work, were sent to Monowitz or Birkenau. We also know that in the period from August 4, 1942, through March 26, 1943, the bodies of 82 Golleschau prisoners were stored at the morgue in the main camp, several of whom had been shot in circumstances not explained by the records.²⁰

The Golleschau subcamp prisoners were evacuated in three groups on January 18 and 21, 1945. The first two of them (the largest) were escorted on foot to Wodzisław Śląski, where two transports were formed: one was sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, while the other was sent to the Flossenbürg concentration camp. The last group of 100 prisoners was escorted to the Golleschau train station, where four prisoners died. The transport list showed that the transport was en route for nine days, until January 29, when the stationmaster at Zwittau notified Oskar Schindler, the director of a factory at Brünnen-Brünnlitz, that there was a freight car standing on the railway siding full of freezing and starving prisoners. Schindler ordered the freight car to be moved onto factory premises. When the door was opened, it turned out that approximately half the prisoners had already died; over a dozen others died after a few days in camp.²¹

SOURCES Published information on Golleschau can be found in Jerzy Frąckiewicz, “Podobóz Golleschau,” *ZO* 9 (1965): 103–119.

Primary source materials are available in APMO, D-Au III Golleschau/1–14; D-Au I–3a, monthly labor roster of male and female prisoners of Auschwitz concentration camp, vols. 1–8; *Zespół Oświadczenia*, 33: 102–194 (Ajzyk Szwarz); 40: 16–19 (Michał Kruczek); 15: 21–29 (Issak Grinberg); 5: 679–683 (Paweł Wałach); 5: 683a–685 (Jan Gibiec); 5: 686 (Paweł Staniczek); 5: 687–691.

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NOTES

1. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/4, p. 607, *Wochenbericht* for August 3–9, 1942, saying that 112 prisoners had been put to work; there was no such reference in the previous report for July 27–August 2, 1942. Former prisoner Michał Kruczek, APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia*, 40: 17, maintains that the first prisoners came to Golleschau in mid-July 1942.

2. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/12, pp. 72–73, 76–79, 82–84, 98–104.

3. Among them 988 Jews (APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/9, p. 94).

4. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/12, pp. 23–29.

5. There were 11 of them in the camp on December 27, 1943 (*ibid.*, p. 37).

6. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/14, p. 2.

7. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/4, p. 424.
8. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/9, p. 34.
9. One of the foremen beat prisoner Mayer Wolnerman severely and broke his glasses (APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/12, p. 15).
10. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/12, p. 12, report by Golleschau subcamp director dated April 20, 1944.
11. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/10, p. 34.
12. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/3/1, p. 24; D-Au III—Golleschau/13, p. 4. Erich Picklapp is mentioned in prisoner accounts as the camp director, although the source documents do not confirm that information.
13. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/12, p. 115, "Mischling" Kapo's request to be released from camp and assigned to the Wehrmacht; infirmary director Dr. Rutkowski was also a "Mischling" (see *ibid.*, p. 37).
14. APMO, Affidavits Collection, 5: 760, account of Erwin Paździora.
15. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/9, p. 372.
16. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/9, pp. 20–21, report by SDG Kaufmann dated December 23, 1944, saying that the infirmary was overcrowded and could not be enlarged.
17. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/9, p. 319.
18. APMO, D-Au III—Golleschau/12/2, Kommando Buch. Arbeitskommando Golleschau.
19. Reports have been preserved in the camp hospital records, saying that the bodies of 11 prisoners shot "while attempting to escape" had been delivered; 6 of them were listed in the commando's record book, which also listed 3 other prisoners whose names had not been listed in the hospital records. That shows that at least 14 fugitives had been shot at Golleschau.
20. APMO, D-Au I—5/1 and 2, morgue record book.
21. Nathan Blumental, *Dokumenty i materiały z czasów okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce* (Records and materials from the time of the German occupation of Poland) (Łódź, 1946), p. 61.

GÜNTHERGRUBE

The Günthergrube subcamp was organized in late January and early February 1944 at the Piast hard coal mine and the new Günthergrube mine under construction in the town of Łędziny (Lendzin), about 24 kilometers (15 miles) from Auschwitz. The mines, which IG Farbenindustrie AG acquired in February 1941, were to supply coal for the IG Farben factory being built in Monowice (Monowitz), near Auschwitz. Administratively, the subcamp came under the command of Auschwitz III-Monowitz.

On January 31, 1944, on the eve of Günthergrube subcamp's establishment, SS-Hauptscharführer Otto Moll, then commandant of the subcamp at the Fürstengrube mine, conducted a selection at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, and about 300 prisoners were sent to the Günthergrube subcamp.¹ The decided majority, around 95 percent, were Jews from the area of Będzin (Bendsburg), Sosnowiec (Sosnowitz), and Zawiercie, as well as from the Netherlands and France.² There were just a dozen or so non-Jewish prisoners, mainly Germans and Poles. In late 1944, larger transports were sent to the sub-

camp, consisting of Jews deported from Hungary and Jews brought to Auschwitz on July 31, 1944, from the Lublin-Majdanek subcamp in Bliżyn. At this point the population of the Günthergrube subcamp reached about 600 prisoners. There were still 586 prisoners there on January 17, 1945, a few days before it was shut down.³

Beginning on May 22, 1944, approximately 40 SS guards from the Auschwitz III Third Guard Company were assigned to the subcamp.⁴ SS-Unterscharführer Alois Wendelin Frey was the subcamp's commandant until it shut down in January 1945.⁵

The first prisoners were put into two barracks in an older camp for civilian forced laborers, called the Lager Heimat; the camp was located between the old Piast and the new Günthergrube mine.⁶ A single barbed-wire fence, with watchtowers at the corners, surrounded the rectangular compound. Prisoners only stayed at Lager Heimat for five months, that is, from February to June 1944; at that time some of the prisoners were put to work building a new subcamp near the new Günthergrube mine. The new subcamp, Lager Günther III, was designed exclusively to house concentration camp prisoners.⁷ Brick watchtowers overlooked the square compound from the corners of a 3-meter (10-foot) brick wall. Ten brick barracks were erected inside the camp, including three to house prisoners and one meant to be the prisoners' hospital. Its construction was not yet finished when the camp was shut down.

The prisoners who worked outside the camp were divided into two basic labor squads: Detachment I and Detachment II. About 120 prisoners from Detachment I worked extracting hard coal in the Piast mine.⁸ Prisoners from Detachment I were also put to work building the new Günthergrube mine, where they worked under the supervision of civilian foremen and were divided into groups according to their jobs. The prisoners assigned to Detachment II worked on the new subcamp; the work primarily included such things as leveling the site, delivering building materials, and bricklaying, electrical, plumbing, and finishing work. Only a small group of prisoners were put to work in the same camp as the prisoner-foremen, in the camp kitchen and prisoners' hospital.

We know of several prisoners who attempted escape from the Günthergrube subcamp. On March 1, 1944, Szymon Lewenstein, born in Berlin and brought to Auschwitz on August 1, 1943, by a Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) transport from Będzin, escaped when he was outside the camp working with Detachment I.⁹ In April or May 1944, a group of five Jews, most of them from Będzin, planned an escape, but the attempt miscarried (prisoners who survived assume it was because they were betrayed by a civilian foreman or SS man, whom the prisoners supposedly let in on their plans). One night SS guards surrounded the subcamp and conducted an additional roll call with their truck lights beaming. They read out the names of the five prisoners, whom they took to Auschwitz for interrogation. A dozen or so days later they were brought back to the subcamp and hanged on the assembly ground in the presence of the other prisoners, the purpose

being to terrorize the other prisoners and to prevent further escapes.¹⁰

Evacuations began in December 1944 with the removal of the Polish prisoners. The remaining prisoners stayed at Günthergrube until January 18, 1945. The prisoners were sent to work even on the day of evacuation, and only in the evening were preparations for the march hurriedly begun. Approximately 20 sick prisoners were loaded onto a truck and taken away, presumably to the neighboring Fürstengrube subcamp, where they probably then perished in barracks set afire by SS guards.

On the night of January 18, 1945, at about 10:00 P.M., all the remaining prisoners, around 560, were escorted out of camp by 40 SS men. The severe cold and icy roads made the march difficult. At daybreak the next day the Günthergrube prisoners merged with columns of Auschwitz III-Monowitz prisoners near Mikołów (Nikolai) and were sent on to the Gleiwitz III subcamp (the prisoners of that subcamp had also been evacuated that same day). Some of the Günthergrube prisoners had already died during the death march to Gleiwitz III; the survivors, as well as prisoners from other subcamps and the Beuthen (later Bytom) prison, about 2,500 persons in all, were loaded into open railway (coal) cars and shipped off on January 21, 1945. That night the train stopped at the Rzędówka (Egersfeld) train station near Rybnik, approximately 18 kilometers (11 miles) south of Gleiwitz (later Gliwice), and the prisoners were ordered to form a march column that then moved farther westward via Rybnik. SS men shot any prisoners who were unable to get out of the train. After liberation, the bodies of 331 prisoners were found at the Rzędówka train station, Kolonia Rzędówka, and vicinity. Several hundred prisoners also perished in Rybnik, the next locality on the death march route. Approximately 1,000 prisoners died along the 40-kilometer (25-mile) stretch from the Rzędówka train station to Racibórz (Ratibor), which the column of prisoners reached on January 23. It was only about 18 days after they had marched out of Rzędówka station that some of the prisoners of the column, in a state of extreme emaciation and exhaustion, reached Gross-Rosen or its subcamps in the Sudeten Mountains. Of the approximately 2,500 prisoners who left from Gleiwitz III on January 21, about 1,900 died along the march route, among them probably the majority of prisoners from Günthergrube.¹¹

On February 25, 1947, the authorities from Germany's U.S. zone handed over Alois Frey, former Günthergrube commandant, to the Polish government for the crimes he had committed at Auschwitz. On March 30, 1948, the Kraków District Court sentenced him to six years in prison for belonging to the SS and guard service; he was released on February 28, 1953. The only reason he received such a light sentence was because it was difficult to find witnesses. He was tried again in Frankfurt am Main in 1967 and acquitted.

SOURCES The following published sources contain additional information: Tadeusz Iwaszko, "Podobóz 'Günthergrube,'" *ZO* 12 (1970): 113–143. See also Jan Delowicz, *Śladem*

krwi. Marsz śmierci więźniów oświęcimskich przybyłych do Rzędówki i poprowadzonych na zachód (Katowice: Towarzystwo Opieki nad Oświęcimiem, 1995). On the Gleiwitz transport, see Andrzej Strzelecki, "Arbeitslager Gleiwitz III," *ZO* 14 (1972): 115–135. On Frey's extradition and trial, see Elżbieta Kobierska-Motas, *Ekstradycja przestępców wojennych do Polski z czterech stref okupacyjnych Niemiec 1945–1950. Część II* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 1992); and Aleksander Lasik, "Ściganie, sądenie i karanie członków oświęcimskiej załogi SS. Procedura. Zagadnienie winy i odpowiedzialności," *ZO* 21 (1995): 189–250.

APMO holds materials in the Günthergrube GmbH collection, as well as accounts of former Günthergrube subcamp prisoners.

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NOTES

1. Accounts of former prisoners Adam Laudon-Dobrzański and Józef Tabaczyński, in APMO, *Oświadczenia [Affidavits]*, vol. 44, book 123; vol. 44, book 67.
2. Account of former prisoner Adam Laudon-Dobrzański, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 44, book 125.
3. Smuggled message of the Resistance Movement at Auschwitz concentration camp, in APMO, *Materiały Ruchu Oporu*, vol. 3, book 212.
4. Kommandantur-Sonderbefehl KL Auschwitz III dated May 22, 1944, in APMO, D-AuIII-1/63.
5. Accounts of former prisoners Adam Schepp, Józef Tabaczyński, Józef Dudziak, and Adam Laudon-Dobrzański, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 31, book 105; vol. 44, books 71, 73; vol. 44, book 118; vol. 44, book 128.
6. Account of former mine worker Józef Gryc, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 44, book 136.
7. Günthergrube notes, Sozialabteilung (Social Department), 7/10/1944, in APMO, D-AuIII/Günthergrube/7, book 14.
8. Lists of prisoners sent to work in the mine, in APMO, D-AuIII-3a/Günthergrube/1.
9. Telegram about the escape of prisoner Szymon Lewenstein, 3/1/1944, in APMO, D-AuI-1/1–278, vol. 2.
10. Accounts of former prisoners Józef Tabaczyński and Adam Laudon-Dobrzański, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 44, book 67; vol. 44, book 129.
11. Account of former prisoner Adam Laudon-Dobrzański, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 44, books 130–131.

HARMENSE

In November 1940, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, mindful of securing the Auschwitz camp and SS interests, decided to create an SS estate around the camp from which the Poles would be driven and where there would be farms for raising food, animals, and fish (because of the large number of ponds in the area); he issued orders to that effect on March 1, 1941.¹ The SS established the first farm in the 39-square-kilometer (15-square-mile) "zone of interest" in

December 1941 on the site of the village of Harmęze (Harmense), which the Germans had evacuated in mid-April. The village land, totaling 286 hectares (707 acres), was incorporated into the farm, along with all the farm equipment and animals.

The Germans first established a poultry farm called, variously, Geflügelfarm, Geflügelzucht, or Geflügelhof Harmense. Initially a work detachment went out from the main camp every day to develop the site; the detachment numbered a dozen or so prisoners with various specialized skills. They demolished the old buildings, leveled the site, and built new facilities with materials salvaged from the old structures or brought from the main camp.²

By September 1941, the Harmense detachment already numbered about 50 prisoners: 6 Germans, among them 4 prisoner foremen, and 44 Poles, some of whom were put to work raising purebred poultry as well as rabbits, nutrias, and fish, while the others expanded the farm. Since the prisoners employed at Harmense had to cover over 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) each way every day, and since winter was approaching and the days were growing shorter, the camp authorities decided to move the detachment to Harmense permanently. The move was carried out on December 8, 1941, and thus the subcamp was established.³

The original group of prisoners, as well as the women prisoners who arrived from Auschwitz II-Birkenau in June 1942, lived in farmhouses and the former schoolhouse. Living conditions varied somewhat from building to building but in general were better than in the main camp. Sanitary arrangements were primitive—most of the buildings had no plumbing—and the bedding was by no means comfortable, but in terms of food, especially, the prisoners were relatively fortunate. Lunch came from the main camp, while breakfast and supper were prepared on-site. The detachment that worked on the fish farm also received an extra ration twice a week: for example, one loaf of bread for eight prisoners plus a piece of horse sausage, jam, or cheese. Most important, the prisoners' work gave them opportunities to "organize" additional food from the farm; similar proclivities on the part of the SS guards made this task somewhat easier.

The farm administration divided the prisoners into four detachments: farm, poultry farm, rabbit farm (which had been moved from the main camp when the prisoners moved permanently to Harmense), and fish farm. One prisoner foreman supervised each detachment. The farm detachment, which had two cows and six horses, transported construction materials, peat for the rabbits, and food and clothing from the main camp, in addition to working the fields.⁴

Work in the fish farming detachment consisted of stocking the ponds and feeding the fish, as well as catching and sorting them. In the winter, the prisoners cleared the snow from the ponds and made air holes in the ice. All fish farming experiments were done in a specially made ichthyological laboratory under the direction of German prisoner Dr. Diethelm Scheer, an ichthyologist by profession. There they tested the soil, water plants, microorganisms, and fish diseases and kept pond

water temperature and soil temperature charts. The laboratory was well equipped with necessary instruments, laboratory glass, and three microscopes.⁵ In 1941, human ashes brought from Crematorium No. 1 at the main camp were dumped into the fishponds.

SS-Oberscharführer Georg Paul Sauer, born October 18, 1911, in the town of Milicz in Lower Silesia, was the commandant of the fish farm, and after he left for the Babitz subcamp, SS-Unterscharführer Rudolf Martin took over the position.⁶

Of the women moved to Harmense in June 1942, some had undergone training in poultry farming earlier, at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Among them were Poles, Slovak Jews, and Germans. The detachment numbered 50 female prisoners in October 1942, and the population remained the same throughout the subcamp's existence. Some of the women were put to work raising the birds, while the others worked to expand the farm, that is, leveling the terrain, making a fowl run for the chickens, and so on.

At Harmense they raised purebred poultry: chickens (about 2,000), ducks (about 1,000), geese (about 300), and turkeys (about 500). The chickens were mainly raised for their eggs; the farm also included a hatchery that produced 100,000 chicks at a time. Aside from the poultry farming, 11 women prisoners were put to work raising rabbits for their fur and meat. Breeding of partridge, nutria, and pedigree dogs—Great Danes—began in Harmense at the end of 1943.⁷

With such extensive animal breeding, Harmense's male and female prisoners (totaling 106 people on March 23, 1944) were unable to operate the entire farm, so numerous detachments came in to help daily from Auschwitz I and Birkenau.

