

Concentration Camp
Stutthof

**Its History & Function
in
National Socialist
Jewish Policy**

Jürgen Graf and Carlo Mattogno



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Jürgen Graf, Carlo Mattogno:

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Cover Illustrations: Front: top: the Stutthof crematorium, rebuilt after the war; right: on the roof of the delousing chamber at Stutthof; Soviet photograph taken in 1945 (see Photo 12 in the Appendix); bottom: inside view of the Stutthof Zyklon B delousing chamber; left: detail of the blue discoloration on the outside wall of the Stutthof delousing chamber. Background: the Stutthof Memorial.

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Introduction

1. Stutthof Concentration Camp

On 2 September 1939 – the day after the beginning of the German military campaign against Poland – an internment camp for Polish detainees was opened in the village of Stutthof, 36 km east of the old German city Danzig in West Prussia (see map). Early in 1942, the status of the camp was changed from that of an internment camp to “Stutthof Concentration Camp.” Prisoners were sent to Stutthof from many different countries throughout the sixty-eight months of its existence; these prisoners included a number of Soviet prisoners of war.



Dark gray: German territory after WWI.

Light gray: German territory annexed by Poland after WWI.

The area of Danzig (dashed line) was formally ruled by the League of Nations.

The village Stutthof (West Prussia) is located on the “Frisches Haff,” a freshwater lake separated from the Baltic Sea by a slender peninsula (“Frische Nehrung”). The entire German territory shown here was annexed by Poland after WWII – except for northern East Prussia, which was occupied by the Soviet Union. The almost-entirely German population of these areas was either killed or expelled, or they fled toward the end of the war.

In 1944, what had previously been a relatively small camp population suddenly exploded, largely due to mass transports of Jewish inmates from the Baltic countries, Hungary, and Poland by way of Auschwitz. Prior to that time, there had been relatively few Jews in the camp. Stutthof was evacuated in January 1945, and was captured by the Soviet Army on 9 May 1945 as the last remaining National Socialist concentration camp. The camp held only about 150 inmates at that time, all the others having been evacuated

2. Stutthof in Polish and Western European Historiography

Literature on Stutthof that is of any scientific value exists only in Poland, where a larger number of books and articles have appeared on that topic. We will return to this Polish literature repeatedly in the present text, but, at this point, we draw the attention of the reader to the fact that this literature is heavily influenced by propaganda and is quite unreliable on decisive points.

The anthology *Stutthof – hitlerowski obóz koncentracyjny*¹ was published in 1988, and is considered the official history of the camp; it has also been available in German translation since 1996.² The Stutthof Memorial Site also publishes a periodical bearing the title *Stutthof. Zeszyty Muzeum (Stutthof. Paper of the Museum)*, hereafter referred to as *SZM*), although it is concerned only partially with events in the camp.

Polish historiography maintains that Stutthof became an ad hoc extermination camp for Jews in 1944. A summary of the orthodox version was published in 1967 in the periodical of the Jewish Historical Institute located in Warsaw:³

“In the spring and summer of 1944, the character of Stutthof changed fundamentally; it was no longer simply a concentration camp, but simultaneously an extermination camp for tens of thousands of Jews, especially Jewish women. [...] The victorious offensive of the Soviet Army forced the Hitlerites to evacuate the concentration camp and prisons in the territory of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In connection with this,

¹ Interpress, Warsaw.

² *Stutthof. Das Konzentrationslager*, Wydawnictwo Marpress, Danzig 1996. All quotations from the official camp report are taken from the above-mentioned German translation, not the Polish original.

³ Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, “Żydowski Więźniowie KL Stutthof,” in: *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, 1967, no. 63, p. 10.

various concentration camps such as Riga-Kaiserwald, Kaunas-Prosidingi, and a few others, were dissolved in 1944. This led to a massive transfer of prisoners of Russian, Belo-Russian, Latvian, and Lithuanian nationality, as well as many thousands of Latvian, and Lithuanian Jews, to Stutthof. Furthermore, the liquidation of Hungarian Jews that was occurring at Auschwitz at that time exceeded the capacity of Auschwitz Camp. Thousands of Hungarian Jews were now sent to Stutthof and its subsidiary camps.”

According to the Polish historical literature, many – mostly Jewish – Stutthof inmates were murdered with poison gas beginning in June or July of 1944. This allegation is also contained in several works of western Holocaust literature; namely, the anthology *Nazi Mass Murder*⁴ published by E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl among others, as well as the *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust*.⁵

And yet there are other historians – even among those who maintain the reality of a systematic extermination of Jews in the Third Reich – who make no claim of any extermination of human beings at Stutthof Concentration Camp. Raul Hilberg’s 1300-page standard work on the Holocaust⁶ mentions Stutthof briefly only four times, and makes no mention of any gas chamber for the extermination of human beings in that camp. Nor does Gerald Reitlinger, the author

⁴ Yale University Press, New Haven 1993; all subsequent quotes from this work are from the German original *Nationalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*, Fischer, Frankfurt/Main 1983.

⁵ Eberhard Jäckel, Peter Longerich, Julius H. Schoeps *et al.*, *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust. Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*. 3 volumes, Argon Verlag, Berlin 1993; the 4-volume English original of this encyclopedia is way inferior to the better edited German edition, which is why we do not quote it here (Israel Gutman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Macmillan, New York 1990).

⁶ Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, 3 volumes, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1997; Engl.: *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols., Holmes and Meier, New York 1985. Hilberg distinguishes between three different types of National Socialist Concentration Camps: “Death camps” (Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Kulmhof and Lublin), “Camps with killing operations” (Poniatowa, Trawniki, Semlin), and “camps with numbers of victims in the area of a few tens of thousands or less.” The third category, in his view, included Stutthof in addition to Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, and Dachau (*ibid.*, p. 1,299). Hilberg thus expressly excludes Stutthof from the category of extermination camp – even an “ad hoc” one. See Jürgen Graf’s critique of Hilberg’s work: *The Giant with Feet of Clay*, 2nd ed., Castle Hill Publishers, Uckfield 2015; also C. Mattogno, *Raul Hilberg e i “centri di sterminio” nazionalsocialisti. Fonti e metodologia*, Rome 2008, www.vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres8/CMhilberg.pdf

of another Holocaust classic,⁷ make any claim of homicidal gassings at Stutthof.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that Stutthof Concentration Camp was never even mentioned during the Nuremberg Trial.

The most-prolific Polish author on the Stutthof camp in Western literature is Marek Orski, who contributed the article about the Stutthof camp in the 1998 anthology *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*⁸ and who ten years later elaborated on the same topic during the 2008 historical conference in Oranienburg, Germany,⁹ although he did not add anything new of significance to the issue.¹⁰

The claims made in the orthodox western Holocaust literature on gassings at Stutthof are based on two kinds of sources: the relevant Polish historical literature, and court judgments in West German trials, based exclusively upon eyewitness reports. No western Holocaust scholar has ever made a serious study of Stutthof. This may be due, at least in part, to the fact that the camp is only alleged to have played a part in the “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” after mid-1944.

