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MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

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MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

Framework concept for the redesign
of the Mauthausen Memorial

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FOREWORD

The silence was uncomfortable, almost oppressive, at the end of my interview with the former inmate and concentration camp survivor Hans Maršálek, arranged as part of a discussion event. I had a lump in my throat as I watched this ninety-four-year-old man with tears in his eyes as he spoke of the blindness of those who persist in living in the past and of some young people. It is moments like these that remind me starkly of my motivation for this work: making sure we never forget, and the important assertion: “Never again!”, which must not be allowed to fade away and which we must never become indifferent to.

I have been responsible for the Mauthausen Memorial for the last four years. As a historian and as someone born in 1978, a long time after the events that took place there, I have been asking myself from the outset what Mauthausen stands for. Is it a collection of old buildings that recall a terrible era? Is it a place of learning for the 200,000 or so visitors who come to see and form their impressions of the site every year? Or is it primarily a memorial and cemetery? To what extent can we call it an “open-air museum”?

A lot of questions that in a complex and extended process have produced

countless approaches and alternatives. Mauthausen Memorial and its exhibition, installed in 1970 and mostly unchanged since then, has long been the object of discussion, sometimes animated and sometimes less so, and, sadly, of sometimes political, but mostly scientific dispute. It is now the last of the major concentration camp memorials to be redesigned – although this fact is nothing to be proud of. The concept described here provides the basis for this redesign. There have been twelve of us who have drafted, discussed, argued about and fine-tuned it, experts from different disciplines with different approaches to the subject, and with great energy, motivation and sense of responsibility. Bertrand, Heidemarie, Christian and Stephan, Franz, Jörg and Florian, Robert, Harald and Ralf, Yariv – I thank you all.

The coming years will therefore see changes in Austria’s largest concentration camp memorial. We will provide information about our work, seek dialogue with survivors, with the public and with our partners, who are so important to us, and we will also give our best. Together we hope to succeed in ensuring that this memorial to humanity and human dignity and against exclusion and intolerance has a “promising future” – in spite of everything.

Barbara Glück

INTRODUCTION

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW CONCEPT

For the last two decades, prominent researchers and interest groups within society have been pointing to the need to redesign Mauthausen Memorial. Yet numerous proposals developed in the past have never been implemented. In 2001 the then Federal Minister Ernst Strasser inaugurated an initiative to redesign the memorial.

The first concrete and quickly implemented results included the erection of new visitors' centres in Mauthausen and Gusen, recording the recollections of hundreds of survivors of the camp as part of an international interview project, setting up the website www.mauthausen-memorial.at and establishing an advisory committee, which later became part of the larger International Forum Mauthausen. Other important areas, such as the urgently needed redesign of the permanent exhibition or a more professional

approach to the memorial education concept, were initially moved down the list of priorities.

In 2008, Federal Minister Günter Platter initiated a project for the redesign of Mauthausen Memorial and commissioned Section IV/7 of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the department responsible for concentration camp memorials, to devise a concept. A working group was established with members of the department and external experts from different disciplines (history, memorial education, museology). Altogether the working group had thirteen members, a manageable number that permitted efficient discussion and decision-making. By including experts in memorials and museums from Germany it was possible to benefit from the experience they had gathered in the course of their own restructuring processes.

The initial meetings focused on basic questions such as the educational

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aims of the redesign, the special features of Mauthausen concentration camp and its history, and the national and international significance of the memorial. On the basis of these general discussions it was then possible to turn to the specific features of the site. A focus of the work here was the definition of the relevant historical content to be taken into account in the redesign, and its integration in the topography of the memorial. This document is the result of the discussions in the working group and the joint decisions made there.

Apart from defining the basic principles for dealing with the historical site and the content needed to present the history of the camp, the group also considered it important to define specific implementation measures and essential preliminary work (conversion and refurbishing, research and collection requirements, etc.).