SS-Unterscharführer Bernhard Glaue, born November 20, 1911, in Diepolz, was the commandant of the subcamp, as well as of the farm, until April 1943. When he was transferred to the Budy subcamp on April 13, SS-Rottenführer Xaver Franz Eidenschinkt became commandant. Marie Rendel was in charge of the women's work. The SS staff included Germans; Volksdeutsche (ethnic Germans) from Slovakia, Bohemia, and Hungary; and in the camp's final phase, convalescent soldiers from the Wehrmacht, who were inducted into the SS after several weeks of training. The camp was frequently inspected by SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr. Joachim Caesar, the commandant of all the Auschwitz camp farms. Himmler also visited the farm on July 17, 1942.

A total of two escapes from the Harmense camp were reported, both organized by Polish prisoners. On May 16, 1942, two male prisoners escaped successfully. Three male prisoners escaped on March 8, 1943, but in that instance, they were all caught and killed.

In the late summer of 1943, the men from Harmense were moved to the nearby subcamp in Budy, from where they continued to walk to work in Harmense under SS escort. The women stayed at Harmense until the camp was evacuated. On January 18, 1945, they and the prisoners from the Birkenau

women's camp were evacuated on foot to Wodzisław Śląski (Loslau), from where they were transported to Bergen-Belsen in cattle cars. The poultry hatchery equipment was also loaded onto carts that day and sent to Ravensbrück with several female prisoners.

There is no record that any of the Harmense camp personnel were tried after the war.

SOURCES Information on Harmense may be found in Anna Zięba, "Geflügelfarm Harmense' Farma hodowlana Harmęże," *ZO* 11 (1969): 37–67 (German version: Die "Geflügelfarm Harmense," *HvA* 11 [1970]: 38–72).

Primary sources are available in APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia*, accounts by former prisoners Alojzy Drzazga, Danuta Drzazga, Jan Jakub Szegidewicz, Jadwiga Rumianowska, Ryszard Nalewajko, Izydor Kornacki, Aleksander Kalczyński, Antonina Kozubek, Waleria Lang, Karol Lang, and Janina Perun; *Zespół Proces Hössa*; *Zespół Opracowania*; files on Auschwitz concentration camp staff members from 1940 to 1945, compiled by Dr. Aleksander Lasik.

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trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, *Zespół Proces Hössa* (Höss Trial Collection), 21: 31–32.
2. APMO, Collection of testimonies, t.33, s.54, statement of former inmate Alojzy Drzazga.
3. APMO, Collection of testimonies, t.86, s.75, statement of former inmate Alojzy Drzazga.
4. APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia*, 45: 38–39, account of former prisoner Jan Jakub Szegidewicz.
5. APMO, Collection of testimonies, t.50, s.12, statement of former inmate Aleksander Kalczyński.
6. *Ibid.*, 50: 11.
7. APMO, Collection of testimonies, t.33, s.109–111, statement of former inmate Antonina Kozubek.

HINDENBURG

During World War II, the Donnersmarckhütte steel mill in the city of Hindenburg (later Zabrze) belonged to Vereinigte Oberschlesische Hüttenwerke AG (Oberhütten or VOH), as it had before the war—but by this time the steel mill had converted its output over to military needs. And because so many German workers had been called into the armed forces, the firm brought in forced laborers and prisoners of war (POWs) to work at the mill.

In early August 1944, approximately 400 female prisoners from the Auschwitz concentration camp were sent to Donnersmarckhütte; 70 male prisoners joined them in the late fall of that year. The barracks allocated to them were located on the steel mill grounds near Foundries 3 and 4.

The subcamp commandant was SS-Unterscharführer Adolf Taube, former muster officer at the Birkenau women's camp, who was especially cruel toward the female prisoners.

One of the female SS overseers was Joanna Bormann, who was previously the commandant of the Babitz subcamp and who was as evil and as cruel as Taube.

Over the subcamp's more than five-month existence, the number of women living there increased to 471. The decided majority of them were Polish Jews selected from among the female prisoners brought to the Auschwitz concentration camp on July 31, 1944, in Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) transports from Radom and Bliżyn, marked with numbers from A-14394 to A-16456. The rest were Czech and Slovak Jews or Gypsies. Most of them came from Jewish intellectual communities and were between 17 and 30 years old.

The subcamp's male Jewish prisoners had been brought to the Auschwitz concentration camp in RSHA transports from the Theresienstadt ghetto camp in early October 1944. They were marked with numbers from B-12997 to B-13065.

Most of the female prisoners were put to work in the steel mill's foundries, manufacturing ammunition, primarily casting bullets, grenade cores, and rings and parts for Luftwaffe weaponry. Several dozen women prisoners worked welding and assembling aerial bomb transport carriages as well as in the machine department, operating the machines and overhead cranes for lifting loads.

SS men and Wehrmacht soldiers escorted the women prisoners to work in the steel mill's respective departments and supervised them during work along with female prisoners serving as foremen. German foremen and skilled workers from Hindenburg also supervised how prisoners did their assigned jobs. Overseer Bormann would come with her dog for inspections to the steel mill departments where the women prisoners worked, as did commandant Taube.

Sunday was also a workday for most of the female prisoners.

According to the accounts of former female prisoners and steel mill employees, Hindenburg subcamp's male prisoners were most probably put to work in the coking plant and Concordia mine.

The living conditions of the Hindenburg subcamp prisoners were similar to those existing at the other camps of the Auschwitz concentration camp system. They lived in wooden barracks, wore camp clothing (stripes), and were limited to a starvation diet. Being Jews, they were not allowed to receive food packages. Sometimes they would receive some food assistance from some of the workers employed at the Hindenburg steel mill who were kindly disposed toward them.

Strict discipline prevailed in the camp, and women prisoners were summarily punished for any small offense or for no reason at all, with punitive exercises, kneeling, and most frequently, beating.

The subcamp was inspected on several occasions by SS men from Auschwitz. They conducted selections among the female prisoners (chiefly in the infirmary), in consequence of which at least several seriously ill women were taken away to Birkenau.

The subcamp was shut down on January 19, 1945. In the evening the women prisoners were escorted on foot to the

Auschwitz Gleiwitz II subcamp, where they were loaded onto coal cars and moved to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Due to the enormous overcrowding at that camp, they were not admitted there but were sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The trip took about two weeks, during which the women received little or no food and quenched their thirst with the snow falling into the train cars. Because of the terrible conditions prevailing at Bergen-Belsen in every respect, and the terrific overcrowding and typhus epidemic spreading there, few women lived to see the moment of liberation.

The Hindenburg subcamp male prisoners were also escorted to Gleiwitz II on January 19, 1945. On January 21, they were loaded into open freight cars (along with the prisoners from Gleiwitz II, Bobrek, and Monowitz subcamps who were evacuated there) and sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Joanna Bormann, who also served at the Babitz and Budy subcamps before coming to Hindenburg, was sentenced to death in 1945 in Lüneburg, in the Bergen-Belsen trial, and ultimately executed.

SOURCES Information on the Hindenburg subcamp may be found in Irena Strzelecka, "Podobóz 'Hindenburg,'" *ZO* 11 (1969): 119–135 (German version: "Das Nebenlager 'Hindenburg,'" *HvA* 11 [1970]: 129–147).

Archival materials are available in APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of former female prisoners, including Helena Adler and Berta Szachowska as well as accounts of Zabrze (Donnersmarckhütte) steel mill employees Karol Adamoszek, Wilhelm Fuchs, Eryk Wróbklik, and others.

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HOHENLINDE [AKA HUBERTUSHÜTTE]

The Hohenlinde subcamp was established in December 1944 on the initiative of the management of the Hubertus steel mill in the Beuthen (Bytom) suburb of Hohenlinde (Łagiewniki), owned by Berghütte. In the face of a shortage of labor needed to increase arms production, in September of that year the steel mill's management asked the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) to allocate 1,000 prisoners from Auschwitz for work in the mill.

On December 20, 1944, a group of 200 Jewish prisoners brought to Auschwitz in Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) transports in 1943 and 1944 were sent to Łagiewniki (some of them were marked with numbers ranging from 152060 to 199870). Because construction of the subcamp had not yet been completed, they were temporarily placed in a separate section of the camp for foreign laborers (*Fremdarbeiterlager*) and soon moved to barracks that had earlier been occupied by Italian prisoners. The subcamp's population on the eve of liberation was 202 prisoners.

The subcamp's commandant was SS-Unterscharführer Eckhardt, who had about 40 SS men under him.

Until mid-January 1945, the subcamp management evidently did not even consider the possibility of the German army's defeat, nor the impending evacuation, since it was waiting for another transport of 800 prisoners to arrive. This is proven by surviving orders for clothing, wooden shoes, and barracks furnishings that the subcamp management was sending to the steel mill management.

The prisoners were put to work in different sections of the steel mill doing the hardest and dirtiest labor (such as in the coking plant loading coke, loading and unloading gravel, etc.). Most of the prisoners were assigned to construct new buildings where production was to be started up just for the army. Civilian and forced laborers employed in sections where prisoners worked were warned that the prisoners were dangerous criminals and that anyone communicating with them could expect to be sent to Auschwitz.

On the night of January 18–19, 1945, the subcamp management received the order to evacuate. On January 19, SS men marched 202 prisoners from Łagiewniki on foot; only 58 of them reached the Leitmeritz camp in Litoměřice, Bohemia (a subcamp of the Flossenbürg concentration camp) in March 1945. An SS man's report of the evacuation dated March 12, 1945, said: "Departure ensued with 202 prisoners; 144 prisoners died under way, and this was reported periodically to the next state police station."¹

SOURCES Published sources on the Hohenlinde subcamp include Irena Strzelecka, "Podobóz 'Hubertushütte' (Arbeitslager Hohenlinde)," *ZO* 12 (1970): 159–170 (German version: "Das Nebenlager 'Hubertushütte' (Arbeitslager Hohenlinde)," *HvA* 12 [1971]: 161–173).

Archival records on this camp are available in APKat, Zespół Berghütte sygn. 2224; APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts of inhabitants of Łagiewniki and vicinity: Jan Jakielko (or Jakielek), Bruno Kruszko (Kruszka), and others.

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NOTE

1. Photocopy of this report in APMO, Sygn. D-Floss/6 różne (nr inwentarza 170052).

JANINAGRUBE [AKA JOHANNAGRUBE, GUTE HOFFNUNGSGRUBE]

The town of Libiąż Mały, which was named Liebenzberg during the occupation, was about 18 kilometers (11.2 miles) from Auschwitz and about 6.5 kilometers (4 miles) from the city of Chrzanów (Krenau). Within the limits of Libiąż is the Janina hard coal mine, which changed names three times during the Nazi occupation: Janinagrube, Johannagrube, and Gute Hoffnungsgrube. In 1943, IG Farbenindustrie acquired the mine in order to supply coal to its chemical factory at Monowitz.¹

A camp for British prisoners of war (POWs) occupied a site close to the mine, but the POWs' productivity was low,

so IG Farbenindustrie pressed to have prisoners from Auschwitz sent to the camp. On July 16, 1943, Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss and IG Farbenindustrie representatives Dürrfeld and Düllberg conducted an inspection and determined that 300 Auschwitz prisoners should replace the 150 British POWs initially and that the camp would be expanded to accommodate 900 prisoners by the end of 1943. The British POWs were taken away from Libiąż on August 20, 1943.²

The Auschwitz subcamp Janinagrube was established on September 4, 1943, when the first transport of approximately 300 prisoners arrived. The largest portion of the transport, about 250 people, consisted of Polish Jews brought to Auschwitz on August 27–28, 1943, who received camp numbers in the 140000 to 142000 series.³ Polish and German prisoners also arrived in that transport. Several hundred more prisoners arrived in 1944, although the exact numbers are impossible to determine.

The following table is based on surviving SS-Hygiene Institute records as well as camp resistance materials and shows the following Janinagrube prisoner population at different dates:⁴

<i>Date</i>	<i>Prisoners</i>
Jan. 20, 1944	437
Feb. 29, 1944	597
Nov. 14, 1944	877
Jan. 17, 1945	857

Approximately 80 percent of Janinagrube's prisoners were Jews from France, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia (Theresienstadt), and Poland. The other 20 percent included Poles, Russians, and Germans.

Some 250 prisoners of non-Jewish descent were taken away from Janinagrube in late 1944. They were moved to Monowitz and then to Birkenau, and they departed in evacuation transports. The prisoner population did not change significantly between November 1944 and January 1945, however, which indicates that the SS sent in Jewish prisoners to replace the non-Jews they had evacuated.

One two-level building from the mine's Obieżowa housing camp was included in the subcamp; approximately 400 prisoners lived in it. The subcamp also had three living barracks, with 150 to 200 prisoners in each. The kitchen, camp hospital, washroom, and latrine were in separate barracks. A double row of electrified barbed wire ringed the camp. An SS guardhouse stood next to the gate, and half of the ground floor in the Obieżowa housing camp building, which bordered on the camp fence, was allocated for living quarters for the SS men and their families.

A small group of prisoners, consisting of professional bricklayers, carpenters, and metalworkers, which arrived at Janinagrube in the first transport on September 4, 1943, went to work immediately to expand the subcamp; it was called the camp detachment.

The camp detachment aside, all the other prisoners were assigned to work underground in the Janinagrube mine on September 6, 1943. The prisoners were put to work in the Wiktor (Squad I and II), Aleksander (Squad III and IV), and Zygmunt (Squad V and VI) beds. Some prisoners also worked in the squad that timbered the mine galleries or as help in operating electrical and motorized machines. A few worked on the mine surface at what was called the "yard," sorting the wood for timbering the mine galleries. At a later time, prisoners were also put to work in the machine repair shops and expanding the mine's railway tracks.

The prisoners who worked underground operated in three shifts—6:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M., 2:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M., 10:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M.—mining and moving coal. They often stood up to their waist in water or lay in the galleries for hours at a time in places where they could not assume any other position. Their strength faded quickly because of the unhealthy working conditions, the lack of protective clothing or proper food, and abuse by the supervisors. According to prisoner accounts, four to six weeks was the longest one could do mining work, even if one avoided accidents, which were common. Many prisoners suffered a variety of fractures and internal injuries. Losses were very great; most of the prisoners died, and those who did not were often found to be unfit for work during a selection at the subcamp hospital, which was equivalent to the death sentence, in the prisoners' opinion.

In the autumn of 1944, 70 persons were chosen from the Janinagrube prisoners for a detachment called the arms detail (Wehrkommando). They worked at the mine's railroad siding located next to the Leśniowa housing camp. Railway cars loaded with such ammunition as mines, torpedoes, and *Panzerfäuste* (rocket-propelled antitank grenades) were rolled onto the siding, where prisoners reloaded the ammunition onto trucks. The ammunition was hauled to the forest detail (Waldkommando) located in the forest near Libiąż.

During the day, the prisoners received less than 0.25 kilograms (8.8 ounces) of bread, along with some margarine, jam, or sausage (it was always just one supplement of a few grams), approximately 1 quart of black coffee, and the same amount of soup made of potatoes, carrots, or rutabaga. Sometimes noodles or beans were added to the soup; sometimes a piece of meat was added as well. Such food rations, combined with the very hard mining labor, brought on a quick loss of strength and consequent starvation.

The Janinagrube subcamp hospital was in a separate barrack, where there was a hospital room for a dozen or so patients as well as a dispensary and facilities for dental assistance. The chief orderly was SS-Oberscharführer Paul Ludwig, followed by SS-Sturmmann Johan Volland. Prisoners Erich Orlik and Walter Loebner, from Czechoslovakia, were the camp doctors.⁵ Due to the large number of sick prisoners, the hospital suffered a constant lack of drugs. Besides illnesses caused by mining accidents, the most frequently encountered diseases were swelling from starvation, tuberculosis, typhus,

ulcerations, phlegmon, and scurvy. Despite their sickness, some prisoners did not report to the hospital because of the selections conducted among patients. Prisoners who were selected were taken to Monowitz or Birkenau by truck transport. Once a week the bodies of dead prisoners were also taken to Auschwitz.

The commandants of the Janinagrube subcamp were SS-Unterscharführer Franz Baumgartner (September 1943 to March 1944), SS-Oberscharführer Herman Kleemann (March to September 1944), and SS-Unterscharführer Rudolf Kamieniczny (September 1944 to January 18, 1945).⁶

The guards were SS men from the Third Guard Company under the Monowitz guard battalion. There was a total of about 50 SS men at the subcamp.

There were 857 prisoners at the last roll call at the Janinagrube subcamp on January 17, 1945. The next day, approximately 800 prisoners were escorted out of the subcamp on a journey on foot to the Gross-Rosen camp. The march lasted about 18 days. According to subcamp doctor Orlik, approximately 200 prisoners reached Gross-Rosen in a state of extreme exhaustion.

Approximately 60 seriously ill prisoners who were not evacuated remained at the Janinagrube subcamp. Beginning with liberation day, January 25, 1945, the people of Libiąż gave help to the surviving prisoners.

SOURCES Information on this camp exists in the following works: Aleksander Lasik, *Zaloga SS w KL Auschwitz w latach 1940–1945* (Bydgoszcz, 1994); Emeryka Iwaszko, "Podobóz Janinagrube," *ZO 10* (1967): 59–82; Danuta Czech, *Kalendarz wydarzeń obozowych* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz National Museum, 1992), pp. 502–503.