Among the revisionists, until now, only the American historian Mark Weber has made any effort to study Stutthof. Although his paper on the subject, which appeared in the *Journal of Historical Review* in 1997, is not based upon original documents, but rather upon the sparse literature available in western languages only, it is nevertheless of high quality. Weber mentions the extensive deportation of Baltic, Polish, and Hungarian Jews to Stutthof in 1944, and remarks:¹¹

⁷ Gerald Reitlinger, *Die Endlösung*, Colloquium Verlag, Berlin 1983; Engl.: *The Final Solution*, 2nd ed., Sphere Books, London 1971.

⁸ M. Orski, “Organisation und Ordnungsprinzipien des Lagers Stutthof”, in: Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, Christoph Dieckmann (eds.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Entwicklung und Struktur*, Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen, 1998, vol. I., pp. 285-308.

⁹ M. Orski, “Die Vernichtung von Häftlingen des Konzentrationslagers Stutthof durch das Giftgas Zyklon B,” in: Günter Morsch, Betrand Perz, Astrid Ley (eds.), *Neue Studien zu nationalsozialistischen Massentötungen durch Giftgas. Historische Bedeutung, technische Entwicklung, revisionistische Leugnung*, Metropol, Berlin 2011, pp. 294-303.

¹⁰ See the analysis by Carlo Mattogno, *Inside the Gas Chambers*, The Barnes Review, Washington, D.C., 2014, pp. 201-206.

¹¹ Mark Weber, “An Important but Little-known Wartime Camp: Stutthof” in: *Journal of Historical Review*, volume 16, no. 5, September/October 1997, p. 2.

“These transfers to Stutthof are difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with a German policy to annihilate Europe’s Jews. If there had been such an extermination policy, it is particularly difficult to understand why Jews from the Baltic region – all of whom were supposedly doomed – were evacuated on Germany’s overtaxed transportation system instead of being killed on the spot. The fact that many of the Jews evacuated by the Germans from the Baltic area to Stutthof were unemployable children is particularly difficult to reconcile with a general extermination policy.”

3. The Objective of the Present Study

The point of departure for our study consisted of a visit to Stutthof in very late June and early July 1997; as well as visiting the camp itself, we viewed a considerable quantity of documentation in the archives. We acquired additional important material on Stutthof Camp during a trip to Poland in March 1999. Since the history of the camp is largely undisputed up to 1944 – the time of the large-scale Jewish deportations – the principal focus of our investigation revolved around three points:

- the alleged gassings of inmates (primarily Jewish);
- the total number of persons who died in the camp;
- the conclusions to be drawn regarding wartime National Socialist Jewish policy from the mass deportations of Jews which occurred in 1944.

The clarification of these three questions – which are closely related – formed the real object of our study. That it also provides a survey of the history of a camp known in the West almost by name only may be viewed as an additional result of the present study.

*April 28, 1999
Jürgen Graf
Carlo Mattogno*

Since the publication of this work, the historiographic landscape of the Stutthof camp has remained virtually unchanged. None of the new contributions, which are rather poor in quality, has significantly increased our understanding of fundamental issues that we investigated for the first edition of the present book. Apart from some obviously needed minor revisions and corrections, we have therefore found it unnecessary to make major changes in this new edition, alt-

hough we did enhance and expand the documentation in the Appendix.

May 9, 2012
Jürgen Graf
Carlo Mattogno

CHAPTER I: An Overview of the History of Stutthof Camp

1. The Period from September 1939 to February 1942

As described in an earlier book,¹² wartime National Socialist concentration camps served primarily two purposes: they performed an internal security function through the internment of actual or potential opponents of National Socialism, and they acquired increasing significance for the war effort at a time when increasing numbers of Germans were being called up for military service, causing a serious manpower shortage in the Reich.

Stutthof Camp was created, at least initially, for the first of the two factors mentioned. The present study intends to provide a brief description of the camp. It is based, in particular, on a paper by Polish historian Mirosław Gliński, which was published in the book on the official history of the camp.¹³

On July 3, 1939, SS *Brigadeführer* Johannes Schäfer, the plenipotentiary of the Free City of Danzig for political affairs, founded the so-called SS *Wachmannsturmbann* under the leadership of SS *Obersturmbannführer* Kurt Eimann. Its duties included the creation of temporary internment camps for all Poles known to be actively anti-German, who were to be arrested immediately in the event of the outbreak of war.

Construction of the camp – northwest of the village of Stutthof (in Polish, Sztutowo) – began in the same month, using prisoners

¹² Jürgen Graf, Carlo Mattogno, *KL Majdanek. Eine historische und technische Studie*, Castle Hill Publisher, Hastings 1998; Engl.: *Concentration Camp Majdanek*, 3rd ed., The Barnes Review, Washington, D.C., 2012.

¹³ Mirosław Gliński, “Organisation und Struktur des Lagers Stutthof,” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 76-98.

from Danzig Prison under the command of SS *Obersturmführer* Erich Gust.

On the afternoon of September 2, *i.e.*, the day after the outbreak of war, a contingent of approximately 200 Poles arrived at Stutthof after having been arrested in the area of Danzig.

All the internment camps in the region were under the command of SS *Sturmbannführer* Max Pauly. The central command post was initially located in the Neufahrwasser camp, which became a subsidiary camp of Stutthof in April 1940. This subsidiary camp was first officially referred to as a “Civilian Prison Camp,” but was also referred to in correspondence as a “Prisoner Camp” and “Prisoner Assembly Camp.” The population of the adjacent area usually referred to it as the “*Waldlager*” (Forest Camp).

Following the visit of SS *Sturmbannführer* Arthur Liebehenschel to Stutthof, Neufahrwasser, and a third internment camp, Grenzdorf, on behalf of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps in January 1940, he drew up a report of his impressions for the head of the Inspectorate Richard Glücks. Glücks then proposed to *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler that the status of Stutthof be officially changed to that of a concentration camp, as it was favorably situated and offered good possibilities for the use of inmate labor. Himmler, however, initially rejected this proposal.¹⁴

Stutthof had approximately 4,500 inmates at the end of January 1940.¹⁵ These inmates consisted almost entirely of Polish men, including numerous priests, teachers, and other members of the intelligentsia considered politically unreliable. A small number of female detainees also arrived at Stutthof after the middle of the same year. They were housed in Barracks I, which received the designation “Women’s Block.”

At this point, a few remarks on the expansion of the camp are in order; our source of information in this regard is a contribution by the Polish historian Ewa Ferenc.¹⁶

When the first prisoners entered the camp in the beginning of September 1939, there were already a number of tents, a kitchen, a washroom and a latrine. The prisoners were first set to work exclu-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 76ff.

¹⁵ Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Obozy hitlerowskie na ziemiach polskich 1939-1945*, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warsaw 1979, p. 493.

¹⁶ Ewa Ferenc, “Bau und Erweiterung des Konzentrationslagers Stutthof (2. September 1939 – 31. December 1944)” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 99-108.

sively on the construction of the internment camp: clearing the forest, leveling the site, etc. As in other camps, the construction phase was particularly arduous for the detainees – the forest commando, occupied with the felling of trees, was considered the hardest job.