In parallel to developing the concept, specific projects were initiated, the results of which provide the basis for the coming redesign of the Mauthausen Memorial. Of particular note in this regard is the archaeological investigation of the ground and buildings on the memorial site that has been carried out since autumn 2008 in collaboration with the Institute of Prehistory and Early History and the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna. Two plots of land have also been purchased by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs, Family and Youth that had previously been the location of significant camp areas such as the Ash Dump and camp III. These can thus be incorporated in future in the memorial concept. Finally, the ongoing research and collection activities by the Mauthausen Memorial

archive provide an important basis for communicating historical content.

The work on the new concept for the Mauthausen Memorial has been carried out in close cooperation with external experts and institutions from various disciplines. This will be extended and intensified during the implementation phase, since without it a lasting redesign of the site will not be possible.

The concept outline that follows will act as a guideline and contextual framework for the redesign of the memorial. With this objective in mind and taking into account the comments and suggestions made during its presentation at the Dialogforum Mauthausen, the concept will serve as a basis for elaborating individual projects in detail. Owing to the extent of the measures, the concept will have to be implemented in stages, commencing immediately after its presentation. The working group will continue to exist so as to define these stages, elaborate the projects and subprojects in detail and implement them in cooperation with Section IV/7. Priority will be given to the implementation of the decentralised exhibition concept, starting with the overview exhibition and new signage of the historical site, and the implementation of the overall educational concept.

MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP 1939–1945

The first inmates from Dachau concentration camp arrived in Mauthausen on 8 August 1938, five months after the “Anschluss” (Annexation) of Austria to Nazi Germany.

The siting of Mauthausen, and of its satellite camp Gusen in 1940, was chosen because of the nearby granite quarries. The inmates were initially put to work erecting the camps and then to produce building materials for the SS company Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke GmbH (DeSt), for use in the monumental and prestige buildings of the German Reich.

The political function of the camp, the continuous persecution and incarceration of actual or supposed political and ideological opponents, had priority until 1943. Mauthausen and Gusen were for a time the only “category III” camps, making for the most severe conditions of confinement within the

Nazi concentration camp system. The mortality during this time was amongst the highest of all concentration camps in the German Reich.

As in the other concentration camps, the inmates of Mauthausen were put to work increasingly in the armaments industry after 1942–43. Several satellite camps were erected and the number of inmates increased dramatically. At the end of 1942 there were 14,000 inmates in Mauthausen, Gusen and a few satellite camps. In March 1945 there were over 84,000.

From the second half of 1944, thousands of inmates, evacuated from other concentration camps to the east of Mauthausen, began to arrive. Moreover, in early 1945, the satellite camps east of Mauthausen and the forced labour camps for Hungarian Jews were closed.

The inmates were driven in death marches towards Mauthausen. This led to sudden and terrible overcrowding in

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Soviet prisoners of war in the roll-call area, SS photo, October 1941

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Mauthausen, Gusen and the satellite camps Ebensee, Steyr and Gunskirchen. Hunger and disease caused the mortality rate to rise sharply.

In contrast to the original idea of establishing a camp for Austrian men, the majority of the 200,000 inmates deported to Mauthausen came from over forty countries, particularly Poland, the Soviet Union and Hungary. Large groups of Germans and Austrians, French, Italians, Yugoslavs and Republican Spaniards were also interned in Mauthausen. Jewish inmates from Hungary and Poland began to arrive in large numbers from early 1944. The same year several thousand women were transferred to Mauthausen.

Thousands of inmates were beaten to death, shot, killed by lethal injection or died through hypothermia as part of the "death bath actions". Over 10,200 inmates were killed in the gas chamber in the main camp, in Gusen or Hartheim Castle and in gas vans driving between Mauthausen and Gusen. But most of the inmates succumbed as a result of the ruthless mistreatment and brutality that accompanied the exploitation of their labour, of deficient diet and clothing, and the absence of medical care. Altogether around 100,000 inmates died in Mauthausen, Gusen and the satellite camps, half of them in the last four months before liberation. Mauthausen was liberated by the US Army on 5 May 1945.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL

In the days and months after liberation, the US Army was occupied with taking care of the survivors, burying the dead in a special cemetery, documenting the crimes and repatriating former inmates.