The following records contain material on this camp: The IG Farben Trial (Case VIII: *USA v. Carl Krauch, et al.*), Prosecution Document Books 80 and 81, available in Poland at IPN; the Trial of Gerhard Maurer, vol. 7; records of the Janinagrube mine in Libiąż, vol.1–16-D-Au III (Janinagrube); and accounts of former Janinagrube prisoners Eugeniusz Ciećkiewicz, Jan Mydlarczyk, Zygmunt Szwejca, and Kazimierz Ślimak.

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NOTES

1. NI-10170, in IG Farben Trial, Pros. Doc. Bk., 81: 1.
2. Letter of August 11, 1943, from the command of the English prisoners of war to the administration of the Janinagrube mine, NI-10525, in IG Farben Trial, Pros. Doc. Bk., 81: 26.
3. Record of the investigation of Janinagrube documents found after the war in the archive of the "Janina" mine, APMO.
4. Materials of the camp Resistance Movement, 2: 60; 3: 208; 7: 475; and documents of the SS-Hygiene Institute, Binder 55/170–185 (APMO).
5. APMO, Maurer Trial—record group number Dpr. Mau./12^a, NI 12385, p. 244; NI 11652, p. 261.
6. Reports of former Janinagrube prisoners Eugeniusz Ciećkiewicz and Kazimierz Ślimak (APMO).

JAWISCHOWITZ

In the first half of 1942, the German government concern Reichswerke Hermann Göring (RWHG) entered into a contract with the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA), under which the Auschwitz concentration camp was to provide 6,000 prisoners to the Brzeszcze-Jawiszowice (Jawischowitz) hard coal mine, which they owned. The mine authorities and the management of Auschwitz prepared barracks in which to put the prisoners, and the SS guarded the buildings.

The first transport of 150 Jewish prisoners arrived on August 15, 1942. The subcamp's population grew steadily and reached approximately 2,500 prisoners in mid-1944; 1,988 were there on January 17, 1945. Most of the prisoners were Jews from Poland and Western Europe, while Poles, Russians, and Germans made up most of the others.

Administratively, the Jawischowitz subcamp was under the command of the main camp at Auschwitz until November 22, 1943; after that it came under Auschwitz III-Monowitz.

SS-Unterscharführer Wilhelm Kowol, born May 13, 1904, in Handorf, was the commandant for two years; he also served at Flossenbürg and at Auschwitz and its Trzebinia subcamp. SS-Hauptscharführer Josef Remmele, born in Horgau on March 3, 1903, took Kowol's place in July 1944 and remained in command until the camp shut down; he had already served at Dachau, Auschwitz, and the Eintrachthütte subcamp. Both men were brutal; Kowol would get drunk and shoot at prisoners, and he also participated in selections. As a guard force, the commandants controlled at least 70 SS men at the turn of the year 1943–1944.

Jawischowitz was infamous among Auschwitz prisoners. Working conditions were extremely hard, and mortality was high. The living barracks were overcrowded. The portions of food issued to prisoners were small and low in calories. Ravenous prisoners often searched for food in the camp garbage heaps or picked up scraps thrown away by passersby on the route to work. There were times when they would pick the grass and eat it while waiting at the mine yard for the march out to camp. The SS men beat them for that.

The camp hospital mainly contained prisoners who had been injured on the job, as well as those suffering from starvation, diarrhea, ulcerations, pneumonia, and typhus. Every few weeks or so, SS doctors would conduct selections in the sickroom. Prisoners they found unfit for work—sometimes over a hundred at a time—went to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, where most died in the gas chambers, while others received phenol injections in the heart. SS doctor Horst Fischer usually conducted the selections, and mine director Otto Heine also participated in one. From the end of October 1942 through December 1944, at least 1,800 prisoners were sent back to Auschwitz. New transports replenished the camp population. The bodies of murdered prisoners or those who had died of hunger and overwork were also trucked away, to the crematoriums at Birkenau.

Some prisoners "went to the wires," meaning they committed suicide by throwing themselves on the subcamp's electrified fence.

Eighty percent of Jawischowitz prisoners worked in the mine, most of them underground, the rest on the surface. Underground they dug, loaded, and hauled coal; drove and shored up new tunnels; and reclaimed shoring materials from cave-ins. Mine employees and prisoner foremen, mostly German, supervised the work; the SS men went below only to make spot inspections. With few exceptions, the German supervisors were hostile toward the prisoners, suspecting them of being averse to work and prone to sabotage. Some of them beat the prisoners under any pretext or without any reason at all. In contrast, almost all the Polish foremen tried to make the work easier for the prisoners, despite the danger of punishment.

Deaths and injuries occurred frequently in the mines, quite aside from the acts that supervisors perpetrated. Cave-ins and other accidents were common. Mentally broken prisoners also committed suicide, sometimes by throwing themselves under the locomotives traveling through the galleries. Prisoners often returned to camp with bodies of comrades on their shoulders.

On the surface, in what was called the "yard," several dozen to well over a hundred prisoners were generally put to work per month unloading and transporting wood, rails, and other materials needed to do the work underground, cleaning the mine grounds, sorting coal, or performing work at similar workstations. Several dozen young Hungarian Jews worked in the sorting plant at Brzeszcze in 1944, including some children under 14 years old.

Most prisoners who worked above ground worked building the Andreas Electric Power Plant in Brzeszcze and expanding various types of mine structures at Jawischowitz. The administration of RWHG had contracted construction work to the following companies: Franz Galehr, Fiebig, Gleitbau Klotz & Co. (Eisenbetonbau Hoch u. Tiefbau) Berlin, Hans-Schmidt (Anschlussgleisbau) Hannover, Hinz und Köhring, Kreuz & Loesch Oppeln, Kurt Hein, Norddeutsche Hoch u. Tiefbau, and Riedel & Sohn (Eisenbeton u. Hochbau) Bielitz. In consultation with the Auschwitz authorities, the mine leased prisoner labor to those companies. Almost all the foregoing companies were under the German Mine and Steelmill Construction Company, Deutsche Bergwerke- und Hüttenbau Gesellschaft (DBHG).

On the surface, besides SS men, the prisoners were supervised by civilian foremen, Wehrmacht soldiers, plant guards (Werkschutz), and members of the volunteer auxiliary guard service (Hilfswachmannschaft). Prisoners were treated so badly at the electric plant construction site that many called the place the "death trap."

Both inside Jawischowitz as well as at their work sites, prisoners tried to improve their situation as best they could. Some of them "appropriated" blankets, comforters, shoes, and other such items at the subcamp, smuggled them into the mine, and exchanged them with Polish workers for food products, primarily bread, fat, and saccharine. In the winter,

when there was not enough fuel to heat the barracks rooms, prisoners would bring pieces of coal from the mine in their pockets or up their sleeves. Some prisoners put to work in the winter at construction sites tried to protect themselves from the cold and wind by putting on what were called "undershirts" under their clothes, meaning sheets from paper cement sacks torn in advance. Not infrequently, the SS men would discover these types of illegal action by prisoners and severely punish them.

Prisoner underground units operated at Jawischowitz in 1943 and 1944, headed by several dozen Austrian, German, Polish, and Russian prisoners. Well over 100 prisoners cooperated with them. In consultation with members of underground organizations at Auschwitz and members of the Polish Socialist Party's combat group operating at Brzeszcze-Jawiszowice, they conducted sabotage operations in the mine, tried to help sick prisoners as well as they could, took care of the young, and prepared escapes. Several prisoners escaped successfully with help from the inhabitants of Brzeszcze, Jawiszowice, and nearby areas, not only Polish Socialist Party (PPS) activists but also members of the Home Army (AK), Polish Workers Party (PPR), Peasant Battalions (B.Ch.), as well as people who did not belong to any underground organizations, despite the risk to their lives. Unsuccessful escapes often led to the deaths of both the escapee and those who rendered assistance.

In the final months of 1944, the SS men sent almost all the Poles as well as some of the Russians and Germans from Jawischowitz to Mauthausen and Buchenwald. The subcamp's final evacuation was in January 1945; 1,948 prisoners were joined to the prisoner columns evacuated from Birkenau. The SS men shot prisoners who could not keep up with the march. Some of the Jawischowitz subcamp prisoners were sent to Mauthausen and some to Buchenwald and its subcamps.

Josef Remmele was tried by an Allied court in West Germany and executed. There is no record that Wilhelm Kowol was ever tried.

SOURCES Several publications contain information on Jawischowitz: Natan Żelechower, "Siedem obozów," *BŻIH* 68 (1968): 5–68; Andrzej Strzelecki, "Podobóz Jawischowitz," *ZO* 15 (1974): 171–234 (German version: "Das Nebenlager Jawischowitz," *HvA* 15 [1975]: 183–250); Andrzej Strzelecki and Henryk Świebicki, *Brzeszcze Jawiszowice 1939–1945* (Brzeszcze 1983, commemorative pamphlet); Moshé and Elie Garbarz, *Un survivant Pologne 1913–1929. Paris 1929–1941. Auschwitz-Birkenau. Jawischowitz-Buchenwald 1942–1945* (Paris: Plon, 1984). The book by Andrzej Strzelecki, *Marsz śmierci. Przewodnik po trasie Oświęcim-Wodzisław Śląski* (Katowice: Towarzystwo Opieki nad Oświęcimiem, 1989), pp. 14–17, offers information on the Jawischowitz subcamp and a commemoration of its victims; also see Strzelecki, *The Evacuation, Dismantling and Liberation of the KL Auschwitz* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz State Museum, 2001), pp. 178–181. For survivor accounts, see Henri Moraud, ed., *Jawischowitz une annexe d'Auschwitz* (Paris: Amicale d'Auschwitz, section Jawischowitz, 1985); Erwin R. Tichauer, *Totenköpf und Zebrakleid. Ein Berliner Jude in Auschwitz. Bearbeitet und mit einem Nachwort*

versehen von Jürgen Matthäus (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2000).

The following archival collections contain relevant documents: APMO, Zespół Akta kopalni Brzeszcze; Zespół Oświadczenia, accounts by former prisoners Leon Błoński, Jan Husarek, Józef Czechowski, Kazimierz Misiewicz, Zbigniew Kaźmierczak, Zygmunt Koehler, Jakub Sekuła, Kazimierz Sztemberg, Tomasz Stokłosa, Witold Tokarz, and others; accounts by residents of Brzeszcze-Jawiszowice and vicinity Wincenty Fornal, Emilia Klimczyk, Janina Pytlik-Bałuk, Franciszek Sobik, Leopold Szczepański, Aleksander Zachara, and others.

Andrzej Strzelecki
trans. Gerard Majka

KATTOWITZ

The Gestapo headquarters in Kattowitz (Katowice) deployed 10 Auschwitz prisoners in Special Detachment (Sonderkommando) Kattowitz from January 1944 to January 1945. Located in the capital of *Gau* (Nazi Party province) Ostoberschlesien (Śląsk) at Strasse der SA 49 (after 1945, Ulica Powstańców 31), the headquarters had a small jail. The Sonderkommando erected air-raid shelters and barracks and may also have conducted bomb disposal operations (*Bombenbeseitigung*). The establishment of U.S. air bases in Italy in the fall of 1943 brought southwestern Poland within bombing range, which accounted for the timing of the Sonderkommando's formation, as well as for the much larger detachments performing similar tasks elsewhere at Auschwitz.

SOURCES This entry is based partly upon Irena Strzelecka and Piotr Setkiewicz, "The Construction, Expansion and Development of the Camp and Its Branches," in *The Establishment and Organization of the Camp*, by Aleksander Lasik et al., vol. 1 of *Auschwitz, 1940–1945: Central Issues in the History of the Camp*, ed. Waclaw Długoborski and Franciszek Piper, trans. William Brand, 5 vols. (Oświęcim: APMO, 2000), p. 132. Additional information about Sonderkommando Kattowitz can be found at "Sub-Camps of Auschwitz Concentration Camp," www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl. For the address of the Kattowitz Gestapo, and a photograph of the building taken in 1997, see Adolf Diamant, *Gestapochef Thümmler: Verbrechen in Chemnitz, Kattowitz und Auschwitz; Die steile Karriere eines Handlangers der nationalsozialistischen Morde und Vergehen gegen die Menschlichkeit* (Chemnitz: Heimatland Sachsen, 1999). This camp is listed in ITS, *Verzeichnis der Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer SS (1933–1945)*, 2 vols. (Arolsen, 1979), 1: 23.

There are no specific primary source collections for this camp.

Joseph Robert White

KOBIER

Kobier was located in a forest complex 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) north of Pszczyna (Pless) and approximately 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) west of Auschwitz. The exact date when

this Auschwitz subcamp was established is uncertain. The name first appears in a dispatch order (*Fabrbefehl*) dated September 23, 1942; a five-ton truck was sent to the village of Kobier (Kobiór) that day to deliver wood to the camp, but it is not known whether there were prisoners there already.¹ The few surviving prisoner accounts say that the subcamp was in existence in the autumn (perhaps as early as October) of 1942 and certainly on December 19, when a truck with supplies for the prisoners was sent to Kobier.² Another probable piece of evidence that a subcamp existed at Kobier is a reference in an order of Auschwitz concentration camp headquarters dated November 2, 1942, which says that trips by SS men to the "Pszczyna forest commandos" (Plesser Forstkommandos) were to be treated as trips outside the camp's "Zone of Interest" (*Interessengebiet*).³

In all likelihood, civilian workers hired by the Pszczyna Forest Management Agency (Oberforstamt Pless) appeared in Kobier in autumn 1942; they began building barracks and a fence. The last barrack (for the SS men) was erected only in late January 1943.⁴ The camp was rectangular and approximately 30×40 meters (98×131 feet) in area. It was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence running along cement posts. Make-shift watchtowers were put up at the outside corners of the fence. The first of three barracks inside the camp, to the right of the entrance gate, housed office space for the SS men, as well as the kitchen and food storeroom. Prisoners lived in the barrack opposite the gate; it contained a separate space housing a readily accessible storeroom for the subcamp's equipment. The third barrack, to the left of the entrance gate, also housed prisoners, as well as the infirmary and dentist's office. The barracks had windows; bunk beds, tables, and benches were set up in them. Heat was provided by quite efficient iron stoves, on which the prisoners attempted to dry their wet clothing. There was also a small toilet barrack with a shower near the camp entrance, and the well.⁵

There were approximately 150 prisoners in the camp, mostly Jews, mainly Polish, French, Belgian, and Czech, and several non-Jewish Germans, Poles, and Russians.⁶ The German prisoners assumed the most important functions: the camp elder (*Lagerälteste*) was Alfred van Hofe, the camp Kapo (*Lagerkapo*) was Theo and was from Hamburg, and the kitchen Kapo was Rudolf Navratil; a few Poles were also put to work in the camp in relatively easier jobs.

The largest Kommando was named "Woodcutter" (*Holz-fäller*), in which prisoners, mainly Jews, were put to work felling trees in the forest and preparing the trunks for further processing. The wood, especially branches and waste material, was used to burn the bodies of Holocaust victims in ditches and heaps at the Birkenau camp. The tree trunks were taken away to sawmills, where they were made into props to support the ceilings in mines. In the spring and summer of 1943, most of the prisoners were sent to remove trees brought down by wind and frost. The work was organized as follows: first a rectangle was marked out along the existing cuttings and clearings so that the respective guards would be able to see each other. Therefore, the prisoners first had to remove

any branches blocking the line of sight along the sides of the rectangle. Next, the SS men took up positions along the clearings that had been marked out, and the prisoners set about cutting down the trees with saws and axes, removing branches, and carrying the wood to spots from where it could be carted away. Prisoners were also frequently put to work cleaning and repairing forest roads so that carts and trucks could get in.

For several weeks there was also a demolition detachment (Abbruchkommando) of approximately 20 prisoners at Kobier; it was assigned to dismantle old houses and farm buildings in the vicinity. Its major job was to reclaim bricks, which were cleaned of any remaining mortar and stacked in piles. Some prisoners also worked sporadically digging ditches and spreading lime on local meadows.

The subcamp's staff numbered approximately 20 SS men. SS-Unterscharführer Franz Baumgartner held the post of commander.⁷ There are differing accounts about him; some say he behaved decently toward the prisoners, while other witnesses say the opposite, that he mistreated the prisoners and tolerated numerous incidents of his guards shooting prisoners for ostensibly trying to escape.⁸ At least once he took the side of a Polish prisoner who had gotten into a conflict with Lagerältester van Hofe. Taking the opportunity, both Poles and Jews testified that van Hofe had helped SS men arrange prisoner "escapes" to give the SS men a pretext to use their weapons, after which he would drink alcohol with them. Baumgartner then held an inquiry, and the Lagerältester was thus stripped of his function and assigned to a penal company.⁹ How many prisoners fell victim to such provocations is not known; there were presumably at least three of them. The bodies of prisoners who were shot or died in the subcamp were sent to the morgue at the parent camp; the first time was February 11, 1943, when the body of a Soviet prisoner was brought there, and the last time was on June 28. In that period, a total of 21 bodies from Kobier were delivered to the morgue at Auschwitz I, although it is uncertain whether that included all the subcamp's fatalities.¹⁰

The lives of the subcamp's prisoners were not much different than the familiar drill at Auschwitz I or Birkenau. The prisoners worked 6 days a week, often in pouring rain or low temperatures. The food, initially delivered from the parent camp, and later prepared on the premises, was not different in quality than the food issued in other parts of the Auschwitz complex. Similarly, the clothing was bad and worn, especially the uncomfortable footwear that injured the feet. Prisoners who were sick or had been injured at work reported to the dispensary in the evening, where an attempt was made to give them first aid. In more serious cases, a prisoner could be put in the "infirmery," meaning an alcove partitioned off by boards housing bunks where a maximum of nine people could be placed. Treatment basically could not exceed 7 to 10 days, because "bedridden patients" were taken away to Birkenau by the truck that brought food to the subcamp and came to Kobier in those intervals of time.