The Construction Office, referred to as the *SS Neubauleitung Stutthof* in early 1942 – later referred to merely as the *Bauleitung* – was responsible for the construction of the buildings. The first head of the Construction Office was SS *Untersturmführer* Otto Neubauer. The Construction Office was subordinate to the Central Construction Office of the *Waffen-SS* and Police in Danzig, which in turn was subordinate to the *Bauinspektion Reich Ost* (Construction Inspectorate of the Reich East), with headquarters in Posen. The latter was in turn subordinate to the chief of Office C (*Amtsgruppe Haushalt und Bauten*; Office Group Budget and Construction) of the *Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt* (Economic and Administrative Main Office, *WVHA*) under SS *Gruppenführer* Hans Kammler.¹⁷

Until October 1941, there were only three inmate barracks in Stutthof. At approximately the same time, the sewer installations were completed, and washrooms were installed in the barracks. Prior to that, the inmates had washed themselves in troughs in the open air.

Another barracks was used as an inmate infirmary, containing, among other things, a surgical division, a first-aid room, and a pharmacy. There was also a kitchen barracks and a laundry. A former retirement home on the camp's property was used as the headquarters building.

Barracks for camp workshops were built after the beginning of 1940; when completed, there was a paint shop, a furniture workshop, a joinery, an electrotechnical workshop, and a smithy. Outside the camp, the inmates built stables for livestock and a slaughterhouse.¹⁸

Between the beginning of April and the end of September 1941, for reasons which are not readily apparent, Stutthof was referred to in the concentration-camp nomenclature as a “transit camp,” although its function had not changed as against the preceding period.¹⁹ Very few documents from this period have survived.

¹⁷ M. Gliński, “Organisation...,” *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 98. On the organization of the SS Construction Administrations, see also Carlo Mattogno, *The Central Construction Office of the Waffen-SS and Police Auschwitz*, Theses & Dissertations Press, Chicago 2005.

¹⁸ E. Ferenc, “Bau und Erweiterung...,” *op. cit.* (note 16), pp. 99-102.

¹⁹ M. Gliński, “Organisation...,” *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 79.

In addition to the inmates from 1941 were the so-called *Erziehungshäftlinge* (rehabilitation inmates). These were nationals of occupied territories – and, to a lesser extent, Germans – who had violated their labor contracts or neglected to comply with the call-up to the labor service. On May 28, 1941, Himmler, in a circular letter to all offices of the *Sipo* (Security Police), ordered the construction of labor rehabilitation camps. He explained the reasons for this decision as follows:²⁰

“With the increasing use of foreign labor and other manpower in companies important to the national and the war economy, the cases of reluctance to work [also] increase, which, in the interest of the war effort of the German people, must be countered by all means. Workers who refuse to work or who endanger the morale of the workers otherwise and who thus have to be arrested by the police to maintain order and security, should be interned in special labor re-education camps and be given regular work. The labor re-education camps are intended exclusively to accommodate the work shirkers and idlers. Internment will occur for the purpose of re-education, nothing else.”

The *Sipo* chief of Danzig, Heinrich Willich, who had received Himmler’s above order to establish a labor re-education camp at Stutthof, sent a request about the camp’s status change and about the increase of the camp guards to Reinhardt Heydrich, Chief of *RSHA* (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, Imperial Security Main Office), who approved it the following day.²¹

At that time the camp was very small and, as indicated by Willich, contained about 2,000 inmates. An undated “List of the necessary manpower for the permanent staff and for the guards of the labor re-education camp Stutthof” stemming from this period included a total of just 291 staff members.²²

Compared to the political inmates, the “rehabilitation inmates” had an easy time and were usually freed after 56 days and assigned to a job. Their internment was not considered a punishment and did not affect the criminal record of the inmates. Furthermore, unlike other prisoners, the Polish and Jewish rehabilitation inmates were entitled to compensation for work done during the internment of 2 *Reichsmark* per day for married prisoners and 0.50 *Reichsmark* for unmarried inmates.²³

²⁰ Circular by Himmler of May 28, 1941, re. “Errichtung von Arbeitserziehungslagern,” RGVA, 1323-2-140, pp. 1f.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-21a.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-10a.

²³ Letter to the *Gestapo* at Danzig by the head of the *Arbeitserziehungslager* at

With the conversion of the camp, non-Polish detainees entered Stutthof for the first time in bigger numbers. French citizens arrived after September 1941; the first of these was a certain Jean Maurisse, who had been a foreign worker in Elbing (Polish Elbląg) for the E. Schichau company, and who returned there after his release from Stutthof.²⁴ There is also evidence of the presence of Italian rehabilitative inmates, but only in 1943 at the earliest.²⁵

Of the Polish political prisoners interned after the outbreak of the war in 1939, approximately 2,000 were released in 1940 and 1941.²⁶ The considerable reduction in the camp manpower starting in the spring of 1940 must be attributed partly to these releases and partly to transfers. In this regard, two large transports which left for Sachsenhausen as early as April 1940 are of considerable significance: 1,000 Stutthof inmates were transferred to Sachsenhausen on April 9, 1940, and another 800 inmates on April 19, 1940.²⁷ In contrast, however, there were no transports from officially recognized concentration camps to internment camps, transit camps, or work camps. On December 10, 1940, Stutthof, therefore, had only 1,024 inmates (including 100 women) over a third of whom were inmates of the subsidiary camps of Elbing and Grenzdorf.²⁸

Stutthof became a labor re-education camp officially on October 1, 1941. On that day the administration of the former civil internment camp was also transferred to the *Gestapo*. At that time it consisted of three residential barracks, one of them for female inmates, one infirmary building, a kitchen building, a disinfection building as well as four watchtowers.²⁹ From the transfer protocol it can be gleaned that the disinfection building contained a room with an autoclave and a disinfection boiler, a vestibule, a bathroom, a room for changing clothes, and a laundry facility.³⁰

Stutthof, Oct. 25, 1941. RGVA, 1323-2-140, p. 71; see Document 1 in the Appendix.

²⁴ Marek Orski, *Des français a Stutthof*, Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, Danzig 1995, pp. 9f.

²⁵ Marek Orski, *Gli Italiani a Stutthof*, Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, Danzig 1996, p. 8.

²⁶ Główna Komisja..., *op. cit.* (note 15), p. 498.

²⁷ Danuta Drywa, "Ruch transportów między KL Stutthof a innymi obozami," *SZM*, no. 9, 1990, p. 27.

²⁸ Główna Komisja..., *op. cit.* (note 15), pp. 498, 504.

²⁹ Transfer protocol of Oct. 28, 1941. RGVA, 1323-2-140, pp. 38-38a; see Document 2 in the Appendix.

³⁰ *Gerätebestand der Entlausungsbaracke* dated Stutthof, Oct. 1, 1941. RGVA, 1323-2-140, p. 71; see Document 3 in the Appendix.