When the occupation zones were determined, the Mauthausen camp came under Soviet administration, served as a barracks for several months and then stood empty until it was handed over to the Republic of Austria in 1947. The local population saw the former camp as a source of valuable building materials and dismantled large parts of it. This pragmatic phase ended on 20 June 1947 when the Soviet occupying forces handed the camp over to the Republic of Austria on the condition that it was turned into a worthy memorial.

Between 1947 and 1949 the Republic of Austria established a national memorial on the site, while at the same time demolishing further areas of the camp and selling practically all of the SS and inmate barracks. Because of the anticipated high maintenance costs, only areas of the camp that were considered of great historical importance and clearly expressed the martyrdom and suffering of the inmates were retained. These surviving relics thus took on even greater importance as testimony to the history of the camp, and this was further enhanced by renovation work and structuring of the site.

As a further commemorative area a sarcophagus was erected in the roll-call area and a chapel and secular consecrated area installed in the former laundry building.



Memorial park at Mauthausen, 2008

The Public Mauthausen Memorial was opened in early 1949. Mauthausen was thus one of the first national concentration camp memorials in Europe.

After the opening of the memorial, however, public interest in Mauthausen dwindled. During the Cold War the memorial had no place in the iconography of the reconstruction of Austria and was side-lined by a commemorative culture whose most visible expression came in the form of the erection across the country of memorials to those who had fought and died in the war.

On the initiative of former inmates from various countries, led by France, national memorials were erected in Mauthausen at this time. The memorial park on the site of the former SS barracks today also includes monuments to groups of victims rather than nationalities – Jews, Roma and Sinti, and young victims – and is regarded as a special feature of the Mauthausen Memorial site. The original concept, which saw the camp relics in themselves as an appropriate memorial to the suffering of the inmates, was thus abandoned in favour of symbolic memorials.

In the early 1960s a cemetery was established in part of the former inmate camp to which the remains of concentration camp victims were transferred from the American cemeteries in Mauthausen and Gusen and the mass graves set up by the SS. More than 14,000 victims are buried in camp II and in the area of inmate barracks 16 to 19.

An initiative of former inmates, accompanied by the founding of the non-partisan Österreichische Lagergemeinschaft Mauthausen in 1964, led to a permanent exhibition on the history of the camp being commissioned by the government in the mid-1960s. The exhibition, which was installed in the former infirmary under the direction of former Mauthausen inmate Hans Maršálek, was opened in 1970. In addition to its function as a cemetery and memorial, this permanent exhibition of Nazi crimes in Austria now made Mauthausen into a site for political and historical education.

This “museum” represented the starting point for the memorial’s evolution into a central site for confronting the history of

Nazi crimes in Austria. The importance of this was reflected in the increasing number of visitors. The growing relevance of the memorial for historical and political education could also be seen in the regular official recommendations by the Ministry of Education since the 1970s, encouraging schools to visit the site.

At the same time, interest in the Mauthausen Memorial as a platform for various political and cultural events also increased. The annual liberation celebrations were now attended by high-ranking politicians and representatives of public life. The swearing-in of soldiers in 1983 and the visit by Pope John Paul II in 1988 also drew public attention to Mauthausen. Even controversial events, like the concert by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in 2000, further demonstrated that at the end of the twentieth century the Mauthausen Memorial had become a focus of official Austrian commemorative culture and remains so today. Since 1997, the date on which Mauthausen was liberated has become the official national day for commemorating the victims of National Socialism.

Since the 1990s, against the background of international political upheavals and a change in attitudes to Austria's Nazi past, discussions about the need to reform the memorial led, amongst other things, to the construction of the Visitors' Centre in 2003, which also laid the foundation for a more fundamental redesign of the memorial.