On Sunday morning the prisoners were sent to bathe under showers (without hot water), and there were system-

atic "louse inspections" (*Lausekontrolle*). The living quarters were also cleaned; the tables and benches were carried out of the barracks and scrubbed using lime. After lunch, the SS men, bored in the isolated camp, sat on benches at the gate and forced prisoners to have boxing matches; the "boxers" were then issued old work gloves. Singing performances enjoyed great success, including those by the especially popular Erich Purm. During the day the prisoners also had the opportunity to repair worn clothing, visit and talk with each other, usually concentrating on ways to get extra food.

There are a few surviving records that provide more detailed information about the operation of the Kobier subcamp; for example, there is a list of furnishings for the prisoners' barracks, itemizing 510 blankets, 20 triple-decker bunks (which means that two or three prisoners had to sleep on one level), 80 enamel bowls (one for every two prisoners), 75 stools, and so on; also surviving are several monthly reports on prisoner activity at the dentist's office, listing the number and type of procedures performed in the summer of 1943.¹¹ It is also known that on March 8, 1943, a prisoner attempted to escape from the Kobier subcamp, Max Franz Schaap, a Dutch Jew. He was caught and put in the basement of Barrack 11 at Auschwitz I; his transfer to the camp hospital was recorded the same day.¹² Also surviving are the prisoner leasing figures of the Oberforstamt Pless camp employment office; in February 1943, the Forest Management Agency paid 5,739 Reichsmark (RM) for 1,913 days' work of prisoners classified as unskilled laborers at 3 RM per day of work (from 64 to 102 prisoners were put to work per day).¹³ In the subsequent months, the number of prisoners hired out by the Forest Management Agency gradually decreased, reaching the level of approximately 53 in August. In the middle of that month, several dozen prisoners were transferred from Kobier to the subcamp at Sosnowiec (Sosnowitz).¹⁴ On August 28, a commando of 26 prisoners went out to work for the last time; therefore, this is presumably the date the camp was disbanded.¹⁵ In his recollections, former prisoner Rudolf Löhr also says that the camp was disbanded at the end of August.¹⁶ The prisoners who still remained in camp at that time were transferred to Auschwitz, and British prisoners of war took their places at the end of the year.

SOURCES The most valuable are the accounts of Rudolf Löhr and Stanisław Łapiński; also a few references in the various subcamp records available at APMO.

Piotr Setkiewicz
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, D-Au I—4/28.
2. APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, 45: 14, account of Stanisław Łapiński; 53: 202, account of Julia Kumor and Monika Koczar; D-Au I—4/25, Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderungen.
3. APMO, D-Au I—1/77, Kommandantur-Sonderbefehl.
4. APMO, D-Au I—4/47, Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderungen.

5. APMO, Zespół Wspomnienia, 165: 53a, recollection of Rudolf Löhr; Affidavits Collection, 53: 202, account of Julia Kumor and Monika Koczar.

6. APMO, Materiały Ruchu Oporu, 1: 24, rept. of April 25, 1943; Kobiór—156 prisoners.

7. APMO, D.Hyg.Inst./23, File 17b, p. 687; entry dated June 22, 1943.

8. APMO, The Höss Trial, 16a: 202, testimony of Karol Sperber.

9. APMO, Affidavits Collection, 45: 15, 16 ; 53: 41, accounts of Stanisław Łapiński and Władysław Lewko; D-Au I—3/1, Penal company record book, p. 2, entry of July 20, 1943, stating that Alfred van Hofe had been put in a penal company.

10. APMO, D-Au I—5/2, Morgue record book, pp. 66–161.

11. APMO, D-Au I—4/45, inventory no. 171425, record dated 3/29/43; Monatliche Leistungs- und Personalmeldung des KL Zahnstation. Aussenkommando Kobier, Juli–August 1943.

12. APMO, D-Au I—3/1b, p. 2136, Barrack 11 bunker [underground isolation cell] record book.

13. APMO, D-Au I—3a/370, Monthly labor roster of male and female prisoners of Auschwitz concentration camp, 2: 68a, 3: 137a, 175a, 5: 264a, 298a.

14. APMO, D-Mau—3a/24538, Mauthausen Files, Affidavits Collection, 45: 16, account of Stanisław Łapiński.

15. APMO, D-Au I—3a/370, Monthly labor roster of male and female prisoners of Auschwitz concentration camp, 6: 318a.

16. APMO, Recollections Collection, 165: 68.

LAGISCHA

The town of Łagisza (Lagischa) is approximately 2.5 kilometers (1.6 miles) north of Będzin (Bendsberg) and approximately 40 kilometers (24.9 miles) northwest of Oświęcim (Auschwitz). In 1941, the German company Energie-Versorgung Oberschlesien (EVO) began the site preparation work for the construction of a power plant named “Walter,” with a projected output of 300 megawatts.

After fencing the site of the future project, the “Klotz” and “Haga” companies, using local inhabitants who had been assigned to work for them, started building living barracks for the future staff. Part of the barracks complex was set apart from the rest of the barracks by a double barbed-wire fence running along concrete posts. Several brick barracks were put up inside; some of them were for the camp inhabitants, while some were used as storehouses. Watchtowers were put up along the fence. That is roughly how the camp looked when a group of Jews were put there at the turn of the year from 1941 to 1942; they were presumably sent to Lagischa by the Organisation Schmelt.

Jerzy Frąckiewicz, the author of the only essay on the history of the Lagischa camp, maintains that the Auschwitz concentration camp had taken over control of those Jews, and they had been included in its population, as happened in

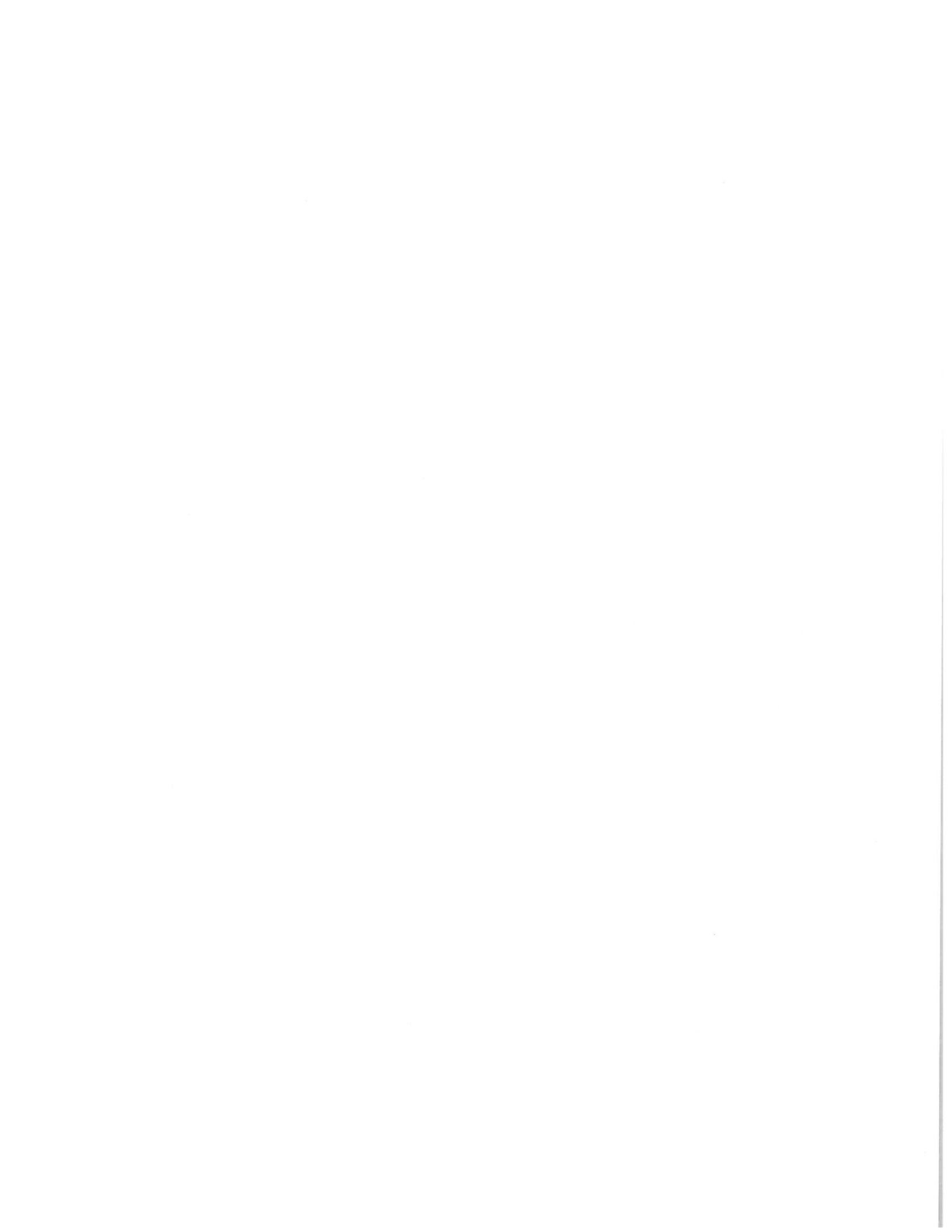
the case of Jewish prisoners at the subcamp in Blachownia Śląska (Blechhammer).¹ However, careful study of his arguments shows that such a takeover did not occur. The numerical series issued in the summer of 1943 do not contain a reference to the issue of approximately 100 numbers to prisoners coming from any camp that could be associated with the opening of a new subcamp. The day that Frąckiewicz determined as the founding date for the Lagischa subcamp (June 15, 1943) is probably inaccurate because that was the opening date of another EVO company subcamp at Jaworzno (Neu-Dachs).² However, it is known that on August 13, 1943, SS-Untersturmführer Sell, the chief of the camp employment office, notified the Auschwitz garrison command of the intent to form four new subcamps soon, including a camp at Lagischa.³ According to what he said, there were plans to place 100 prisoners in the camp initially, but their number was to reach the target of 1,000. There were also plans to assign a guard staff to Lagischa, initially with a 1:25 SS-prisoner ratio, later to reach 1:40.

The date the subcamp was formed can be established based on an invoice (*Forderungsnachweis*) that the camp employment office issued to the Lagischa power plant management in September 1943.⁴ It shows that the first 302 prisoners were put to work building the plant on September 10. However, since the previous day had been a Sunday, and September 8 was entered in one of the few surviving records of a Lagischa prisoner as the transfer date, we ought to assume that the subcamp was formed on that day.⁵

The aforementioned invoice and subsequent ones show that the “Walter” power plant paid 4 Reichsmark (RM) for a day’s work by a skilled workman (44 prisoners) and 3 RM for a helper. In October, the number of prisoners put to work was at a level similar to that of September, but it rose to over 500 in early November, which proves that another transport or transports arrived at Lagischa.⁶ But considering the fact that at other Auschwitz subcamps the actual prisoner population was approximately 20 percent greater than the number of those put to work (more or less 10 percent of prisoners worked inside the subcamp, and up to 10 percent were sick), it is probably safe to assume that there were over 600 prisoners in Lagischa in late 1943.

Among the several dozen prisoners with entries surviving in camp records, the most names that appear are those of Polish and French Jews; there were also Poles and Russians in the camp. There is similar information about the ethnic makeup of the Lagischa prisoners in the accounts of former prisoners; Polish laborers and local residents were employed building the power plant.⁷ Former prisoners’ accounts indicate that a Pole, Jerzy Jackowski, held the position of camp elder (*Lagerälteste*); the kitchen Kapo was Stanisław Łapiński, and the chief of the camp infirmary was a German, Hans Bock.

There were eight barracks inside the camp fence, of which four were used as quarters for the prisoners, one housed the camp infirmary, and the other three served as warehouses and



6. APMO, D-Au I—3a/370/6, Monthly labor roster of male and female prisoners of Auschwitz concentration camp, pp. 361a, 394a; D-Au I—3a/370/7, p. 463a.

7. The most entries regarding prisoners of Lagischa subcamp are in the records of the camp employment office and in the numbers book (*Nummerbuch*). APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia [Affidavits Collection], relations of Zbigniew Tokarski (40: 140, 141); Zbigniew Mroczkowski (46: 42–44); Stanisława Dydak (44: 1–3); Antoni Górecki (44: 4, 5); Stanisław Drygalski (44: 6, 7); Otylia Piaskowska (44: 8, 9); Tadeusz Łapka (44: 10–13); Aniela Gwoździowska, Irena Kubik, Zofia Motoczyńska (44: 14–17).

8. APMO, Microfilm 1900, CHIDK. Fond 502–2–19, pp. 936–957; Microfilm 1898, CHIDK. Fond 502–2–17, pp. 186–206.

9. APMO, D-Au I—1/3, Zespół Telegramy, pp. 447–449.

10. APMO, Sturmbannbefehl No. 147/43 of 9/27/1943; Standortbefehl No. 53/43 of November 22, 1943 (item 12d); Sturmbann-Sonderbefehl of November 24, 1943; and Kommandantur-Sonderbefehl KL Auschwitz III of 5/22/1944 (D-Au III—1/6).

11. APMO, D-Au I—4/2, p. 140, Personalbefehl KL Auschwitz II of December 11, 1943, No. 2/43.

12. APMO, Książka ewidencyjna bloku 20 Auschwitz I, p. 39; Entry regarding prisoner Moszek Reisman, brought from the Lagischa subcamp, December 24, 1943; Zespół Materiały ruchu oporu, 2: 60, 7: 475; Repts. of January 20 and February 22, 1944.

13. APMO, Microfilm 1900, CHIDK. Fond 502–2–19, pp. 936–957; Microfilm 1898, CHIDK. Fond 502–2–17, pp. 186–206.

14. APMO, D-Au III—1/66, Kommandanturbefehl KL Auschwitz III No. 9/44 of September 6, 1944.

15. APMO, Microfilm 1898, CHIDK. Fond 502–2–17, p. 207.

16. APMO, D-Au I—1/3, Meldeblatt, p. 356.

LAURAHÜTTE

Laurahütte was organized in late March and early April 1944 at the Oberschlesische Gerätebau GmbH company, which was probably founded in 1941 at the existing Huta Laura (Laurahütte) steel mill in the town of Siemianowice Śląskie (Siemianowitz) near Katowice.¹ The subcamp was approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Auschwitz and was under the administrative command of Auschwitz III-Monowitz. The company belonged to the German Rheinmetall-Borsig AG corporation. Since it was an arms plant, Oberschlesische Gerätebau GmbH was under military supervision. The company manufactured anti-aircraft guns for the navy.

No sources are available to indicate who established this subcamp or precisely when it was established. The earliest record in surviving Auschwitz documents is from April 8, 1944. A German prisoner named Karl Schmied, a cook, was moved from Eintrachthütte to Laurahütte on that day.² Transferring a prisoner with that job suggests that it was exactly at that time that the subcamp was established. A note

made on April 14, 1944, by the muster officer of Auschwitz III-Monowitz, showing that on that day two prisoners were moved to the Laurahütte subcamp, seems to support that idea.³ The camp definitely did not exist at the beginning of March 1944, as it is not on the list of subcamps in a letter by the SS garrison doctor dated March 8, 1944.⁴ Three Polish prisoners were also moved to the new subcamp in very early April 1944, and several days later a larger group of prisoners joined them in order to get the future subcamp's premises in order and prepare space in one of the production facilities to house prisoners.⁵ Inside that facility there were already three-tier wooden bunks, probably for prisoners in the forced labor camp for Jews that the Germans established in 1941 under the Organisation Schmelt; that camp was shut down before the Laurahütte subcamp was organized at Oberschlesische Gerätebau GmbH.⁶

In May 1944, once the subcamp was ready to house more prisoners, about 150 to 250 Jews were moved from Auschwitz III-Monowitz to Laurahütte. These prisoners had come to Auschwitz from the Netherlands, France, and Belgium; now they went to the new subcamp as slave laborers. Smaller transports of Auschwitz prisoners were also moved in the following months, predominantly Jews of different nationalities, including a transport of approximately 150 Jewish prisoners from Hungary in September 1944.⁷ On January 17, 1945, several days prior to evacuation, there were 937 prisoners in the subcamp, mainly Jews.⁸

The subcamp's management was in the hands of SS men. SS-Oberscharführer Walter Quakernack held the position of commandant throughout the subcamp's existence; SS-Rottenführer Kramm was his deputy.⁹ There were five or six SS men in all. However, the subcamp's guards were not SS men from the Auschwitz garrison but around 40 naval ratings from the coastal anti-aircraft artillery, commanded by Obermaat Adamczyk. Most of the ratings were older.¹⁰

In general, the subcamp was shaped like a triangle, whose northern and eastern side was formed by a wall approximately 3 meters (10 feet) high, topped with barbed wire. The subcamp's first buildings were a large factory hall, where prisoners were quartered, as well as a brick building that contained the camp storehouses. The barrack where the kitchen and secretarial office were set up, as well as the prisoner hospital barrack, was erected only after the prisoners had been brought to the subcamp. Construction of another barrack for prisoners was begun, although it was not completed. There were three watchtowers on the inside corners of the subcamp or on its outside fence, and a guardhouse next to the gate, through which prisoners exited the camp directly into the factory buildings. The entire subcamp formed a completely separate unit within the factory grounds, administered by the subcamp management.