Himmler visited Stutthof on November 23, 1941³¹ and finally decided to change the status of the camp to that of a regular concentration camp. The decisive factor in this decision was economic; this is proven by the following letter sent by Heinrich Himmler to the chief of the SS *Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt* Oswald Pohl on December 19, 1941:³²

“Dear Pohl!

I recently visited Stutthof Camp during my visit to the district of Danzig-West Prussia. I have become convinced that Stutthof is of great significance to the subsequent settlement of the district of Danzig-West Prussia. Stutthof has all the possibilities for workshops, joineries, metal-working shops, etc. I believe that we must further expand and utilize Stutthof. In my opinion, the expansion must strive at the following:

- 1) The installation of building joineries and metal workshops for settlement activity in West Prussia.*
- 2) The fullest use of the tailor shop, joinery, and other workshops for us. A great quantity of orders for the armed forces is being fulfilled.*
- 3) Installation of an auto repair workshop for the local SS headquarters.*
- 4) Purchase of a brickyard on the bay, which is very favorable and which has a narrow-gauge railway and canal, and which is being offered to us there now.*
- 5) Stutthof must also be expanded to accept 20,000 Russian prisoners of war at a later time, who can be used to build a settlement in the district of Danzig-West Prussia.*

I enclose a statement on the preparation of the site, drawn up in Danzig. Some of the sludge could be of interest for the fertilization of the meadows if it is worth mining it at a depth of 10-12 m, as well as the white, soft, medium-hard and hard limestone lying at a depth of 100 meters on the other hand. If I am not mistaken, there is a great lack of cement and limestone in the district of Danzig-West Prussia. Both can be derived from limestone.

Stutthof is now to be taken over by yourself and SS Brigadeführer Glücks as a recognized concentration camp with industrial function.

Heil Hitler!

Your H. Himmler”

Inspector of Concentration Camps Richard Glücks announced on January 7, 1942, that Stutthof would now be considered a state concentration camp. The respective cable stated:³³

³¹ A photo album of the Himmler visit has survived and is stored in the archive.

³² Archivum Muzeum Stutthof (hereinafter briefly referred to as AMS), I-IA-2; see Document 4 in the Appendix.

³³ RGVA, 1323-2-140, p. 95; see Document 5 in the Appendix.

“The Reich Leader SS and Head of the German Police has ordered that the internment camp Stutthof, including [its] industrial enterprises, is taken over by the Head of the SS Main Office Economics and Buildings and the Insp.[ectorate] of the Concentration Camps. The necessary preparations have to be implemented immediately.”

This decision was reflected in a circular letter of February 20, 1942 from the Chief of the Security Police and the *SD*:³⁴

“Former SS special camp Stutthof, by order of the Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police, effective immediately, is to be taken over as a state concentration camp with the designation ‘Concentration Camp Stutthof’. Former commander of Special Camp Stutthof, SS Hauptsturmführer of the Waffen-SS Pauly, is to be assigned camp commander by the Inspector of Concentration Camps.”

With its promotion to the rank of “state concentration camp,” Stutthof became subordinate to the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps in Oranienburg.

At that time the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, directed by SS-*Brigadeführer* Richard Glücks, was still subordinate to the SS *Führungshauptamt* (Central Office of the SS Leader). When this office was merged with the *Hauptamt Haushalt und Bauten* (Central Office Budget and Construction) to the new SS-*WVHA*, the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was incorporated into *Amtsgruppe D – Konzentrationslager* (Office Group D – Concentration Camps), to which the Stutthof Camp was also subordinate.³⁵

Max Pauly remained the commandant of the Stutthof Camp, as mentioned in the above document. At the end of August 1942, he was recalled from Stutthof to Neuengamme Concentration Camp, which he commanded until the end of the war. For his activities in this latter camp, he was sentenced to death and hanged after trial by the British occupation government in Hamburg.³⁶

Pauly’s successor in Stutthof was SS *Sturmbannführer* Paul Werner Hoppe. Hoppe was no longer fit for active service due to an inju-

³⁴ AMS, I-A-7; see Document 6 in the Appendix.

³⁵ The Inspectorate of Concentration Camps under Richard Glücks consisted of four departments, which, as *Amtsgruppe D*, were subordinate to the *Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt (WVHA)* of the SS in Berlin. Department D I (Concentration camps), which governed the administration of concentration camps; Department D II (Inmate labor), which coordinated inmate labor and ordered transfers; Department D III (camp hygiene and sanitary personnel); and Department D IV (Administration), which was responsible for the financing and equipping of the concentration camps.

³⁶ Janina Grabowska, “Die Verantwortung für die im KL Stutthof begangenen Verbrechen. Die Prozesse,” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2), p. 294.

ry suffered on the eastern front, and was therefore recalled into the concentration-camp service, to which he had already belonged as a member of the Dachau camp staff from 1937 to 1941. He commanded Stutthof until the end of the war, but left the camp at the beginning of April 1945, whereupon it was unofficially commanded by SS *Hauptsturmführer* Paul Ehle. Hoppe was sentenced to nine years imprisonment after a trial in Bochum in 1957. He was released after serving seven and half years.³⁶ We have no information as to Ehle's fate in the post-war period.

Stutthof was organized as follows:³⁷

Camp Commandant – Division I-VI – SS Death's-Head *Sturmabteilung*

The six departments were as follows:

Department I – Command Post: This consisted of the camp commandant's staff, and was subordinate to the adjutant of the latter. The following services were part of Department I: **The Security Service** supervised order in the camp; the **Information Service** was responsible for relations between the camp and the higher offices; **Motor Pool** in charge of transportation; the **Armory, Canteens** (there were two, one for the camp personnel and one for the inmates); the **SS Court** adjudicated minor violations of camp regulations (serious cases were referred to the SS Court in Danzig).

Department II – Political Department: This compiled the inmate's personal files based on transport lists, including the inmate's category (political prisoner, protective custody prisoner, criminal, etc.). In the event of death, it informed the relatives of the deceased person as well as the office that had ordered the transfer of the deceased person to the Stutthof camp. The Political Department also performed interrogations of inmates.

Department III – Protective-Custody Camp: The various departments of the camp were subordinate to the leader of the protective-custody camp: the men's camp, women's camp, and the camp complexes set up later (special camp, Germanic camp, and Jewish camp, which will be discussed in detail below). The leader of the protective-custody camp was accompanied by an officer responsible for determining the camp's manpower by carrying out roll calls twice a day. The **Labor Service**, which was subordinate to the Labor Service Leader, was a sub-department. The Labor Service Leader com-

³⁷ M. Gliński, "Organisation...", *op. cit.* (note 13), pp. 88ff.

piled an inmate card file based on vocation in order to ensure the most efficient employment of camp inmates.

Department IV – Economy and Administration: This department was responsible for financial issues, paying out wages to camp personnel, purchasing necessary food and clothing, etc.

Department V – Camp Doctor: The head camp doctor was responsible for medical care. The inmate and staff infirmary, the pharmacy, and the crematorium were under his care. The head camp doctor had to be present at executions as well as during the infliction of corporal punishment.