COMMEMORATIVE CULTURE AT MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL

Mauthausen Memorial is not merely a historical site commemorating the crimes of the Nazi regime – as well as survival and resistance. It is also, and above all, a cemetery dedicated to the memory of the victims. Survivors and relatives of Mauthausen inmates from all over the world still visit the site to remember the dead.

Just as former inmates were instrumental in the establishment and development of the memorial, the commemorative culture, too, has until recently been mainly driven by survivors and their organisations. The first commemorative celebration took place on 16 May 1945 as a farewell celebration in the roll-call area for the former Soviet prisoners. This International Solidarity Rally already contained all of the elements that were to characterise the "official" international component of later liberation celebrations, such as the ritual entrance into the camp of former inmates and their mustering in the roll-call area.

Since 1946, international liberation celebrations instigated by organisations of former inmates have taken place each year in May, around the date the camp was liberated. In the first decades the socialising practice of commemoration was essential to the creation and maintenance of group identity within the victim associations. At the same time these events signalled to the outside world that the suffering at Mauthausen concentration camp could not simply be forgotten.

In the first decades after the war, participation in the liberation



Procession of former inmates at the liberation commemoration in May 1955

celebrations and visits to the former concentration camp and its satellite camps in general were restricted for the most part to survivors and relatives of persons deported to Mauthausen. Involvement by the people of Austria and official bodies in these annual events was small until the 1970s. The presentation of the former Mauthausen concentration camp as a site commemorating victims, particularly during the liberation celebrations, conflicted directly with the experience of most of Austrian society, who had been active participants in National Socialism. It was not until the changing historical awareness in Austria in the 1970s that the commemorative culture in Mauthausen was recognised more by society and politicians. This was accompanied by the establishment of the memorial as a place of historical and political education.

This reorientation is not just an Austrian phenomenon. The fundamental discussions taking place on attitudes to National Socialism in the national consciousness in the course of the political upheavals in the early 1990s have given impetus in many European countries to new ways of commemorating the victims of the Nazi regime. Holocaust memorials, commemorative museums, and the redesign of exhibitions and memorials are illustrative of a new European commemorative culture since the 1990s. Memorials to the crimes of National Socialism are seen as places that provide first-hand access to history

and to the events at the very places where they occurred.

In Mauthausen, and particularly at the sites of other camps like Gusen and the satellite camps, the commemorative culture has been fostered and cultivated since the 1980s increasingly by later generations. In 2000, the *Österreichische Lagergemeinschaft Mauthausen* handed over its agenda to the follow-up organisation, *Mauthausen Komitee Österreich*.

The material expression of this commemorative culture can be seen in particular in the erection of memorials and monuments at the sites of former satellite camps. In Mauthausen itself, apart from the official memorials and commemorative areas, sites have been created for specific forms of collective and individual remembrance, such as the area of the former crematorium.

These places and the associated forms of remembrance are an essential component of the memorial. They are nurtured by a living commemorative culture that will need to be consolidated in future.

In particular, the redesign will need to take account of hitherto neglected areas of commemoration, such as the former Ash Dump, which should be made accessible so as to make clear their significance in the camp's history and as a place of the dead.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE REDESIGN

REDESIGN GUIDELINES

The redesign of Mauthausen Memorial is part of an ongoing process of change that the site has undergone since it was handed over to the Republic of Austria in 1947. The redesign measures must therefore be seen as part of a continuing historical process.

The concept working group decided to draft guiding principles that should remain valid beyond the redesign project itself. The guidelines will thus not only determine the nature and extent of measures carried out during the present redesign, but will also govern future decisions and provide a framework for responsible management of Mauthausen Memorial. As such they form the parameters against which all future work can be verified.

1. The historical buildings are to be preserved.
2. Building measures, including renovation and conservation, should be subject to a prior expert assessment.
3. The reference point for the redesign is the documented status of the camp on 5 May 1945, with allowance for reconstruction and interference with the historical substance after that date.
4. The existing memorial areas and cemeteries are to be preserved as such and maintained in a dignified manner in commemoration of the victims.
5. Any information provided must refer to the historical site and not compete with it.
6. The information should be organised to target different visitor groups.
7. Rules for design interventions are to be drafted and bindingly observed during implementation.
8. All future design measures must also involve a documentation of the previous status quo.