Prisoners put in the Laurahütte subcamp worked directly in manufacturing as well as inside the subcamp. There were the following detachments: electricians, metalworkers, lathe and milling machine operators, draftsmen, painters, transporters (moving raw materials within the plant), and engineers,

as well as detachments for the camp kitchen, infirmary, cleaners, and a secretarial office. Most prisoners worked producing coastal anti-aircraft guns.¹¹

Civilian employees also worked at the company, and both civilian as well as prisoner foremen supervised the prisoners during the manufacturing process; such precision equipment required high-quality work. When they reported prisoners to the subcamp management for any alleged offenses, they directly contributed to the severe punishment imposed on the prisoners. Any little transgression was regarded as sabotage. For instance, one prisoner, a Dutch Jew (Juda Fransman), who was accused of laziness and sabotage, was punished by flogging. Another prisoner, also a Dutch Jew (Max Levy), who was accused of shirking work and feigning illness, was also given the flogging penalty.¹² Prisoners put to work in production initially worked in the daytime, then a night shift was also instituted.

After liberation, former Laurahütte prisoners recalled several escapes from the subcamp, among which one is documented in surviving records: Jan Purgal escaped from the subcamp on the night of August 18, 1944, with another prisoner's help. SS men from the Political Branch conducted an investigation, after which all Polish prisoners were moved to Auschwitz III-Monowitz in early September 1944 and on from there to other concentration camps within the Third Reich.¹³ Two Jewish prisoners also escaped from the subcamp; their final fate is unknown. The Germans used that escape to justify extra suffering for the remaining Jewish prisoners, in the form of a roll call that lasted several hours. The escape of a young Russian prisoner ended tragically; he was caught, interrogated at Auschwitz, and brought back to Laurahütte, where he was hanged on the assembly ground in the presence of all the subcamp's prisoners.¹⁴

Resistance took several forms in this camp. Prisoners who worked in the engineering office were able to move about the factory buildings and availed themselves of that opportunity for a sabotage operation in which they damaged the mechanisms of guns that the plant manufactured. They carried out the sabotage after the final inspection, when the anti-aircraft guns were still on company premises, awaiting shipment by rail. Since civilian employees also worked at the plant, among them many Poles, prisoners had favorable conditions for establishing illegal communications. This had special significance for Jewish prisoners, who did not have the opportunity of receiving food packages and so could not obtain various products that way.¹⁵

Evacuation of the Laurahütte subcamp began on January 23, 1945. On that day, all 937 prisoners were loaded into train cars that had been put on the railway ramp near the plant. The company's civilian personnel were also evacuated on that same train. The prisoners were transported to the Mauthausen concentration camp. A total of 134 prisoners died during the trip, which lasted five days and nights. Several days later at Mauthausen, a group of about 400 prisoners was formed from the Laurahütte transport and sent to the Neuengamme subcamp in Hannover-Mühlenberg-Linden, where they were put

to work at Hanomag and Rheinmetall-Borsig AG, manufacturing anti-aircraft guns. SS-Oberscharführer Walter Quakernack again became commandant of that subcamp. According to the account of former prisoner Arnošt Basch, of the approximately 400 prisoners brought to Hannover-Mühlenberg-Linden, only 254 survived the stay at that subcamp and the death march to the Bergen-Belsen camp.¹⁶

Walter Quakernack was sentenced to death by a British Military Court in Lüneburg in 1946.

SOURCES The following published sources contain additional information: Tadeusz Iwaszko, "Podobóz 'Laurahütte,'" *ZO* 10 (1967): 101–115, which includes a map prepared by the author on p. 102; and Aleksander Lasik, "Ściganie, sądenie i karanie członków oświęcimskiej załogi SS. Procedura. Zagadnienie winy i odpowiedzialności," *ZO* 21 (1995): 189–250, on the Quakernack trial.

APMO holds fragmentary surviving documents on the Laurahütte subcamp in various collections of Auschwitz concentration camp records, as well as accounts of former Laurahütte subcamp prisoners. An eyewitness account of Jewish forced labor at this factory is Ernest Koenig, *Im Vorhof der Vernichtung. Als Zwangsarbeiter in den Aussenlagern von Auschwitz*, ed. with an afterword by Gioia-Olivia Karnagel (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000).

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NOTES

1. Circular letter from the SS-WVHA to concentration camp commanders, employment unit re: Ergänzung zum Einheitsaktenplan dated June 9, 1944, Nuremberg Doc. NO-597, in APMO, *Proces Maurera*, vol. 6, books 99–100.
2. Häftlingspersonalkarte Karl Schmied, in APMO, D-AuIII-3a/46.
3. APMO, D-Au III/Monowitz/5/, book 522.
4. Letter from SS-Standortarzt dated March 8, 1944, in APMO, D-AuIII/Golleschau/, books 236 and 237.
5. Account of former prisoner Jan Purgal, in APMO, *Oświadczenia [Affidavits]*, vol. 40, book 70.
6. Ernest Koenig, *Im Vorhof der Vernichtung. Als Zwangsarbeiter in den Aussenlagern von Auschwitz*, ed. with an afterword by Gioia-Olivia Karnagel (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), p. 108.
7. Account of former Auschwitz prisoner Arnošt Basch, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 40, books 113, 115.
8. Smuggled message of the Resistance Movement at Auschwitz concentration camp dated January 17, 1945, in APMO, *Materiały Ruchu Oporu*, vol. 3, book 212.
9. Accounts of former Auschwitz prisoners Jerzy Kałka and Arnošt Basch, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 37, book 64, vol. 40, book 112.
10. Account of former Auschwitz prisoner Jerzy Kałka, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 37, book 64.
11. Accounts of former Auschwitz prisoners Jerzy Kałka, Jan Purgal, and Arnošt Basch, in APMO, *Affidavits*, vol. 37, book 64, vol. 40, books 70–71, vol. 40, book 113.
12. Juda Fransman's *Strafverfügung* dated July 5, 1944, in

APMO, D-Au I, II, III-2/301; Max Levy's Strafmeldung dated 6/29/1944, in APMO, D-Au I, II, III-2/299.

13. Accounts of former Auschwitz prisoners Jan Purgal, Jerzy Kałka, and Ryszard Sidowski, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 40, books 71–72, vol. 37, books 64–65, vol. 40, book 105.

14. Accounts of former Auschwitz prisoners Joseph Kupferman, Ryszard Sidowski, and Arnošt Basch, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 40, book 119, vol. 40, book 104, vol. 40, book 113.

15. Accounts of former Auschwitz prisoners Jerzy Kałka and Jan Purgal, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 37, book 64, vol. 40, book 71.

16. Accounts of former Auschwitz prisoners Joseph Kupferman and Arnošt Basch, in APMO, Affidavits, vol. 40, book 119, vol. 40, books 84, 113, 116–117.

LICHTEWERDEN

The Lichtewerden subcamp was established on November 11, 1944, at the thread factory in the town of Světlá (Lichtewerden) near the town of Bruntal (Freudenthal), located in the mountains of northern Moravia.¹ The factory belonged to the Gustav Adolf Buhl und Sohn textile firm, headquartered in Staré Město-under-Sněžník (Mährisch Altstadt). The company also owned a linen spinning mill in the town of Žacléř (Schatzlar), located to the south of the Karkonosze mountain range. Both Buhl und Sohn plants used the labor of Jewish women, among them Poles who had been put in forced labor camps as well as prisoners from the Gross-Rosen and Auschwitz concentration camps, starting in autumn 1944. The Auschwitz prisoners were put to work at the thread factory in Světlá.²

A selection of Jewish women took place on November 9, 1944, at the Auschwitz II-Birkenau women's camp. A group of 300 women were selected, bathed, given camp numbers that were tattooed on their arms, and then moved to Lichtewerden on November 11. The new subcamp, like others being established at industrial facilities, was under the administrative command of Auschwitz III-Monowitz. According to the accounts of prisoners who were in the selected group, SS men conducted the selection. One of them with the rank of SS-Oberscharführer, later the commandant of the Lichtewerden camp, looked at all the women's hands during the selection and picked those whose hands were tough from work. Polish Jews predominated among the women moved to Lichtewerden, but there were also Czechs and Slovaks selected. That was both the first and the last transport sent to this subcamp. The subcamp's buildings consisted of four wooden barracks painted green, including two accommodation barracks, a kitchen, and a washroom. The accommodation barracks for the prisoners contained three-decker bunks and were divided into rooms called *sztubas* holding 32 women each. There were stoves in the rooms, but the SS staff would beat any prisoners who tried to use them. Instead of striped uniforms, the prisoners wore civilian clothing marked lengthwise down the back with a stripe of red oil paint.

In the washroom, the prisoners could use cold running water; sometimes warm water was even available. They were issued soap in small quantities. The living and sanitary conditions were considerably better here in comparison to the camp at Birkenau.³ A dispensary was also established for the prisoners in camp, as well as an infirmary—a poor substitute for a hospital—where a doctor and a nurse selected from among the prisoners were put to work.

The camp was fenced with barbed wire and had four watchtowers in which SS men kept guard all day through. These were Wehrmacht soldiers who had been removed from service at the front due to their age or incapacity to serve and who were incorporated into the SS after a few weeks of training. Unfortunately, no records have survived about the camp's SS staff. It is known, however, that the staff included 16 SS guards and four women supervisors.⁴ The women called the camp commandant, who was disabled with one eye, "Schnauze," as he used that word most often in his communications with them. The prisoners all described him as a terrible brute and simpleton, and also as a ruthless sadist, who would beat them and threatened to send them back to Birkenau for the smallest offenses or for no reason at all. He always walked with a cane. An SS man by the first name of Martin was his assistant, whom the prisoners described as a harmless elderly man. There were also four women overseers. Three of them, especially one by the first name of Maria, had a very bad reputation. On the other hand, the fourth one, Luiza, was the opposite of the others. She always defended the prisoners against the SS personnel.⁵

The prisoners would leave for work in a tight group under the escort of SS men after the morning roll call. They returned from work the same way. A small group of women worked inside the camp in the kitchen, in the infirmary, or doing cleaning work.

Work at the factory lasted from 6:00 A.M. to 4:00 or 6:00 P.M. In the factory facilities, they worked at the same workstations with Czech female civilian employees from the factory personnel. These civilian workers supervised the prisoners' work but otherwise were prohibited from communicating with them. The camp escort purposely misled the factory staff, saying that the prisoners were common criminals. Therefore, their attitude toward the prisoners was rather indifferent. There were sporadic instances of furtively tossing some food or sometimes a newspaper to the prisoners, especially toward the end of the war, when discipline had slackened among the SS men supervising the prisoners.⁶

Some of the prisoners were put to work on the yarn-winding machinery; others worked in the linen spinning mill, where the labor was especially hard, as the dust hovering in the air made breathing difficult. Those who were put to work weighing and delivering 50-kilogram (110-pound) cotton bales to the respective workstations had equally hard labor. Some prisoners received serious injuries while operating the machines; the camp commandant treated every on-the-job accident as sabotage. There were also instances of hungry, exhausted prisoners fainting at work, as the hunger in the camp kept growing

from month to month. Meals were only issued twice a day in camp: in the morning and in the evening upon returning from work. The prisoners got about one-seventh of a kilogram (one-third of a pound) of bread per day (two loaves per *sztuba*), plus a cup of unsweetened black coffee, and some soup made of rotten vegetables or potato peels in the evening.⁷ The factory management provided the camp with some food rations for the prisoners working in the factory, but they were stolen by the camp's German personnel.

On May 6, 1945, the entire SS staff left the camp, headed by the commandant. Two days later the Russians entered Lichtewerden, liberating the 300 prisoners in that camp.⁸

SOURCES Primary sources on Lichtewerden may be found in APMO (e.g., a daily list of occupations of the female inmates at Auschwitz III; Syg. D-Au III-Lichtewerden/1; testimonies; correspondence) and at ITS.

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trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, Syg. D-Au III—3a/1, k. 432, daily employment list of female prisoners in the subcamps under the Monowitz concentration camp (Oświęcim III).

2. APMO, Syg. K: I-8523/92/2669/86, correspondence with the Okresním Vlastivědném Muzeem v Šumperku, dated September 19, 1986; Syg. D-Au III-Lichtewerden/1, pp. 1–6, list of inmates of the SS-Arbeitslager Lichtewerden (by names and numbers) dated December 23, 1944 (original at the Jewish Museum in Prague).

3. APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia, 58: 23–33, 48–55, accounts of former prisoners Celina Hochberger Strauchen and Lola Gimpel née Landmann; 98: 67–68, account of Helena Celta.

4. APMO, daily employment list, pp. 462–509.

5. Testimony of former prisoner Mila Hornik in Natan Blumental, ed., *Dokumenty i materiały. Tom I Obozy* (Łódź: 1946), pp. 49–50; APMO, Collection of testimonies, 98: 68, statement by former inmate Helena Celta.

6. APMO, Testimonies, 58: 49–50, statement of Lola Gimpel; 98: 68, statement of Helena Celta.

7. APMO, Testimonies, 58: 50.

8. APMO, Testimonies, 58: 32, 54; 98: 69.

NEU-DACHS

The Germans established the Neu-Dachs subcamp on June 15, 1943, in Jaworzno. The German company Energie-Versorgung Oberschlesien AG (EVO) initiated the subcamp's establishment in order to put Auschwitz prisoners to work in Jaworzno's hard coal mines and building a thermal power plant.¹ The first group of approximately 100 prisoners arrived in the subcamp on June 15, 1943. Over the next six months, the population grew to about 2,000, and a year later, in January 1945, shortly before evacuation, there were 3,664 prisoners in the subcamp. This was 1,500 more prisoners than the Germans projected when they established the sub-

camp.² That growth came about because EVO kept asking for more prisoners. The decided majority of prisoners were Jews from all over Europe. Poles constituted the majority of the non-Jews.³

The living conditions, clothing, and food in the camp were no different from those at Auschwitz. Prisoners often would not get new clothes in exchange for worn-out clothing. They therefore went about in tattered clothes, and most of them did not have any underwear, socks, or gloves. The mines assigned leather or rubber shoes and overalls to some prisoners who worked in flooded places, but these were never repaired. Prisoners received neither helmets nor rubber capes, which civilian workers had.⁴ Besides the camp food, the mines provided prisoners classified as hard laborers with a bowl of meatless soup during work, to increase work output. For good work, prisoners also received 10 cigarettes each from the mines and companies, plus vouchers worth 1 to 4 Reichsmark (RM) for use in the camp canteen. However, the canteen did not have what the prisoners most needed—food—and the companies distributed the vouchers in small quantities, so there was little real incentive to work harder. The SS authorities kept drawing attention to the small amount of vouchers being allotted and called on the mines and companies to increase them—most likely out of concern for the SS canteen's profits rather than the prisoners' welfare.⁵

The subcamp was an independent administrative and management unit: it had its own kitchen, hospital, clothing warehouses, food warehouses, laundry, workshops, baths, and delousing facilities. Clothes, food (except for bread, which was supplied locally in Jaworzno), medicine, and other materials were provided from the Auschwitz central warehouses.⁶

The subcamp was under the command of Auschwitz I until November 21, 1943, after which it was under Auschwitz III-Monowitz. SS-Obersturmführer Bruno Pfützte was the subcamp commandant.⁷ The guard staff was composed of around 200 to 300 SS men who belonged to the Monowitz 4th Guard Company.⁸

Jaworzno's Rudolfgrube, Dachsgrube, and Friedrich-Augustgrube hard coal mines and the Wilhelm power plant were the prisoners' chief places of work. Prisoners worked in three shifts, with only one Sunday per month off. Prisoners comprised approximately 60 percent of the staff at the Jaworzno mines. The rest of the employees were mainly Polish workers.⁹

The prisoners marched to work under SS escort, fastened to metal bars that they had to hold with their bare hands, even in the coldest weather. To entertain themselves before sending the prisoners underground, the SS men would throw them cigarettes, then set their dogs on them. Thirty prisoners were packed into elevators designed for 8 persons.

Once underground, the prisoners were divided up into groups of several men each and assigned to civilian workers who were responsible for their output. In the mines, the prisoners did almost every job possible: excavating coal, loading it onto carts, conveying it, digging new galleries, deepening

shafts, and so on. For the malnourished prisoners, it was work that exceeded their physical capabilities.