Department VI – Training: This department was responsible for the political and vocational training of camp personnel as well as for cultural events.³⁸

The **SS Death's Head *Sturmbann* CC Stutthof** consisted of camp guard personnel. In addition to Reich Germans, the guards consisted of a large percentage of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, as well as non-Germans (Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians). Approximately 2,500 guards, including a number of women, did service during the sixty-eight months of the camp's existence.³⁹

2. The Period from March 1942 to June 1944

On December 19, 1941, after his visit to the camp, Heinrich Himmler ordered the expansion of the Stutthof Camp within the framework of the "*Generalplan Ost*".⁴⁰ Pursuant thereto, 20,000 Soviet PoWs were to be admitted into the camp in order to contribute to "settlement expansion in the district of Danzig/West Prussia."³²

As a result of this decision, SS *Unterscharführer* Johann Pauls delivered a plan for the camp expansion to the *Reichsführer* SS, which was approved by Himmler on March 3, 1942. Among other

³⁸ These included, among other things, theatrical performances. For example, the Regional Theatre of Danzig-West Prussia presented a comedy on February 16, 1944 in the Comradeship Home of the camp. AMS, 1-1B-3.

³⁹ In 1944, when the large Jewish transports arrived, the camp administration organized a crash course for women supervisors, the graduates of which then did service in the Jewish camp as well as in the exterior offices. M. Gliński, "Organisation...", *op. cit.* (note 13) p. 92.

⁴⁰ Jan Erik Schulte, "Vom Arbeits- zum Vernichtungslager. Die Entstehungsgeschichte von Auschwitz-Birkenau 1941/42," in: *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 50, 2002, no. 1, p. 53.

things, it provided for the construction of housing for 20,000 inmates west and north of the already existing structures, now known as the “old camp.” To enable the planned expansion, the brickyard that was mentioned in Himmler’s letter of April 1942, as well as the Werdershof estate (also located south-east of the camp), were leased by Department II of the SS-*WVHA* (Budget and Construction),⁴¹ where the “Germanic camp”⁴² was to be built the following year.

North of the old camp 30 barracks were now built as the first part of the “new camp”; of these, 20 (labeled with numbers I to XX) were intended for inmates, including the camp canteen, the kitchen, and the quarantine barracks for inmates suffering from contagious diseases. The DAW (*Deutsche Ausrüstungs-Werke*) factories were housed in the remaining barracks, including a furrier’s workshop, tailor’s workshop, weaving workshop, shoemaker’s workshop, and a bicycle-repair workshop (see Document 7 in the Appendix for a Polish post-war camp map).

The first inmates were transferred to the new camp in July 1943. The women remained in the old camp.

Following completion of the barracks, construction began on the streets, sewerage, and water mains for the new camp. At the same time, construction began on a barracks for guard personnel west of the old camp; the guard personnel in question moved in on March 28, 1943.

Northeast of the new camp, work began in October 1943 on the construction of two factory hangars for the DAW. These were put into operation one year later. The Focke-Wulf Company manufactured airplane parts in the first factory hangar, while motors and machine parts were repaired in the second, the “*DAW Maschinenhalle*.”

Inmate labor was basically divided into two categories: the construction and maintenance of the camp itself, and labor for industrial enterprises. Inmates were made available to the latter against payment. As stated above, a few companies, such as the DAW or Focke-Wulf, established operations in the camp itself. Otherwise, inmates assigned to companies were put to work in “subsidiary camps” or “exterior commandos,” in which case there was a gradual transition between both types. Polish historiography assumes a total of 60 subsidiary camps and exterior commandos.⁴³ These included, for exam-

⁴¹ E. Ferenc, “Bau und Erweiterung...,” *op. cit.* (note 16), pp. 103f.

⁴² Camp for inmates of Germanic origin (mainly Norwegians and Danes).

⁴³ Główna Komisja..., *op. cit.* (note 15), pp. 502-506.

ple, the “Elbing exterior office,” where between 200 and 500 inmates were active for various undertakings “including work done for the Holzmann company in building the wharf, in the plywood factory, in cleaning the city, in the sewers of the city, and in some smaller enterprises,” as well as in building houses.⁴⁴

Other inmates were rented out to farmers working in the vicinity of Stutthof.⁴⁵

The leader of the Stutthof protective-custody camp, SS *Hauptsturmführer* Theodor Traugott Meyer, in his notes written in August 1947 while in a Polish prison, explains that 3,000 Jewish women were transferred to help during the harvest upon the personal intervention of Camp Commandant Hoppe.⁴⁶

All the above-mentioned factors prove the great significance of Stutthof Camp from an economic point of view (cf. Section IV.1).

Many inmates were released from the camp. According to the official history of the camp, the total number of released inmates amounted to 5,000.⁴⁷ Special lists of released inmates were compiled every day by the camp’s “Political Section.” Hundreds of such lists are preserved by the Stutthof Museum, which cover almost the entire history of the camp. Here are some examples:

June 13, 1942:	44 releases ⁴⁸
August 28, 1942:	58 releases ⁴⁹
December 18 1942:	51 releases ⁵⁰
May 06, 1943:	30 releases ⁵¹
July 12, 1943:	46 releases ⁵²
January 21, 1944:	55 releases ⁵³
February 10, 1944:	32 releases ⁵⁴
July 13, 1944:	24 releases ⁵⁵
August 29, 1944:	ca. 40 releases ⁵⁶

⁴⁴ Marek Orski, “Die Arbeit” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 207ff.

⁴⁵ In this regard, see the report by Gerda Gottschalk in: Hermann Kuhn (ed.), *Stutthof. Ein Konzentrationslager vor den Toren Danzigs*. Edition Temmen, Bremen 1995, pp. 138ff.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁴⁷ Janina Grabowska, “Die Häftlinge” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2), p. 120.

⁴⁸ AMS, 1-11C-6, p. 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁵¹ AMS, 1-11C-7, p. 37.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵³ AMS, 1-11C-8, p. 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37; see Document 8 in the Appendix.

Many of the inmates released on a given day were “rehabilitation inmates.” The list of May 6, 1943, provides an example of this: 30 rehabilitation inmates were released, in addition to two inmates to be transferred to Auschwitz or Sachsenhausen (one stateless “asocial” and one Polish protective-custody inmate).⁵⁷ On the other hand, the 58 inmates released on August 28, 1942, consisted of 23 “shirkers” (which was certainly a synonym for “rehabilitation inmates”) as well as 21 protective-custody inmates, *i.e.*, political prisoners. The majority of released inmates were Poles.

The releases from Stutthof are totaled at least until October 1944 in the “Lists of departures” (*Abgangslisten*), some pages of which have been preserved. For example, on October 19, 1944, at least 51 prisoners were released (indicated by the abbreviation A = 1), 15 women and 36 men.⁵⁸

It should be noted that some of these releases took place at a time when, according to the orthodox version of history, large numbers of inmates were being murdered in the gas chamber. According to the orthodox version of history, therefore, the Germans released witnesses to their alleged mass-extirmination program, enabling them to report about what they had seen! Since the alleged gas chamber was located immediately at the edge of the old camp and was easily visible from the old camp (see Document 7 in the Appendix), there would have been no way to conceal any homicidal mass gassings.