DEALING WITH THE SITE

THE REMAINS OF THE CAMP AFTER 1945

The concentration camp liberated by the US Army on 5 May 1945 was not completed as the original SS plans intended. Construction work was carried out continuously at the camp between 1939 and 1945, not only to accommodate the increasing number of inmates but also to adapt the camp to requirements presented by the steady enlargement of the camp's functions.

Before it was liberated, Mauthausen concentration camp had already been modified in an attempt to remove the traces of the crimes committed there. The SS had incinerated large amounts of documents and photographs and the

gas chambers had their installations hastily dismantled. This makes it difficult to set a starting point for the archaeological remnants from which to survey subsequent changes. The date of liberation, 5 May 1945, nevertheless presents itself as an appropriate baseline.

For the US Army the liberated camp was above all a crime scene, the site of Nazi atrocities. Many liberated inmates saw the former camp first of all as a place of suffering, and the remains stood for the crimes committed there and thus took on the status of relics.

In conflict with the interests of former inmates in preserving the remains of the camp, they were seen by others as a source of valuable building materials which were in very short supply in the

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Ash Dump with commemorative stone and cross, 2006

immediate post-war period. Until the site was handed over to the Republic of Austria in 1947, the remains of the building were arbitrarily destroyed. The erection of the memorial between 1947 and 1949 was also accompanied by the dismantling of significant sections of the camp, justified both by financial considerations and also by differences in interpretation of the historical significance of the remaining buildings as symbols of the inmates' suffering. Moreover, the renovations during conversion of the former camp into a worthy memorial and thereafter did not comply with present-day standards for handling historical buildings.

The historical site was changed and modified several times in this way, but for a long time the interventions were not adequately documented.

PRESERVING THE BUILDING REMAINS AS PART OF THE REDESIGN

One of the aims of the redesign of the memorial is to ensure that the surviving buildings and camp features are preserved and protected as set forth in national and international laws and conventions. The baseline for this consideration is the status on 5 May 1945, with account taken of the memorial areas and cemeteries as an essential component of the subsequent history of and attitude to the camp. The aim is to clearly differentiate these different epochs and hence to make them recognisable.

The restoration of the original state, such as the removal of the asphalt on the roll-call area laid in the 1980s, is justified by educational and scientific arguments and will take place solely on the basis of prior archaeological and architectural assessments. Apart from measures to shore up the buildings, no reconstruction

is intended, and necessary structural measures should be kept to a minimum.

DEFINITION OF THE CAMP BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Mauthausen Memorial defined between 1947 and 1949 enclosed only part of the former concentration camp. Many sections were returned to their earlier owners, including part of the inmates' camp and the former tent camp and camp III (purchased by the Republic of Austria in 2009). The Ash Dump and execution area, many administrative buildings, workshops and technical installations were outside the memorial. The Wiener Graben quarry, a central symbol within Mauthausen, was not integrated in the memorial until the 1950s, and part of the site, along with the SS barracks (today Bernaschek housing estate), still remained outside.

This redrawing of the memorial boundaries determined which buildings and structures were retained and which were left in disrepair. Even within the memorial, however, parts of the camp were transformed or changed after 1945, making them difficult to identify as belonging to the former concentration camp. This applies, for example, to the area of the former hospital camp, which was burnt down by the US Army to prevent epidemics.

The original structure and extent of the camp is to be made visible again through restrained landscaping and historical interpretation, although once again avoiding any form of reconstruction. These interventions are part of the overall landscape design concept that is to be developed.

A prerequisite that considerably facilitates the achievement of this aim is the long-term intention of gradually

purchasing the sites not belonging to the Republic on which parts of the camp were situated.