Some prisoners were hired out from EVO, which was the main employer, to various construction companies, large and small. For instance, the Breitenbach-Montanbau company employed several dozen prisoners to build a railroad siding for the Dachs mine. Quite a large group of prisoners worked building the new Richardgrube mine.

After they returned from work, the prisoners were also forced to perform various cleanup jobs in camp.

Brutal discipline was the preferred method for maintaining high output. Some of the German mine foremen would beat prisoners severely—sometimes fatally—for taking a moment's break from work. Especially after meetings of the SA to which most of the foremen belonged, they would go underground and abuse the prisoners on any pretext.¹⁰ Eventually, the subcamp commandant intervened; in a special letter he notified the management of Jaworzno's mines that, regardless of their position, all civilian workers were prohibited from beating prisoners.¹¹

In order to tighten discipline and step up work output, on June 28, 1944, mine inspector Bergmann asked subcamp commandant Pfütze to replace Jewish prisoner foremen with Aryan ones, which, as he stated, brought the desired results.¹²

Besides summary on-the-spot beatings, prisoners also received so-called regulation punishments such as flogging and confinement in a standing cell. A Polish prisoner was locked in the standing cell for 13 nights for having brought into camp a package with food and medicine, which he had secretly received from a prisoner's wife. Juda Kalvo, a Jew, was punished by flogging for having exchanged his two gold teeth for 5 kilograms (11 pounds) of bread.¹³ Long roll calls each morning and evening, which sometimes lasted up to two hours, added to the suffering, especially in winter. If the SS found that someone had escaped, the punitive roll calls could last 12 hours or more.¹⁴

A hospital and dentist's office were set up in the subcamp for the sick and disabled prisoners. There were three wards: internal medicine, surgery, and diarrhea. The Jewish prisoner doctors there wanted to help the patients, but a lack of basic drugs hindered their efforts. They mainly treated people with aspirin and carbon, used disinfectants, and bandaged wounds. The hospital was only intended for those who were less seriously ill; SS doctors (including Horst Fischer from the Monowitz hospital) selected the rest to go to the Auschwitz hospital or straight to the gas chambers.¹⁵ For example, a surviving list of selected prisoners dated January 18, 1944, shows 247 prisoners who were taken away to Birkenau and killed.¹⁶

Some Polish workers took the risk of aiding them by sharing food and helping to organize escapes, some of which were successful. The risks were substantial. Głowacz, a miner from the Rudolf mine, was arrested for supplying bread to the prisoners. He was taken away to the Auschwitz concentration camp and died in a few weeks. The Jewish prisoner who had helped him was tortured to death.

One escape attempt ended tragically when the SS arrested approximately 30 prisoners for treason after they tried to get out of the camp through a tunnel. After an investigation held at the Auschwitz I camp, the SS hanged 19 prisoners at the subcamp on December 6, 1943, and sent 7 to a penal company.¹⁷

The SS began shutting the camp down in January 1945. On January 17, after food from the camp warehouses had been distributed, approximately 3,200 prisoners found to be fit to march were escorted out via Mysłowice toward the Auschwitz subcamp of Blechhammer. The prisoners reached it after three days of marching in severe cold over snow-covered side roads. Many of those who could not keep up with the columns were shot along the way. The prisoners stayed at Blechhammer for one day, after which they were herded to Gross-Rosen, then taken by train to Buchenwald. Russian forces liberated the 400 seriously ill prisoners who remained in camp on January 19, 1945.¹⁸

SOURCES APMO holds the following relevant records: Kaufmännische Direktion EVO Kattowitz (hereinafter Jaworzno); Akta Procesu Hössa; Affidavits Collection, accounts of Adam Budak, Kazimierz Borowiec, Jan Broniowski, Antoni Kartasiński, Antoni Kucharz, Wiktor Pasikowski, Aron Piernat, Zbigniew Tokarski, Józef Tałach, Włodzisław Śmigielski, Stanisław Sadowski, Theodor Weil, and Mieczysław Zięc-Zewski; *Fahrbefehl*; *Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderung*; *SS-Hygiene Institut*; *Materials of the camp resistance movement (Mat. RO)*; *Kommandantur-Befehle KL Auschwitz III*.

See also Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Neu-Dachs," *HvA 12* (1971): 55–111; Henry Bulawko, *Les yeux de la mort et de l'espoire. Auschwitz-Jaworzno* (Paris: Recherche, 1980); Paul Heller, "Das Aussenlager Jaworzno," in *Auschwitz. Zeugnisse und Berichte*, ed. H.-G. Adler, Hermann Langbein, and Ella Lingens-Reiner (Cologne: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1984), pp. 169–171.

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, Kaufmännische Direktion EVO Kattowitz (hereinafter Jaworzno), segr. 1, book 37, letter from EVO to Amtsgruppe D dated June 22, 1943.
2. APMO, *Materiały Ruchu Oporu*, vol. 2, book 60; vol. 3, book 212.
3. APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia* (Affidavits Collection), accounts of Mieczysław Zięc-Zewski and Wiktor Pasikowski.
4. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts by former prisoners Włodzisław Śmigielski and Wiktor Pasikowski, as well as civilian employees of Jaworzno mines: Stanisław Sadowski and Antoni Kartasiński.
5. APMO, KL Auschwitz III, *Kommandantur Befehl Nr 6/44*.
6. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts of former prisoners Mieczysław Zięc-Zewski and Theodor Hennequin.
7. *Kommandantur-Sonderbefehl* dated May 22, 1944.
8. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts of former prisoners Zbigniew Tokarski, Wiktor Pasikowski, Aron Piernat, and Zbigniew Mroczkowski.

9. APMO, Affidavits Collection, account of engineer Jan Broniowski.

10. APMO, Affidavits Collection, account of civilian employee Kazimierz Borowiec.

11. APMO, Jaworzno, File 1, books 198–199.

12. APMO, Jaworzno, File 1, book 260.

13. APMO, Punishment Reports and Orders.

14. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts of former prisoners Theodor Hennequin, Augustyn Pietruszko, and Wiktor Pasikowski.

15. APMO, Affidavits Collection, account of former prisoner Theodor Weil.

16. APMO, Jaworzno, File 3, books 144–148, original list of those selected.

17. APMO, Książka bunkra (Bunker Book)—register of prisoners put into the Auschwitz I camp jail contains the names of those arrested.

18. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts of former prisoners Wiktor Pasikowski, Aron Piernat, Zbigniew Mroczkowski, and Theodor Hennequin.

NEUSTADT O/S

The Neustadt subcamp was established in September 1944 in the city of Neustadt (Prudnik) on the premises of a textile factory that had been owned by a Jew, Samuel Fränkl, before the war, and was renamed Schlesische Feinweberei AG Neustadt O/S after war broke out.

Like many other Third Reich industrial plants, during the war Schlesische Feinweberei used the forced labor of foreign workers, prisoners of war (POWs), and in 1944 it accessed the reserves of the cheap slave labor of Auschwitz concentration camp prisoners. Negotiations in the business of putting prisoners to work were finalized in September 1944. A surviving order of Auschwitz III-Monowitz commandant SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Schwarz, dated September 6, 1944, proves this; it assigned SS guard staff to the newly forming Neustadt subcamp from the Lagischa subcamp, which was shut down the same day. The first, and last, transport of 400 female Hungarian Jewish prisoners was brought to Schlesische Feinweberei on September 26, 1944.

The women brought from Auschwitz II-Birkenau were placed on the second floor of one of the factory buildings, in space that had previously housed a forced labor camp for Polish Jews. Bars were put on the windows of the rooms allocated for the prisoners, and the building and yard were fenced.

The commandant of Neustadt was SS-Obersturmführer Paul Müller, who had earlier been commandant of the women's camp at Birkenau and had also been the commander of the Monowitz staff prior to his assignment to Neustadt. Max Krause, the Neustadt area Gestapo chief, conducted random inspections on the factory premises. His chief characteristic was his particular sadism; Neustadt residents called him the “devil of Prudnik County.”

Even when they arrived at Neustadt, the women were haggard and mentally broken. Hunger, hours of work in the factory, and anxiety over the plight of the loved ones with whom they had been brought to Auschwitz devastated them even more. Dead prisoners were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Neustadt.

The prisoners learned to weave as soon as they arrived at Neustadt, for about two to three weeks. They were then put to work in the weaving plant. Accounts of people who were employed there with the prisoners show that they were so physically exhausted and mentally broken that they did not have the strength to work. The SS men forced them to do so by beating them.

The subcamp was shut down on January 19, 1945, and the women there were evacuated on foot to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, from where they were then taken to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

SOURCES Information on the Neustadt subcamp may be found in Irena Strzelecka, “The Neustadt Subcamp,” *ZO 13* (1971): 153–166 (German version: “Das Nebenlager Neustadt,” *HvA 11* [1971]: 159–170).

Original records pertaining to this camp are held at APMO, Affidavits Collection, account of former female prisoner Charlota Karešova, as well as accounts of Prudnik residents and former Schlesische Feinweberei employees Zofia Kałwa, Józef Kanik, Anna Krawczyk, and others.

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PLAWY [AKA WIRTSCHAFTSHOF PLAWY, GUT PLAWY]

The small village of Pławy (Plawy) is approximately 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) south of Brzezinka (Birkenau). In late 1940, pursuant to an agreement between the concentration camp headquarters and the Katowice regency government, a decision was made to form an Auschwitz “zone of interest”, within which there were plans to create an SS agricultural and breeding farm upon the personal wish of Heinrich Himmler. Although Plawy was in the center of the planned zone, there were probably no plans yet to establish a separate farm there. On March 8, 1941, all the inhabitants were removed from the village, and most of the homes belonging to them (55) were demolished over the next few months.¹ From 1942 to 1944, farm commandos made up of prisoners brought in from the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp worked on the land belonging to the village.

In the spring of 1944, one large barrack—a barn—was erected on the site of the future camp as well as two somewhat smaller ones, where cows and horses were later kept. Photographs taken by Allied reconnaissance planes show that no other buildings were put up near them at least until August. Only the photographs of November 29 and December 21, 1944, show more structures on the site, including accommodation barracks for the prisoners and a fence.²

It is hard to ascertain when prisoners were housed in the barracks on a permanent basis. Starting at least in early October 1944, three large commandos worked at Plawy: Sinschowski (an average of 100 female prisoners), Haseloch (200), and Mokrus (320),³ which were listed in the labor commando records of the women's camp at Birkenau until October 30. At the end of the month, only Mokrus and a Schinkowsky [*sic*] commando (under Kommandoführer Haseloch) of 200 female prisoners appear in the records. Those commandos are listed in the Birkenau labor roster of female prisoners for the last time on October 30, and on that same day, commando 21—Neuhof Plawy (203 women)⁴—appears in the commando roster for the Auschwitz I women's camp, meaning that from then on, those prisoners were under the command of the women's camp located in the camp extension (Schutzhaftlagererweiterung). Also surviving from October 31, 1944, is a document regarding the reorganization of commandos put to work at farm labor, mentioning the creation of the new "Plawy parent camp" (Stammkommando Plawy) numbering 193 prisoners. It was based on a disbanded commando led by SS-Unterscharführer Mokrus (he kept his position). In addition, Marschkommando Plawy (83 female prisoners) was formed out of commandos 9 and 22 and was commanded by SS-Unterscharführer Haseloch. The list also refers to the small 10-person Melker Plawy⁵ commando. Every day from then on, the records of the women's camp employment office listed two commandos working in Plawy—a "parent camp" and a "marching camp"—and the approximate size of both, 260 and 100 women, respectively.⁶ The name of the former would indicate that the prisoners in it were permanently put into Plawy on October 31, while the women from the "marching" commando went back and forth to work from the Auschwitz I women's camp. However, the fact that the commandos were included in the parent camp's population would suggest that there was not a separate subcamp at Plawy yet.

According to the account of former prisoner Anna Tytoniak, the Plawy subcamp was formed on January 3, 1945.⁷ In it were placed approximately 200 women who had previously been at Birkenau, mainly Russian women, as well as prisoner-functionaries: two female German Kapos, a barrack chief (also a German woman), a living quarters chief (a Hungarian Jewish woman), and the commando scribe (a Polish woman).

The subcamp was rectangular in shape, 160 by 140 meters (525 by 460 feet).⁸ It was surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence running along concrete posts. The fence was not electrified, and no watchtowers were put up around the subcamp. Inside, the camp was divided by an inner fence into a living section and a farming section. The former held two accommodation barracks for the women and the men (also separated by a barbed-wire fence). A large barn was erected in the center of the farm area, flanked by a quite large stable and cowshed. Barracks for the sheep, pigs, and geese were built a bit further away, as well as storehouses for the farm tools. There was a small office barrack near the entry gate, where the men's and women's commando scribes worked.

The barrack for the female prisoners was spacious and, compared to the barracks of the Birkenau women's camp, far better furnished; it had windows and electric lighting. The women slept alone on bunk beds and had clean straw mattresses and blankets. The space was heated by two stoves, which were regularly supplied with coal—which was a rarity at Birkenau. The prisoner-functionaries had their own room at one corner of the barrack, furnished with clean bedding and many "luxury" items that the barrack chief and Kapo had obtained at the "Canada" warehouses. A makeshift infirmary was set up in the opposite corner of the barrack, to the left of the entrance. Next to it was a washroom where a large barrel had been installed, filled every day with fresh water from a well that had been dug near the barrack.

The women were dressed in prisoners' stripes and jackets and wore white cloth kerchiefs on their heads. They got up at 6:00 A.M.; they washed and made their beds, then were issued "tea" or "coffee" brought in from the Auschwitz main camp. The women lined up in front of the barrack for roll call. Then some of them left for work in the farm barracks, where they fed and milked the cows (about 100), cleaned the cowshed, and carried out the manure; the others were sent to sift the fodder potatoes and beets that had been put up in mounds of earth and to transport the fodder to the camp. They were issued lunch at the work site. In the evening at approximately 6:00 P.M., the women returned to the subcamp, where they received bread with some margarine and jam after the roll call. The doors were closed for the night from the outside with a sliding bar and padlock. SS men served guard duty around the fence, and in principle they could not enter the camp during that time.

SS-Aufseherin Cichoń was in charge of the women's section of the subcamp. She behaved decently toward the prisoners, as did the SS men who had been assigned to guard them; they were often older men and were clearly frightened at the prospect of the Red Army suddenly arriving.

The male prisoners at Plawy were mainly Russians and Poles; also sent there were several Slovak Jews and Germans, who held Kapo positions and that of barrack chief.⁹ They had been placed in Plawy presumably in the last days of December 1944. The barrack in which they lived was furnished like the women's barrack, with a separate room for the prisoner-functionaries, a makeshift washroom, and a space that was something like a dispensary. Patients with no prognosis of a quick recovery were sent back to the hospital at the main camp.

These Plawy prisoners mainly took care of the horses, of which there were about 70 to 80, and also transported farm produce and milk to the camp dairy, having 25 carts available (each one harnessed with 2 horses). A guard escorted every cart leaving the subcamp. A noncommissioned officer with the rank of SS-Oberscharführer was in charge of the men's camp.

The Plawy subcamp operated for only about three weeks. On the night of January 17–18, 1945, the SS men ordered the prisoners to slaughter the calves and pigs, after which they loaded the meat onto several carts. They loaded feed and hay

for the cows and horses onto the carts that were left. The last roll call was held the following morning at the assembly ground, after which the 138 male¹⁰ and the approximately 200 female prisoners set out westward on foot. The convoy was arranged as follows: the livestock was driven at the head of the column, with the female prisoners following a bit behind, then the carts loaded with the meat and feed, and the male prisoners marching at the end, driving along about 300 geese with them. At Pszczyna, where they stopped for the night, the SS men gave the geese to retreating Wehrmacht soldiers, in return for which they received bread and canned food. The next day the female prisoners reached Wodzisław Śląski. They were evacuated farther westward in freight cars. The male prisoners continued driving the livestock to the town of Zamberg, where the SS men sold the cows to local farmers, and the prisoners were sent to the nearby railroad station, from where they were later taken to Mauthausen.

SOURCES Primary source materials are available at APMO, Labor rosters of female prisoners of Au I and Au II; *Zespół Oświadczenia*, 49: 153–158, account by Anna Tytoniak, and 67: 218–222, account by Roman Wieszała.

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trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, D-Au I—3a/1 Segr. 14, report of Heinrich Schwarz dated March 17, 1941, on the progress of the displacement operation; *Zespół Oświadczenia* (Affidavits Collection), 50: 152–153, account by Józef Świadek; 48: 14, account by Józef Paszek.

2. APMO, *Zespół Opracowania* (Essays Collection), vol. 64c, aerial photographs, neg. nos. 22379/6 and 22379/11.

3. APMO, D-Au II—3a/18b–30b, labor rosters of female prisoners of Au II concentration camp.

4. APMO, D-Au I—3a/27b, labor rosters of female prisoners of Au I.

5. APMO, D-Au I—Landwirtschaft/67a, 2: 80.

6. APMO, D-Au I—3a/28b and following, labor rosters of female prisoners of Au I.

7. APMO, 49: 153; 48: 198.

8. Calculated on the basis of aerial photograph dated December 21, 1944 (neg. no. 22379/18); APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia* (Affidavits Collection), vol. 64c.