The increase in camp manpower after the decision to expand the camp is revealed in the following statistics:

31 July 1942:	2,283 inmates, including 163 women;
31 July 1942:	1,855 inmates, including 332 women;
31 March 1943:	3,590 inmates, including 285 women;
End of 1943:	approximately 6,000 inmates. ⁵⁹

With the designation of Stutthof as a regular concentration camp, transports not only departed for other concentration camps, but transports from other concentration camps entered the camp as well. A Polish study written in 1990 estimated the total number of persons

⁵⁶ Page number missing in our copy. The original has the lower part of the page torn; see Document 9 in the Appendix.

⁵⁷ See Document 10 in the Appendix.

⁵⁸ *Abgangsliste Nr. 8*. RGVA, 1367-1-195, pp. 206-206a. See Document 11 in the Appendix.

⁵⁹ Główna Komisja..., *op. cit.* (note 15), p. 498.

transferred from Stutthof at 24,624.⁶⁰ We will discuss the extent of transports from other camps to Stutthof in another chapter.

The transports to Stutthof beginning in 1942 – the first, with 114 inmates from Buchenwald, arrived on April 14, 1942⁶⁰ – resulted in an internationalization of Stutthof Camp. Of course, Poles remained the most numerous group of camp inmates until mid-1944, but the numbers of inmates from other countries, especially the Soviet Union and Germany, were constantly increasing. Resistance fighters or persons suspected of supporting the resistance, in addition to prisoners of war, also arrived from the USSR.

German new arrivals included significantly more criminals than political prisoners. Many such criminals arrived from Mauthausen, a camp designated for incorrigible serious criminals. This bad habit, stubbornly indulged in by the SS, of assigning career criminals to positions as *Kapos*, and therefore in a position of authority over other inmates, may have been the main reason for the brutality and mistreatment described at great length – as well as indubitably with dramatic embellishment – in the testimonies of former Stutthof inmates.⁶¹

Two smaller groups of prisoners also received privileged treatment in Stutthof. The first group consisted of the so-called “honorary prisoners,” which was understood to mean intellectuals interned for their political unreliability, or diplomats from the Baltic States of Latvia and Lithuania. These inmates lived separately from the other prisoners and did not have to work.⁶² The same was true of a group of 282 (or, according to other sources, 273) Norwegian policemen transferred to Stutthof in December 1943 or January 1944 for refusing to sign a loyalty oath to Vidkun Quisling’s National Socialist government. In 1943, these Norwegians were quartered in the so-called Germanic camp south-east of the old camp, which was originally intended for SS men liable to punishment.⁶³ Some of them voluntarily performed light work as gardeners or postmen. The approx-

⁶⁰ Danuta Drywa, “Ruch transportów...,” *op. cit.* (note 27), p. 31.

⁶¹ The terrorization of the political prisoners by the criminal inmates was a phenomenon observable in many camps. It is described in detail in serious works of concentration camp memoirs, such as, for example, Paul Rassinier’s *Le Mensonge de Ulysse* (reprint: La Vieille Taupe, Paris 1980), or Benedikt Kautsky’s *Teufel und Verdammte* (Büchergilde Gutenberg, Zürich 1946).

⁶² M. Orski, “Stutthof als internationales Lager,” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2) p. 145.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 148; M. Gliński, “Organisation...,” *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 93.

imately 150 Danish communists, having previously entered the camp in October 1943, were required to work on a regular basis, but they also appear to have received preferential treatment on the basis of their Nordic descent.⁶⁴

As in other camps, disease was the principal danger and chief cause of the high mortality. Typhus – which broke out in the spring of 1942 for the first time – was especially devastating. Another epidemic broke out in April 1943, and lasted until June.⁶⁵ Of the more than 1,100 inmates who died in that period, the majority doubtlessly died of typhus.⁶⁶

3. The Period from June 1944 to January 1945

Conditions in Stutthof changed drastically starting in mid-1944. In addition to a few transports of non-Jews, numerous mass transports of Jews – the vast majority of whom were women – arrived between 29 June and 28 October. I will return to this in Chapter IV.

The manner in which the camp administration reacted to the continuous arrival of mass transports is described by SS *Hauptsturmbannführer* Theodor Meyer, protective-custody camp commander in Stutthof, in his notes written in a Polish prison while awaiting execution:⁶⁷

“When the Lublin and Riga camps and outer camps in the East were evacuated, Stutthof was designated a reception camp. Transports with thousands of Jewish women arrived, even from Auschwitz. These trans-

⁶⁴ M. Orski, *op. cit.* (note 62), p. 145.

⁶⁵ On the typhus epidemics, see Elżbieta Grot, “Indirekte Extermination,” in: *Stutthof*, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 195f. The German term for typhus is *Fleckfieber*. Unfortunately the Polish literature does not distinguish between *Typhus* (typhoid fever) and *Fleckfieber* (typhus). These are two distinct diseases with merely partially similar symptoms. He could therefore not determine which one is meant.

⁶⁶ On the mortality, see Chapter III, Section 5. E. Grot mentions only 849 deaths between 1 April and 12 June, which may possibly be attributed to the fact that they do not take account of the exterior stations and auxiliary camps. In the death register, “Typhus” is listed as the cause of death in only 12 cases, leading E. Grot to assume a falsification of mortality statistics by the camp authorities. It is, however, impossible to understand why the camp authorities would have attempted to hide the typhus epidemic – which everyone knew about – through false statistics. Presumably “heart failure” was entered as the immediate cause of death for most victims of typhus, “heart failure,” “general exhaustion” and the like, being in fact results of the epidemic.

⁶⁷ Copy in the Archives of the Stutthof Museum, quoted according to H. Kuhn (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 45), pp. 189f.

ports were mostly in a condition that exceeded anything ever seen before. They were sent on the transports without sufficient clothing and food. Now they were supposed to be accepted in a camp that was itself on subsistence level. Telexes, radio messages, went back and forth between Berlin and Stutthof to make the gentlemen in Berlin realize that this was impossible; that Stutthof could no longer accept any more inmates. The camp commandant himself traveled to Berlin for a conference intended to prevent any more inmates from being sent to Stutthof, but without success. Berlin only promised to ensure that the inmates would be detailed off in workers.^[68] A representative appeared and made contacts with industry. Commandos were detailed off to Königsberg, Elbing, Danzig, Gotenhafen, Stolp, Bromberg, Stettin, and to the nearer or more distant surroundings. New masses arrived. The various offices of the Gestapo emptied their camps and ghettos and sent the inmates to Stutthof without making any inquiry at any time. Typhus-infected inmates spread the disease in the camp, and this epidemic caused many victims among the masses tightly packed together in the camp. Where, and how, could an improvement be made? More and more transports arrived. Could one refuse to accept them? No! When the transports arrived with their inmates, they had to be accepted.”