A further prerequisite is the archaeological investigation that is already underway in a collaboration between the memorial and the Institute of Prehistory and Early History and the Institute of Contemporary History of the University of Vienna, which will supply more detailed information about the topography and surviving traces of no longer recognisable parts of the camp (hospital camp, camp III, tent camp).

ACCESSIBILITY OF CAMP AREAS AND BUILDINGS

Certain areas of the Mauthausen Memorial have both historical significance and modern-day functions. These former places of death and suffering are now archaeological remains used for museum purposes, as well as being a memorial and place of contemplation.

One central and sensitive place of this type is the area of the crematorium, gas chamber and execution site, where these different functions coincide in a particularly striking manner. The way in which these areas are accessed today fails to do justice to their multifaceted significance. The crowds of visitors wishing to see these confined areas jar with their function as a place of quiet contemplation. Access by visitors to the gas chamber is problematic from an educational point of view and also for reasons of piety. In addition, the volume of visitors in these areas also threatens the building structure and hence important traces of the crimes that were committed there.

The new design will reorganise access to this area of the camp without one of

the above-mentioned functions being sacrificed at the expense of another. Access to the gas chamber, execution site and morgue will be restricted, but they will still be viewable from the outside. The existing areas of personal contemplation such as crematoriums I and III will retain this function and visitor access will be controlled in such a way as to preserve the dignity of the sites and the historical building substance.

As far as the opening of hitherto inaccessible areas and buildings is concerned, questions of conservation and safety and of the contextual relevance for the memorial's educational concept must first be considered. Whilst allowing for these considerations, the basement area of the kitchen barracks and the camp commandant's room will be incorporated in the exhibition concept as part of the "Inmates of Mauthausen concentration camp" and "SS camp" exhibitions.

In addition, all other rooms should be made accessible in principle for guided tours on specific themes.

BASIC EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF MEMORIAL WORK

In the last twenty years there has been increasing debate surrounding the expectations society has of memorials to victims of the Nazis. It has been questioned whether a visit to a memorial on its own is enough to promote a humanitarian and democratic attitude. In parallel with the development of educational departments within the memorials, it has become evident that mere confrontation with the crimes committed in these places does not necessarily make visitors sensitive to the concept of human rights. Memorials face major challenges in their efforts to communicate and present the historical events appropriately. They must fulfil several, often conflicting functions. On the one hand, they are burial grounds and places of mourning, respect and restraint. At the same time, however, they need to create an atmosphere conducive to open and critical learning. They should trigger empathy and understanding for the victims but also a confrontation with the history of the perpetrators. They should incite political thinking and action by referencing current events, while at the same time underlining the uniqueness of the Nazi crimes and avoiding simplifications or generalisations. Finally, they must combat the trivialisation of the events but, at the same time, function as public cultural sites capable of handling thousands of visitors, offering food and sanitary facilities as well as literature about the genocide and information about the daily experience of torture and death in the concentration camps.

RESTRUCTURING OF EDUCATIONAL WORK

In autumn 2007, a department was established at Mauthausen Memorial to

develop an educational infrastructure. The following aims were defined:

EVALUATION

The memorial is visited by individuals and groups with different backgrounds, expectations and needs, which makes it necessary to devise a nuanced educational concept. This will be defined in the course of a future evaluation project.

PROFESSIONAL GUIDES

For the last few decades the educational work at the memorial has relied mainly on volunteers performing community service as an alternative to military service. The increasingly young age of these volunteers and the limits to their training because of the short period of service are at odds with the professional education concept the Memorial aspires to. Since 2007 a pool of communicators has been established with the appropriate knowledge, empathy and sensitivity to the site and its educational objectives.

DIVERSITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL MEASURES

A varied educational agenda has to be developed to meet the different needs of visitors. The accompanying educational programme should be oriented towards the target groups and also offer the possibility for thematic focuses. In addition to the different types of guided tours, the programme should also offer workshops and seminars.