9. APMO, Affidavits Collection, 67: 218–222, account by Roman Wieszała.

10. APMO, *Zespół Materiały Ruchu Oporu* (Resistance Movement Materials Collection), 3: 208, 212.

RADOSTOWITZ

From 1942 to 1943, the Pless Forestry Management Office (Oberforstamt Pless) deployed approximately 20 Auschwitz prisoners on a forest detail at Radostowitz (Radostowice). The camp was located in a barn. All of the prisoners were Jewish. The killing center at Birkenau used the trees felled by this detachment for open-pit cremations, but the Ober-

forstamt suspended logging operations during wintertime. The Oberforstamt Pless established similar camps at Altdorf (Stara Wieś) and Kobier (Kobiór). In a special commandant order of November 2, 1942, concerning “offenses with the use of motor vehicles,” SS-Obersturmbannführer Rudolf Höss referred to these camps as the “Pless forest detachments” (Pless Forstkommandos) but did not list them by name.¹

SOURCES This entry is based upon Irena Strzelecka and Piotr Setkiewicz, “The Construction, Expansion and Development of the Camp and Its Branches,” in *The Establishment and Organization of the Camp*, by Aleksander Lasik et al., vol. 1 of *Auschwitz, 1940–1945: Central Issues in the History of the Camp*, ed. Waclaw Długoborski and Franciszek Piper, trans. William Brand, 5 vols. (Oświęcim: APMO, 2000), pp. 130–131, who cite Anna Zięba, “Podobóz Radostowitz” (unpub. MSS, n.d.), which is available at ANMA. Additional information about Radostowitz can be gleaned from “Sub-Camps of Auschwitz Concentration Camp,” www.auschwitz-muzeum.oswiecim.pl.

The forest detachment reference is reproduced in Norbert Frei et al., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000).

Joseph Robert White

NOTE

1. Quotation in Rudolf Höss, Kommandantursonderbefehl, Betr.: “Verstöße bei Benutzung von Kraftfahrzeugen,” November 2, 1942, reproduced in Norbert Frei et al., *Standort- und Kommandanturbefehle des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1940–1945*, vol. 1 of *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte von Auschwitz* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000), p. 192.

RAJSKO

The establishment of the Auschwitz concentration camp sealed the fate of neighboring localities such as Rajsko (Raisko). The Kattowitz (Katowice) Relocation Agency (Umwanderer Zentralstelle) made the displacement of the Polish population one of its top priorities. During his first visit to Auschwitz and tour of the camp zone of interest on March 1, 1941, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler ordered camp commandant Rudolf Höss to develop the entire area for agriculture and other uses to serve the Reich. The residents of nearby villages, Rajsko among them, were displaced in line with carrying out that order.

When preparing to create specialized agricultural, breeding, and experimental farms, the SS sent numerous prisoner detachments (including women’s detachments, after a women’s camp had been formed in the spring of 1942) to the site that were put to work doing a variety of jobs including demolition work, repairs, building dikes, cleaning fishponds, site leveling, draining fields, and building the

roads, barracks, and other structures needed to operate the specialized farms. Work in the demolition detachments was especially dangerous; injured and dead prisoners were not infrequently pulled out of heaps of rubble after buildings collapsed on them.

After the population had been displaced from the village of Rajsko, 68 homes and 41 stables were demolished. Approximately 300 female and 150 male prisoners walked to work in Rajsko in 1942. They had to cultivate an area of about 65 hectares (161 acres). Women prisoners were put to work weeding, draining fields, reaping grain, site leveling, plowing, and raising vegetables and flowers. Otto Moll, later the chief of the crematoria at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, was the detachment commander of the gardening detachment that walked to Rajsko to work. Moll was cruel and ruthless; he committed bestial and calculated murders of prisoners, especially Jewish ones, toward whom he was inflamed with particular hate.

The work done by the outside detachments prepared the way for the establishment of subcamps associated with horticulture and breeding in the camp "zone of interest." The women's detachment that had been walking to Rajsko was moved there permanently on June 12, 1943, thus establishing the Rajsko subcamp. The camp stood in the northwest part of the village about 200 meters (656 feet) from the main road running from Auschwitz (Oświęcim) to Brzeszcze. The female prisoners were divided up into two detachments, one for gardening and one for plant breeding.

The SS men who supervised the women at their work were under the command of SS-Obersturmbannführer Joachim Caesar, who had a Ph.D. in agriculture and botany and was the director of the Auschwitz concentration camp farms.

The prisoners of the gardening detachment, mainly Polish and Russian women, raised vegetables for the SS kitchens and army units. Cucumbers initialed with their origin were already being sent to Berlin in April. SS men from the Auschwitz staff also bought Rajsko vegetables. The women also bred and cultivated flowers. According to the testimony of former prisoner Irena Halbreich, Rajsko flowers were famous throughout the Reich. In the summertime, the women worked raising vegetables and grain. In the winter, they shoveled the roads clean, removed snow, protected trees from freezing, and prepared wood for fuel. A large greenhouse and hotbeds was one of their work sites; there they sowed and forced early vegetables, seedlings, and flowers.

Since they were in close contact with SS men, the prisoners who were put to work in horticulture were assured better sanitary and hygienic conditions and a change of underwear, clothing, and shoes. However, their work was hard and was inspected daily. If even one small thing wrong was noticed, the woman at fault was punished by whipping, carrying rocks on holidays, or working in a penal company. The SS often conducted random inspections of the prisoners in the field, during which the prisoners had to take off their clothes, and if any civilian clothing or paper sacks were found under

their dresses to protect them from the cold, they were punished.

The plant breeding research and experimental detachment consisted of a group of prisoners, mainly Polish women, with degrees in biology, horticulture, and chemistry. At Caesar's request, the first group of biologists was sent to Auschwitz from Ravensbrück on May 12, 1942. The detachment's population gradually increased to 150 prisoners. Under the supervision of civilian employees, German and Russian scientists, and agro-engineers, the women worked on raising a plant called the *kok-sagiz*, whose roots contained a rubber-producing substance. Making up for the shortage of natural rubber, the supply of which the Allies had blockaded, had grown into an issue of national importance. The rubber-producing substance the plant yielded was put through laboratory tests in the nearby IG Farbenindustrie plants. The purpose of the experiments was to transplant the plant from Asia to Western Europe and to grow a species of *kok-sagiz* whose roots contained the highest percentage of the rubber-producing substance. Himmler himself was in charge of cultivating this rubber-yielding plant. Scientists and army representatives visited the Rajsko experimental station. Caesar accompanied them and provided any explanations they might need.

Plant breeding was an exceptionally good detachment to be assigned to. Because of the important nature of the work being done for the German government, the prisoners put to work there were treated well. Due to the working conditions and camaraderie among the prisoners, the women could maintain a good level of mental stability and physical condition. They even held impromptu shows and evening discussions on various occasions and holidays. When circumstances permitted, they sent vegetables to the children and others hospitalized in Birkenau, via the prisoners walking from Birkenau to Rajsko to work. But even in this better detachment, there were instances of prisoners dying of typhus.

The Rajsko camp existed until January 18, 1945. On that day, the Rajsko female prisoners were joined with a column of male prisoners evacuated from the Auschwitz main camp.

SOURCES Published sources on the Rajsko camp include M. Dechavassine, "Le kommando Pflanzenzucht á Rajsko," *ApAz* 15 (1947): 3-4; Anna Zięba, "The Rajsko Subcamp," *ZO* 9 (1965): 71-102 (German version: Anna Zięba, "Das Nebenlager Rajsko," *HvA* 9 [1966]: 75-108); and Jadwiga Apostoł-Staniszevska, *Echa okupacyjnych lat* (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 322-335.

Archival materials may be found in APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia [Affidavits Collection], accounts of former female prisoners Józefa Kiwałowa, Maria Raczyńska, Zenobia Rządzińska, Stefania Szkutowa, Antonina Kopycińska, Hana Laskowa, Zofia Skurska, Wanda Tarasiewicz, Zofia Pajerska; Zespół Proces Hössa [The Höss Trial collection], testimony of former female prisoner Irena Halbreich.

Irena Strzelecka
trans. Gerard Majka

SOSNOWITZ I

The Germans established a subcamp of Auschwitz in Sosnowiec (Sosnowitz), on occupied Polish lands, in August 1943.

The subcamp was established for the purpose of renovating a large building at 12 Targowa Street in Sosnowiec, which had previously housed the offices of the Central Office of the Jewish Councils of Elders in Eastern Upper Silesia (Zentrale der Jüdischen Ältestenräte in Ost-Oberschlesien), where approximately 1,200 people were employed. One hundred tradesmen-prisoners including bricklayers, painters, cabinetmakers, carpenters, metalworkers, electricians, glaziers, and stove-setters were sent to Sosnowiec in late August 1943 to do renovation work.¹ Most of the prisoners were Poles. Additionally, there were Jews from Poland and France, as well as several Germans who served as prisoner-foremen.

The prisoners were quartered on-site in the building being renovated. Their clothing and food were severely inadequate and not much different from that which the Auschwitz prisoners had. Since there was no infirmary on-site, prisoners were sent to Auschwitz if they became ill. There was also a kitchen on-site, to which food products were brought in from Auschwitz.

Work lasted about 10 to 12 hours daily. SS men and German prisoner-foremen supervised the prisoners at work. The SS men summarily whipped them for any real or alleged transgressions. Sometimes the punishment consisted of summary brutal beating and kicking.²

SS-Rottenführer Lehmann initially served as the subcamp's commandant, followed by SS-Unterscharführer Horst Czerwiński.³ Fifteen SS men supervised the prisoners.⁴

When the amount of work decreased in December 1943, almost half the prisoners were moved to the Lagischa subcamp; the rest were moved in February 1944, and the Sosnowitz camp was shut down.⁵

SOURCES APMO holds the following relevant records: Affidavits Collection, accounts by Edward Spurtacz, Stanisław Łapiński, Januariusz Lengiewicz, and Zbigniew Tokarski; Arbeitseinsatz; Akta Procesu Hössa; Fahrbefehle; Kraftfahrzeug-Anforderung; Mauthausen prisoner files; Resistance Movement Materials; Correspondence on IG Farbenindustrie 9d-1.

See also Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Sosnowitz (I)," *HvA* 11 (1970): 89–96.

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, Correspondence on IG Farbenindustrie 9d-1, p. 48, letter from Auschwitz Arbeitseinsatz to Auschwitz Standortverwaltung dated August 13, 1943; Zespół Oświadczenia (Affidavits Collection), account by former prisoner Edward Spurtacz; Files of Mauthausen concentration camp prisoners, files of prisoners Franciszek Szast and Januariusz Lengiewicz.

2. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts by former prisoners Edward Spurtacz, Stanisław Łapiński, Januariusz Lengiewicz, and Zbigniew Tokarski.

3. APMO, Affidavits Collection, accounts by former prisoners Edward Spurtacz and Stanisław Łapiński.

4. APMO, Correspondence on IG Farbenindustrie 9d-1, p. 48, letter from Auschwitz Arbeitseinsatz to Auschwitz Standortverwaltung dated August 13, 1943.

5. APMO, Affidavits Collection, account by former prisoner Zbigniew Tokarski; Files of Mauthausen concentration camp prisoners, files of prisoner Franciszek Szast; Materiały Ruchu Oporu (Resistance Movement Materials), vol. 2, book 60, vol. 7, book 475 (subcamp prisoner populations).

SOSNOWITZ II

The Germans established a subcamp of Auschwitz in Sosnowiec (Sosnowitz) in May 1944, at the request of the Ost-Maschinenbau GmbH (Osmag) company. Company representatives held preliminary negotiations in Sosnowiec on March 12 with officials of the employment office at the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) on a plan to put prisoners to work. The terms for hiring out prisoners were set forth in a letter from WVHA DII to the company management dated April 26, 1944.¹ The Sosnowitz II subcamp was under the administrative control of Auschwitz III-Monowitz and was headed by commandant SS-Hauptscharführer Albin Vaupel. Several dozen SS men from the Monowitz 5th Guard Company watched the prisoners and escorted them to and from work. On the factory premises, guard duty was shared among SS men not on the camp guard staff, factory guards, and Wehrmacht soldiers.

The first group of approximately 600 prisoners arrived in the subcamp at the beginning of May 1944. Additional drafts added to that number as time went on. The highest prisoner population was approximately 900, at the end of 1944. The population fell to 863 people on January 17, 1945, after some prisoners were moved to Auschwitz.² This number was approximately 500 people less than the projected population of 1,400.

Ninety-five percent of the prisoners were Jews who had been brought to Auschwitz in late 1943 and early 1944 from Poland, France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, and Yugoslavia. There were also several dozen Poles, Russians, Germans, and French in the subcamp.³

Housing and clothing conditions were no different from those typical for Auschwitz camps. The prisoners slept in wooden barracks on three-decker bunks and wore striped clothes and wooden shoes. Some prisoners received clothes of black cloth instead of stripes. Red crosses were painted on the backs of that clothing, and stripes were painted on the pants along the seams. The food, although inadequate, was somewhat better than at the main camp. During work, in addition to typical camp food, prisoners were rationed the rest of the soup that remained in the plant cafeteria.

The prisoners were put to work in the Ost-Maschinenbau arms plants in Sosnowiec, manufacturing barrels and shells for anti-aircraft guns. Some of the prisoners worked in 12-hour shifts and some in 8-hour ones. For the most part, the prisoners worked as helpers to the civilians who operated the plant's machines: they delivered raw materials to workstations, took out finished products, and cleaned the machines.⁴ Burns and bruises occurred in handling the hot extruded barrels. Only a few prisoners received training and went on to operate the machines themselves.

The discrimination against prisoners as opposed to civilian workers was expressed in situations such as air-raids, when civilian personnel went to the bomb shelters, while prisoners had to stay at their workstations under the supervision of prisoner-foremen.

Prisoner treatment on the job was better than at the main camp because of the nature of the work. That does not mean that prisoners were free from persecution and severe punishments. Punitive exercises combined with beating were a common form of punishment; the Germans meted it out for singing badly, low productivity, or being late for roll call.

Under the contract that the company signed with the SS, the company paid 6 Reichsmark (RM) for a day's work by a skilled worker and 4 RM for that of an unskilled laborer to the national treasury, via the SS bank account.

The bodies of the dead were taken to the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp to be cremated.

There were several escapes from the subcamp, mainly by Russians. Three Russians escaped from the factory in the night on September 6, 1944: Hryhorij Sijew, Nikolai Korolkow, and Potapow [Polish spellings], who dressed in civilian clothing that Niklaszyński, a Polish civilian worker, had provided to them and left via the plant gate.⁵ A guard shot the fourth escapee as he was going across the gate. Two other prisoners caught escaping were hanged in the subcamp.

In early December 1944, the non-Jewish prisoners were taken away to the main camp and then to the Mauthausen concentration camp. The Sosnowitz camp was finally shut down and the approximately 863 prisoners evacuated in January 1945. The prisoners were taken on foot to Gleiwitz (later Gliwice), then via Ratibor (Racibórz) to Troppau (Opava), which they reached 12 days later. The escorts shot many prisoners who did not keep up with the march, the weak, and the sick. The survivors were loaded into boxcars in Opava and taken away to Mauthausen; the train journey took 4 days. From Mauthausen some prisoners went on to the Gusen subcamp.

SOURCES APMO holds the following relevant records: Affidavits Collection, accounts by Józef Słoń, Julius Engel, Mario Spizzichino, Augustyn Piotrowski, Hawrił Nikiszin, Stefan Gubała, Edward Ciesielski, Wiktor Bil, Antoni Lis, Władysław Wojciechowski, and Franciszek Depta; Camp Resistance Movement Materials; Meldeblatt; Fahrbefehle.

See also Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Sosnowitz (II)," *HvA* 11 (1970): 97-128.

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APKat, Berghütte 2511, books 6-8a (microfilm at APMO), letter from SS-WVHA to Ost-Maschinenbau GmbH dated April 26, 1944.

2. APMO, *Materiały Ruchu Oporu* (Resistance Movement Materials), vol. 3, books 208, 212, prisoner population on January 17, 1945.

3. APMO, *Zespół Oświadczenia* (Affidavits Collection), accounts of former prisoners Julius Engel and Mario Spizzichino.

4. Prisoner living and working conditions have been depicted based on the accounts of former Sosnowitz II subcamp prisoners Józef Słoń, Julius Engel, Mario Spizzichino, and Hawrił Nikiszin, as well as Ost-Maschinenbau GmbH civilian plant employees Stefan Gubała, Edward Ciesielski, Wiktor Bil, Antoni Lis, Władysław Wojciechowski, and Franciszek Depta.

5. APMO, *Meldeblatt* No. 8, Breslau, October 1, 1944, p. 354, two of the three fugitives were listed in the arrest warrant: Hryhorij Sijew (real name—Hawrił Nikiszin) and Nikolai Korolkow. Hawrił Nikiszin writes more of the escape in his account held at APMO, Affidavits Collection.