We see not the slightest grounds for doubting the truthfulness of the content of this testimony.⁶⁹

In order to provide at least some housing for the many new arrivals, a “Special Camp” was created from scratch in the western part of the camp in July 1944; this camp consisted of a kitchen barracks in addition to several inmate barracks. This camp was used, for example, to quarter Germans who had been taken hostage because relatives of theirs belonged to anti-National Socialist resistance movements; one of them was Fey von Hassell, daughter of diplomat Ulrich von Hassell.⁷⁰ Parallel to this area, 10 barracks numbered XXI

⁶⁸ Error in original.

⁶⁹ Theodore Traugott Meyer, in his report written during Polish imprisonment, expressly disputed the accusation of tormenting the inmates and insisted that he helped them as much as he could. He said he had taken care to ensure that as many inmates as possible would receive hard work bonuses, even when many prisoners were not entitled to them. He continues:

“The incorporation of the bath installations was approved for every housing block. The sanitary installations were good. The camp orchestra played Sundays. Entertainment was provided. And I am supposed to have approved all this because I wanted to torment the inmates? [...] Were the inmates mistreated at their arrival? No. When the big transports arrived, I made frequent inspections and saw no act of mistreatment.”

We reproduce these remarks by Meyer because we are of the opinion that both parties have the right to be heard.

⁷⁰ Fey von Hassell’s report regarding her stay in Stutthof was reproduced in extract

and XXX were built north of the new camp and designated, as a whole, the “Jewish camp,” although only six of the ten barracks were intended for Jews; another two were used to house women deported to Stutthof after the crushing of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and the other two were used as warehouses for personal effects.⁷¹

At the end of August 1944, the camp census, including the outer camps, was approximately 60,000;⁷² it had therefore multiplied tenfold in eight months! The last large transport arrived from Auschwitz on October 29. In the following month, only individual groups of inmates arrived at Stutthof; the last inmate, the Pole Jan Zielina, no. 105,302, arrived from Auschwitz on January 17, 1945.⁷³ The fact that transports from Stutthof departed after October 1944 was one reason for the renewed decline in the camp census. A second reason was the typhus epidemic that broke out in late summer 1944 for the second time and took on devastating proportions by the end of the year. The poor hygienic conditions in the further-overcrowded housing naturally contributed to propagation of the lethal epidemic. The deficiency of the disinfection facilities is shown, among other things, by the certification of a transfer to Flossenbürg dated November 24, 1944:⁷⁴

“The following inmates are to be transferred from Stutthof Concentration Camp to Flossenbürg Concentration Camp on 11.24.1944:

216 men (Jews)

284 women (Jews).

It should be noted that these inmates come from a camp in which typhus, paratyphus, diphtheria, and scarlet fever are rampant at the present time. Quarantine is therefore to be imposed, and these inmates are to be put to work in closed groups.

These inmates were bathed and deloused prior to departure on the transport. Due to insufficient delousing facilities at this camp, we cannot guarantee that these prisoners are free from lice.

The SS garrison doctor.”

On December 29, 1944, Hoppe found himself compelled to decree a partial camp quarantine by special order.⁷⁵

by H. Kuhn (ed.), *op. cit.* (note 45), pp. 176ff.

⁷¹ M. Gliński, “Organisation....,” *op. cit.* (note 13), p. 93; E. Ferenc, “Bau und Erweiterung...,” *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 107.

⁷² Główna Komisja..., *op. cit.* (note 15), p. 499.

⁷³ Elżbieta Grot, *Rejs Śmierci, Evakuacja morska Więźniów KL Stutthof*, Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, Danzig 1993, p. 13.

⁷⁴ AMS, I-II-C-4, p. 159; see Document 12 in the Appendix.

⁷⁵ AMS, I-IB-3, p. 275.

“In the course of the struggle against typhus, entry and leaving of the new women’s camps I, II, and III is blocked, effective immediately, due to danger of contagion by typhus.”

The raging epidemic and the generally deteriorating conditions against the background of the German military collapse led to the final, and worst, phase in the existence of Stutthof Camp – just as in Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, and other camps.

As of January 24, 1945, the day before the first waves of evacuation, the camp census report indicated a census of 28,390 female and 18,115 male inmates (including the subsidiary camps). This number included 25,775 Jewish women and 2,898 Jewish men.⁷⁶

4. Evacuation and the End

Documentation on the tragic last months of Stutthof Camp is very fragmentary. In Polish literature on the subject, commonplace facts and atrocity propaganda are intermixed in a veritable stew.⁷⁷ For this reason, it seems to us impossible to offer even an approximate estimate of the number of victims caused by the evacuation of the camp, and we will refrain from putting forth any estimates.

What has survived, though, are daily records on the camp strength from a series consisting mainly of *Morgenappell* (morning roll call) documents ranging from January 24 to April 22, 1945. They show the numbers given in Table 1 (next page).⁷⁸

The fate of Stutthof inmates at that time was very little different from – or even identical to – the fate of the millions of German civilians who fled before the advancing Red Army during that harshest winter of the war, under almost inconceivable circumstances and

⁷⁶ Camp strength report of 24 January 1945, GARF, 7021-106-3, p. 1.

⁷⁷ For example, J. Grabowska reports that women who were unable to march were burnt alive in their barracks by the SS (“Die Letzten Tage des Lagerbestehens. Die Befreiung,” in: *Stutthof, op. cit.* (note 2), p. 292). As a source, the reader is referred to the testimony of Kapo Alfred Nicolaysen before the Soviet Committee for the Investigation of War Crimes. As the author informs us on the following page of the same book, Nicolaysen was sentenced to death following trial in Danzig of 25 members of the camp guard personnel; Nicolaysen was then the only person pardoned out of the 14 persons sentenced to death, presumably in consideration for services rendered in shoring up the traditional atrocity story of Jews burnt alive by the SS.

⁷⁸ GARF, 7021-106-3, pp. 1-182.

Table 1: Inmates in the Stutthof Camp in early 1945⁸⁰

DATE	MALE INMATES	FEMALE INMATES	TOTAL
January 24	18,115	28,390	46,505 ⁸¹
January 30	10,544	23,404	33,948
February 1	10,317	22,274	32,591
February 5	10,229	22,165	32,394
February 10	10,050	21,803	31,853
February 15	15,900 ⁸²	10,209	26,109
February 20	15,662	9,381	25,043
February 25	15,469	9,075	24,544
March 1	15,270	8,744	24,022
March 5	15,158	8,434	23,592
March 10	15,020	8,188	23,208
March 15	14,904	8,000	22,904
March 20	6,287	3,170	9,457
March 25	6,603	3,236	9,839
April 1	4,866	2,239	7,105
April 5	4,843	2,159	7,002
April 10	4,773	2,093	6,866
April 15	4,692	2,043	6,735
April 20	4,629	2,004	6,633
April 22	4,614	1,985	6,599

who therefore suffered horribly high losses. The U.S. historian Mark Weber hit the nail on the head when he wrote:⁷⁹

“Stutthof’s prisoners were not the only ones to endure this terrible calamity. During this same period, hundreds of thousands of German civilians, most of them women and children, as well [as] civilians of other nationalities, were slowly making their way westward in the snow and freezing weather. Many of these people also died during the winter trek.”