COLLABORATION WITH THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ART AND CULTURE

Around one third of the visitors to the memorial are Austrian schoolchildren. In the past they were often confronted by the Mauthausen Memorial without adequate preparation. The existing collaboration

with the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture and the communication project “erinnern.at” is to be stepped up so as to create an appropriate framework for school visits to Mauthausen. This will start with age guidelines for visits to

the memorial and will include seminars for teachers in which they will be made aware, amongst other things, of the need for preparation and follow-up of visits, as well as the provision of educational material on the memorial website.



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Community service volunteer giving a guided tour to a school class, 2008

OTHER COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Cooperation with other organisations and interest groups involved in memorial education will be intensified. Collaboration with the Mauthausen Komitee Österreich regarding the training of communicators should be sought. The development of common standards and quality criteria for education and communication at the memorial is particularly important in this respect as a means of fostering the exchange of knowledge and coordinating the educational provision at the memorial.

PUBLIC ARCHIVE AND RESEARCH FACILITIES FOR VISITORS TO THE MEMORIAL

Apart from the exhibitions, there are no other facilities at the Mauthausen Memorial where visitors can carry out their own research into the history of Mauthausen concentration camp. Research on relatives or specific questions about the history of Mauthausen can currently be carried out only at the archive in Vienna. Material for further research is not presently available at the memorial itself.

In future this will be provided by a public archive designed specially for visitors to the memorial. It will offer the means for independent but guided research to follow up the information communicated during the visit to the memorial. The content must first be collated and prepared. The detailed concept for the public archive must therefore be developed in close cooperation between the archive in Vienna and the educational department at the memorial.

SATELLITE CAMPS AND GUSEN

Mauthausen concentration camp was a system consisting of a main camp in Mauthausen, a branch camp in Gusen and around forty satellite camps. The first of these satellite camps, established in 1941, served the SS. With the increasing importance of the war industry for Nazi Germany, a growing network of satellite camps was created. Of the over 84,000 inmates in the Mauthausen camp system in March 1945, 65,000 were in the satellite camps and Gusen.

GUSEN MEMORIAL

Gusen had a special status within the Mauthausen concentration camp

system. The site for its construction was chosen in 1938 at the same time as the main camp in Mauthausen. It was run largely as an independent camp from 25 May 1940. Mauthausen and Gusen were closely related in function, however, because of the granite industry and the class III categorisation of both camps. Of the 71,000 or so inmates in Gusen, around half died in the camp.

In spite of the large number of victims and its special significance for certain groups of victims, Gusen was sidelined for a long time as a memorial.

While the Republic of Austria centralised commemoration of the victims of the Nazi

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Mauthausen concentration camp and its satellite camps

concentration camps in Mauthausen, Gusen had only an unofficial memorial to its victims.

In the 1960s, survivor associations erected the Mémorial de Gusen in the area of the former crematorium barracks. At this time the remains of the camp had already disappeared, with the exception of a few structures. The majority of the former site is now privately owned and is used for commercial or residential purposes.

It is only since 1997 that the Republic of Austria has met its commitment to commemorate the victims of Gusen concentration camp by declaring the Mémorial de Gusen a public monument. However, the remaining buildings in Gusen are not listed as historical monuments and are in danger of being destroyed. To consolidate Gusen as a place of remembrance in future it is vital that the remaining buildings are preserved.

A visitor centre was built close to the memorial in 2004 and a permanent exhibition on the history of the camp was installed there a year later. The "Audioweg Gusen", established in 2007 on the site of the former camp, also provides information on its history and on the treatment of the remains of the camp after the war.

These measures address the history of the camp in a manner appropriate to its significance. In the last few years, however, it would appear that the exhibition at the Gusen Memorial has not been highly frequented. The Gusen

concept must therefore be more closely linked to the Mauthausen Memorial in keeping with the camp's historical role.