TRZEBINIA

The Germans established a subcamp of the Auschwitz concentration camp in August 1944 in Trzebinia, a town located between Auschwitz (Oświęcim) and Kraków, at the request of the German Erdöl Raffinerie Trzebinia GmbH petroleum refinery, which planned to use the inmates' labor. In a letter to the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA) Amt D II, dated June 20, 1944, the refinery requested that the SS supply them with 1,000 prisoners.¹ That number was never achieved. The largest prisoner population in Trzebinia was over 800 in September 1944.² These prisoners arrived in August and September 1944 in several truck transports from Auschwitz II-Birkenau.³ Except for seven German prisoner-foremen, they were all Jews, most of them Polish and



Post-liberation view of Auschwitz-Trzebinia from the south.
USHMM WS # 51035, COURTESY OF IPN

Hungarian. There were 120 children aged 14 to 17 among the prisoners.⁴

The prisoners were housed in a camp that originally housed British prisoners of war (POWs), whom the Germans had removed from Trzebinia in early August 1944. Living conditions in the subcamp were very hard. Barracks that had previously housed 200 British POWs now were packed with four times as many prisoners. The food, as was typical of concentration camps, was completely inadequate.

As the SS had been requested, the prisoners were mainly put to work expanding the refinery: in bricklaying work, handling building materials, constructing sewers, and digging drainage ditches. Some prisoners were also put to work expanding the camp. Depending upon the time of year, the work lasted from 8.5 to 11 hours.⁵ For the prisoners' work, the refinery paid the Reich treasury, via the SS, 6 Reichsmark (RM) for a day's work by a skilled worker and 4 RM for that of an unskilled one.⁶ Some prisoners were employed directly by the refinery, but most were subhired from the refinery by various construction and installation companies.

Although the refinery management was aware that the prisoners were not being fed properly, in its monthly reports it continually expressed its displeasure with their low work output, which was rated at between 45 and 60 percent of the free laborers' productivity. One of the measures the management took in order to raise productivity was to replace the Jewish prisoner-foremen with Germans.⁷ In its report for August 1944, the refinery stated that the change contributed to a rise in work output. However, in the very next report for September 1944, the management was again displeased with productivity and stated that "an increase in productivity can be achieved only if the block elders, guards, and prisoner foremen are all relentless in impelling prisoners to work."⁸

In response to that, the SS men and prisoner-foremen tormented the prisoners in a bestial manner in order to force them to expend maximum effort: they beat them with poles, iron bars, rubber cables, and shovel handles; kicked them; and not infrequently killed them. One witness, a Polish worker, saw how Oberkapo Albert Gumprich put a pole onto the neck of a fallen prisoner and ordered two prisoners to stand on the ends, in consequence of which the prisoner was strangled. After work, the prisoners had to carry the bodies of those who had been murdered back to the camp or, if they did not have the strength, drag them back, pulling them by the arms.⁹

Not only were the prisoners tormented by being driven to labor; they were also abused for the smallest disciplinary transgressions. Accepting any food from the Polish workers was a strictly punishable offense. In one instance, when a prisoner picked up an apple that a worker had thrown to him, the prisoner-foreman killed him with one blow to the head with a pole.¹⁰

Any attempt to obtain additional clothing as protection against the cold was also punished. Once, when a prisoner put some newspaper under his striped clothing to protect himself from the cold, a prisoner-foreman brutally beat and kicked

him. During the beating the prisoner had to take the pieces of newspaper out of his shirt.¹¹

Many prisoners fell ill under such conditions. From October 1944 onward, there were always approximately 50 to 100 prisoners in the camp infirmary.¹² In January 1945, the number of infirmary patients, convalescents, and those treated as outpatients was approximately one-third of the total prisoner population.¹³

In order to raise productivity, sick prisoners were trucked away to Birkenau, and those fit for work were brought in.¹⁴ The bodies of those prisoners who died on the spot from illness, starvation, or mistreatment were taken to Birkenau for cremation at first; then in November 1944 the Germans built a crematorium on-site in Trzebinia. SS men blew it up before leaving the camp in January 1945.¹⁵

Because the Red Army was approaching, the camp was shut down on January 17 or 18, 1945. Some prisoners who were unable to march were loaded into four railway freight cars over which a makeshift roof was put up and taken away. The other prisoners were issued extra clothes and food (bread and margarine) and prodded westward to march on foot in columns. The march took place during severely cold, snowy weather. Anyone who did not keep up with the march, especially on the first leg of the evacuation route from Trzebinia to Auschwitz, was shot. Some of those unable to march were left at the Birkenau camp. The rest marched on to Rybnik, but only half of those who had set out from Trzebinia arrived. In Rybnik they were loaded into open freight cars. Covered with snow, they rode toward Gross-Rosen, where they were not admitted, so they were sent to Sachsenhausen, then were sent to Bergen-Belsen two weeks later.¹⁶

Camp commandant SS-Unterscharführer Wilhelm Kowol, who was in charge of 60 SS men, bears direct responsibility for the crimes committed in Trzebinia. The names of over 20 SS men have been identified, including 3 who were tried in court in Poland after the war.

SOURCES On this subcamp, see Franciszek Piper, "Das Nebenlager Trzebinia," *HvA* 16 (1978): 93–135.

APMO contains the Trzebinia Collection, records on the former Trzebinia subcamp, which includes refinery correspondence with SS officials, refinery reports, invoices for prisoner labor, and records of construction companies that used prisoner labor. In the Affidavits Collection, see also the account of former Trzebinia subcamp prisoner Benjamin Pilicer. From OKBZNwK see Catalog No. Ds. 18/67, records of examinations of Trzebinia refinery civilian employees about the Trzebinia subcamp.

Franciszek Piper
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTES

1. APMO, Zespół Trzebinia [Trzebinia Collection], 3/2, book 44.

2. *Ibid.*, book 15, refinery report for September 1944.

3. Ibid., book 47, invoice for prisoner labor dated September 2, 1944.

4. Ibid., books 19–22, 30–40, list of prisoners by name dated August 24, 1944, and list of those newly arrived dated September 17, 1944.

5. Ibid., books 2, 3, 14–15, 29, monthly refinery reports on prisoner employment.

6. Ibid., book 47, invoice for prisoner labor in August 1944.

7. Ibid., book 29, refinery report for August 1944.

8. Ibid., book 29, refinery report for September 1944.

9. OKBZNNwK, sygn. [catalog no.] Ds. 18/67, testimony of civilian refinery employee Kazimierz Chrzęszcz, May 5, 1969.

10. Ibid., testimony of female civilian employee Czesław Kalisiewicz, April 11, 1969.

11. Ibid., testimony of female civilian employee Maria Matonóg, April 28, 1969.

12. APMO, Trzebinia Collection, 3/2, books 2, 3, 14–15, 29, refinery reports for the period from August to November 1944.

13. APMO, Trzebinia Collection, 3/5, books 1–9, daily reports of subcamp management for January 1945.

14. OKBZNNwK, catalog no. Ds. 18/67, testimony of civilian refinery employee Stanisław Pluto.

15. Ibid., testimonies of civilian refinery employees Rudolf Fasko, Erwin Michalik, Stanisław Struzik, and Edward Bucki.

16. APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia [Affidavits Collection], accounts of former prisoner Benjamin Pilicer.

TSCHECHOWITZ **(BOMBENSUCHERKOMMANDO)**

The Allied air raid on Tschechowitz (Czechowice) on August 20, 1944, was the immediate reason for establishing a subcamp of the Auschwitz concentration camp there. Such places as the Czechowice-Południowe train station, the nearby petroleum refinery owned by Vacuum Oil Company AG, and the brickyard in Bestwina were struck, as well as other sites. Many unexploded bombs remained throughout the bombed area.

Immediately after the raid, the Armaments Inspectorat VIIIb and the Organisation Todt (OT) began to ask that labor be assigned from Auschwitz to the task of repairing the bomb damage and to remove unexploded bombs. The bomb search detachment (Bombensucherkommando) most probably came into being upon the initiative of the Deutsche Reichsbahn Office in Tschechowitz. The first group of approximately 70 prisoners, among them around 60 Germans, was brought to Tschechowitz from the Auschwitz main camp just a few days after the bombing. They were immediately assigned to remove unexploded bombs between the tracks. Three days later, the German prisoners were moved back to the main camp, and approximately 100 Jews from such places as Belgium, Poland, Hungary,

and France were brought in to Tschechowitz to replace them. The SS guards were replaced by guards provided by Tschechowitz's chief of police. Two ordnance technicians were assigned from the Luftwaffe to supervise the work of the prisoners.

The prisoners were quartered in the old beer bottling plant building near the Czechowice-Południowe train station. Before the war, the plant was owned by Henryk Feliks, a Jew, who had been taken away to the Krakau-Plaszow concentration camp along with approximately 300 Jewish residents of Tschechowitz. The camp management and guards' rooms were in the building next door, where a restaurant and Feliks's residence had been before the war. The subcamp's commandant was SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Claussen, who had served several functions at the main camp, such as political unit officer and, in 1944, Rapportführer. He conducted executions at the Death Wall and participated in selections.

Because the Czechowice-Dziedzice-Bielsko railway line had to be reopened as quickly as possible, the prisoners worked both day and night shifts. They also worked at the refinery and the other sites in the bombing area. The labor the prisoners did was hard, tiring, and extremely dangerous. In his postwar testimony, Claussen said that the prisoners went through a living hell while removing the unexploded bombs, as they constantly contended with the possibility of sudden death.¹

In the less than three weeks of the subcamp's existence, the prisoners retrieved and disarmed more than 80 unexploded bombs. The subcamp was shut down in early September 1944, and the prisoners there were taken back to the main camp.

Claussen was born in Alton, near Hamburg, on December 16, 1915. He came to Auschwitz from Buchenwald in 1941. In September 1944, he was assigned first to the Italian, then to the Hungarian front. U.S. Military Police arrested him after the war, and he died in prison in Poland in 1948.

SOURCES Information on this camp may be found in Irena Strzelecka and Tadeusz Szymański, "Podobozy Tschechowitz-Bombensucherkommando i Tschechowitz-Vacuum," *ZO* 18 (1983): 187–222 (German version: "Die Nebenlager Tschechowitz-Bombensucherkommando und Tschechowitz-Vacuum," *HvA* 18 [1990]: 189–224).

Original records pertaining to the camp are available in the APMO, Zespół Oświadczenia [Affidavits Collection], accounts of former prisoner Jenő Vamosi and accounts of Czechowice residents.

Irena Strzelecka
trans. Gerard Majka

NOTE

1. APMO, Zespół Proces załogi [Staff Trial Collection], vol. 78, book 262.

TSCHECHOWITZ**[AKA TSCHECHOWITZ-VACUUM]**

In September 1944, the Germans established a second subcamp of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Tschechowitz, the name of which appears in surviving records as Arbeitslager Tschechowitz-Vacuum. It stood on the grounds of the old Przemysła farm on the Czechowice-Dziedzice-Bielsko railway line. A brick stable building was adapted as space for the prisoners.

SS man Knoblik served as the subcamp's commandant. Members of the Organisation Todt (OT) and plant protection (Werkschutz) employees supervised the prisoners during work, as did German policemen brought to Czechowice from Moravska Ostrava. German criminal prisoners comprised what was called the "prisoner government."

The first prisoner transport arrived at the subcamp in the latter half of September 1944. The transport consisted of approximately 300 Polish Jews, whom the Germans selected from prisoners who had arrived in Birkenau from the Łódź ghetto. Slightly more than 300 Czech Jews who had come from the Theresienstadt (Terezin) ghetto to Auschwitz joined the first group on October 9, 1944. Besides those transports, several smaller transports were sent to the subcamp. There were 596 prisoners in the subcamp on November 9, 1944, and 561 on January 17, 1945.

The prisoners' living conditions were essentially the same as those in other Auschwitz subcamps. Józef Ogiegło, then a Czechowice resident, stated in his account that just the prisoners' appearance alone showed that they were starving. "The people in the camp looked like shadows," testified Ludwik Rup, whom the Germans employed as a forced laborer in the refinery. Only hunger could force prisoners to collect cabbage and rutabaga leaves from the rubbish heap they passed on the way to work, which was next to the kitchen for forced laborers. Some of the more decent guards would allow the prisoners to collect garbage. Others beat the prisoners or even shot at them for attempting to obtain additional nourishment. For example, an SS man shot a prisoner to death during work for picking up a rutabaga that a civilian worker had thrown to him. Two juvenile prisoners, brothers from the town of Hradec Kralove, were beaten so severely by SS men for breaking into a food warehouse that they died shortly thereafter. Prisoners were tormented with punitive exercises and hours of roll calls for the smallest offenses; they were whipped, and prisoners were beaten every day in camp as well as at their workplaces.

At least one prisoner attempted to escape to freedom, counting on the help of Czechowice residents. Although he did manage to get beyond the fence and hide in a sewer near the camp, SS men found him during a search of the area near the camp and shot him to death. Investigations of prisoner escapes were conducted by officials of the Auschwitz I political unit: SS-Oberscharführer Wilhelm Boger, SS-Unterscharführer Federsel, and SS-Rottenführer Pery Broad.

The prisoners' primary workplace was on the premises of the petroleum refinery. There they were mostly put to work demolishing the ruins of bombed structures; doing bricklaying, concrete work, and earthmoving; and repairing tracks and roads. The prisoners were constantly persecuted by the guards and prisoner-foremen who supervised them while they worked. There were also instances in which the guards shot prisoners who worked too slowly.

In early 1945, the approach of Soviet troops forced the management of Auschwitz to shut down the subcamp. Approximately 450 prisoners left the subcamp under armed escort on January 18, 1945, at about 7:00 P.M. The Germans left several dozen sick prisoners and the bodies of dead ones at the subcamp. On January 20, after two days of marching on the Dziedzice-Goczałkowice-Pszczyna road, the prisoners reached Wodzisław Śląski. Prisoners who could not keep up with their comrades were shot by the guards. Sixteen victims of this death march—Polish and Czech Jews—were buried at Suszcze-Łęg near Pszczyna. At the train station in Wodzisław Śląski, Tschechowitz subcamp prisoners encountered thousands of comrades from the Auschwitz main camp, from Birkenau, and from other Auschwitz subcamps. The prisoners were loaded onto open coal cars and sent to camps inside Germany. The cars holding Tschechowitz prisoners reached Buchenwald four days later. Of the approximately 450 prisoners who left the subcamp, about 300 were still alive. Some prisoners were kept at Buchenwald, while the rest were sent to its subcamps, such as Rehmsdorf near Leipzig. In a letter written just after the war to Erwin Habal, his friend from the subcamp, former prisoner Ctibor Erban recalls that it was "desperately bad" at Rehmsdorf. Prisoners received incredibly small food rations; they had no opportunity to wash or change underwear. Thousands of lice nested in the bunks and blankets. Under such conditions only a few of the prisoners evacuated from Czechowice lived to see liberation.

Almost all the prisoners left at the subcamp also perished. On Sunday, January 21, 1945, at about 1:00 P.M., an armed unit of OT members entered the subcamp. They ordered the prisoners to dig a ditch, ostensibly to bury the bodies of dead prisoners. A few hours later, several SS men or Sicherheitsdienst (SD) members arrived at the subcamp. They ordered the people living in the vicinity of the subcamp to leave their homes and warned them that if they helped escaped prisoners, they would all be shot. Accounts of the events unfolding in the subcamp were provided after the war by former prisoners Erwin Habal and Dr. Josef Weil as well as longtime Czechowice residents Antoni Chrapek, Aleksander Owsiniński, and Józef Ogiegło, who observed the events in the subcamp from hiding. When the Nazis entered the camp hospital, they shot each bedridden prisoner in his bunk and ordered the few remaining prisoners who were still on their feet to carry the bodies of their dead comrades out to the ditch in the yard and cover them with straw mattresses. The Nazis then poured flammable liquids on the heap of human bodies and straw mattresses and set it on fire. Several prisoners

managed to slip out of the subcamp and hide nearby, but patrols shot most of them. Probably only Habal and Weil survived, with three friends. After leaving the subcamp, Habal hid in Maria Adamaszkowa's chicken coop. The Polish Ogiegło family took care of the prisoner at the risk of their lives.

SOURCES Information on this camp may be found in Irena Strzelecka and Tadeusz Szymański, "Podobozy Tschechowitz-Bombensucherkommando i Tschechowitz-Vacuum," *ZO* 18 (1983): 187-222 (German version: "Die Nebenlager Tschechowitz-Bombensucherkommando und Tschechowitz-Vacuum," *HvA* 18 [1990]: 189-224).

Archival sources are available in: APMO, Zespół Oświad-

czenia [Affidavits Collection]: account of former prisoners Ctibor Erban, Pavel Nettel, Erwin Habal, Josef Weil; accounts of residents of Czechowice of that time, including Józef Borończyk, Antoni Chrapek, Józef Ogiegło, and Aleksander Owsiański; Zespół Opracowania [Studies Collection], reports of site inspections of the former subcamp by such organizations as the Jewish Congregation of Bielsko-Biała; Zespół Akta SS-Hygiene Institut [SS-Hygiene Institute Records Collection]: numerical listing of Tschechowitz-Vacuum subcamp prisoners; and the collections of Katowice division of the IPN, testimony of Ludwik Rup (sygn. akt [catalog no.] Ds. 19/66).

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