In her interesting book *Rejs Śmierci (Voyage of Death)* the Polish historian Elżbieta Grot quotes a Norwegian inmate, not mentioned by name, who gives us the following general atmosphere of the conditions prevailing in West Prussia at that time:⁸³

“A line of refugees from East Prussia, several miles long, consisting of terror-stricken families who had abandoned their homeland and their property in panic was, to us, the visible image of a people in a state of

⁷⁹ Mark Weber, *op. cit.* (note 11), pp. 3ff.

⁸⁰ See Documents 23-34 in the Appendix.

⁸¹ GARF, 7021-106-3, p. 1. According to the *Stärkemeldung* and the *Stärke-Nachweis* for the same day, the number of inmates was 46,331 (GARF, 7021-106-3, pp. 2f.). The difference is explained by the changes occurring during the day.

⁸² It is unknown where these approximately 5,900 prisoners came from who were admitted into the camp between February 11 and 15.

⁸³ E. Grot, *Rejs Śmierci...*, *op. cit.* (note 73), p. 15.

complete dissolution. Dead horses lying by the edge of the road, desperation-filled old people, weeping women, and – the worst experience for us – starving infants, often running barefoot through the snow looking for mothers or fathers who had attempted to break through to the other side of the Weichsel [...] By midday, a sexton approached requesting us to help him bury the bodies of the dead, excusing himself by saying that no auxiliary labor was available to him.”

The tragedy of the Stutthof refugees who died during the evacuation must be viewed in the context of this tragedy extending over an immense territory. The decision to evacuate the camp appears to have been made by Fritz Katzmann, the Higher SS and Police Chief of Danzig, after the onset of the large-scale winter offensive of the Red Army on January 12, 1945. After January 20, all work in the camp was directed at the forthcoming evacuation, and approximately 11,000 inmates were led out of Stutthof on January 25 and 26. They were supposed to march on foot to Lauenberg, 140 km further west, for internment in a non-commissioned officers' school for the *Waffen-SS*. The distance was to be covered in seven days, exclusively on backroads, because the main roads were filled with German refugee columns and German troops. At night, the inmates were supposed to be lodged in villages.

The evacuation did not run according to plan, particularly because of the heavy snowdrifts and poor road conditions. Many inmates died on the road, others escaped, and considerable numbers were overtaken by the advancing Soviet troops and liberated. The majority of the evacuees were halted by the *Wehrmacht* before they reached Lauenberg, and put to work building anti-tank ditches. In early March, following the onset of another Soviet offensive, those who were able to march were led in the direction of Gotenhafen and Putzig, where they were supposed to be transported to Germany by ship. They did not get there, because the columns were captured on the way by the Soviets.⁸⁴ According to Polish sources based on estimates that cannot be verified, approximately 5,000 died out of the 11,500 evacuated on January 25 and 26.⁸⁵

Stutthof still had 33,948 inmates on January 30, approximately one third of them in the main camp.⁸⁶ At approximately the same

⁸⁴ M. Orski, *Ostatnie dni Obozu Stutthof*, Wydawnictwo Marpress, Danzig 1995, pp. 8ff.; J. Grabowska, “Die Evakuierung des Stammlagers zu Lande” in: *Stutthof*, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 267ff.

⁸⁵ J. Grabowska, *op. cit.* (note 84), p. 275.

⁸⁶ M. Orski, *op. cit.* (note 84), p. 14.

time, the camp began to fill with German refugees who took up temporary lodgings there, taking over the new camp and part of the old camp. Many of these German civilians were later evacuated to the west by sea. The camp was attacked by Soviet bombers on March 25 and on several occasions afterwards; several of the women's barracks in the old camp burnt down.⁸⁷

At this time, a large proportion of the inmates in Danzig and Gotenhafen – the name for Gdingen at that time – were put to work in the shipyard or in various factories. Beginning in March, these cities were severely bombed by the Soviet air force, killing many inmates and German civilians.⁸⁸

Instead of simply leaving the remaining inmates behind for the Soviets, as reason would have indicated, since the Soviet arrival was now only a question of time, even more panicked evacuation actions were carried out by sea during the last weeks of the war, ending tragically for a great many of the persons involved. On March 25, a ship transport with over 600 refugees from the Gotenhafen subsidiary camp sailed for Kiel, where the inmates were interned in subsidiary camps of Neuengamme Concentration Camp. Two large sea transports with a total of approximately 4,400 inmates departed on April 25 and 27. The first traveled by way of Hela to Neustadt, where the inmates were lodged in a hospital following the arrival of British troops. A few were later transferred to Sweden by the Swedish Red Cross for medical care. The second transport arrived at Flensburg after a long period of wandering. There, the inmates were embarked onto the ship *Rheinfels*. On May 9, the ship was boarded by representatives of the Swedish Red Cross, who decided to take the totally exhausted inmates to Sweden for treatment. A large number of the persons evacuated by sea died from hunger, exhaustion, or disease before the end of the war. An unknown number were killed during British aerial attacks on the evacuation ships.⁸⁹

The Red Army entered Stutthof on May 9, 1945, but found only approximately 150 inmates – most of whom were sick – in addition to approximately 20,000 German civilians. Paul Ehle, acting unofficially as the last concentration-camp commander, had fled a few

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Many of the Jewish women later reported by the Soviet Commission to have been burnt alive by the SS presumably died during these bombing attacks. See note 77.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁸⁹ A detailed description of the evacuation by sea can be found in E. Grot, *op. cit.* (note 73).

days before. The existence of Stutthof Concentration Camp coincided almost precisely with the duration of war: it opened the day after the war began, and was captured by Soviet troops the day after it ended.

In 1946 and 1947, four trials were held in Poland against a total of 80 members of Stutthof Camp guard personnel. After trial, 21 death sentences were handed down and carried out, with one exception. Another five camp functionaries, including the second commander, P.W. Hoppe, were brought to court in three trials in the Federal Republic of Germany (1955, 1957, and 1964); four of them received sentences of imprisonment of up to nine years.⁹⁰

The joy of liberation was of short duration for many inmates captured by the Red Army. Accused of collaboration with the Germans or of membership in Polish nationalist movements such as the *Armia Krajowa* (Homeland Army), or the Boy Scout-type organization *Szare Szeregi* (Gray Ranks), they were promptly arrested again and disappeared into Soviet concentration camps, some of them for many years. Three examples were Marian Pawlaczyk, Jan Będziński and Mieczysław Goncarzewski, who were only released from the Gulag archipelago after Stalin's death in 1953. Their crime: During interrogations held after their liberation by the Soviet secret service NKVD, they were found to be too well-informed about the structure of the camp. This sealed their fate: in the eyes of the NKVD, this proved that they had collaborated with the Germans.⁹¹

⁹⁰ J. Grabowska, *op. cit.* (note 36), pp. 293f.

⁹¹ M. Orski, *op. cit.* (note 84), pp. 36ff.