There are several measures that could be introduced to increase the number of visitors to the Gusen Memorial. The new entrance to the Mauthausen Memorial will be of significance here, as information about the Gusen Memorial can be provided at this point, but also as part of the pre-visit information. Groups on a tight schedule should be pointed towards the exhibition in the Gusen Visitor Centre. Those with a larger amount of time at their disposal who wish to find out more should also be made aware of the Audioweg Gusen. Furthermore, the existing website www.gusen-memorial.at should be better incorporated in the Mauthausen Memorial website. Finally, the standard tour of the Mauthausen Memorial and the overview exhibition and Mauthausen quarry exhibition should all point out the topographical and functional connection between the two concentration camps.

MEMORIALS IN FORMER SATELLITE CAMPS

Apart from Mauthausen and Gusen, the Melk memorial and Ebensee concentration camp cemetery also fall under the responsibility of Mauthausen Memorial. In cooperation with the Mauthausen Komitee Kärnten/Koroška, the erection of a memorial at the former Loiblpass Nord satellite camp is currently being planned. Many other former satellite camps have fallen into oblivion today. Mauthausen Memorial must also take responsibility for the sites of former Mauthausen satellite camps.

The following objectives will be set to commemorate these places of terror:

- **PRESERVATION:** The surviving building remains in the former satellite camps must be preserved.
- **DOCUMENTATION:** The building remains must be documented, interpreted and placed in the context of their original historical status. Source documentation on individual camps in the Mauthausen Memorial archive will need to be systematically enhanced and added to.
- **INITIATION OF LOCAL PROJECTS:** At the regional level, confrontation with and research into the history of the satellite camps should be stimulated. This can occur through direct cooperation with local initiatives or by offering targeted support.
- **INFORMATION:** Information should be provided at the sites of the former satellite camps. This task should be carried out by local initiatives, with the quality of the information and communication verified by the Mauthausen Memorial.

THE DECENTRALISED EXHIBITION CONCEPT

Every year the Mauthausen Memorial receives around 200,000 visitors. They come to Mauthausen above all to find out about this historical site and its installations and buildings. An important aim in the redesign of the museum must therefore be to develop the twenty-eight-hectare site so as to provide visitors with an idea of both the topography and the history of the camp.

The core idea of the decentralised exhibition concept is to enable exploration and discovery of the historical site. The surviving buildings and installations are to be seen as exhibits used to explain the history and functioning of Mauthausen. Inscriptions and comments will provide contextual information about the historical significance and topographical situation of individual camp installations. Key information on the history of the camp – and also to some degree the memorial – should be available without visiting an exhibition or taking a guided tour.

A further essential component of the concept is a system of decentralised exhibitions providing in-depth information. These will consist of a historical overview exhibition and five detailed thematic exhibitions. The decentralised exhibition concept provides a basis for addressing the history of the camp at different analytical levels and from different perspectives, allowing an understanding of the history of Mauthausen as a whole. It also takes account of the fundamental difference between the victim and perpetrator perspectives.

The relationship between the overview exhibition and the individual thematic exhibitions must be established in particular on the basis of different

presentation levels and a differing degree of detail. The overview exhibition should examine the structural context of the camp and its history. This involves the overarching hierarchy of the Nazi concentration camp system as a whole, the particular historical situation in the Ostmark and regional characteristics of Mauthausen concentration camp. Finally, the overview exhibition will take account of Mauthausen's structure with its main camp and satellite camps.

The thematic exhibitions will investigate specific contexts relevant to each theme, with particular emphasis on placing experiences and events in the context of Mauthausen, thereby providing a connection to the site itself. In terms of content they will focus on forced labour and extermination as central functions of the camp on the one hand and on the stories of victims and perpetrators on the other. An additional thematic focus will be the history of the memorial itself and attitudes to Mauthausen concentration camp after 1945.

INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORICAL SITE

The sites, surviving buildings and installations in the camp are exhibits that provide a framework for presenting the history of the concentration camp from 1938 to 1945 and also, to a lesser extent, of the memorial since 1947. As specific sites of individual and collective suffering, however, they also need to be placed in a context that reflects the inmates' experiences.

The inscriptions and commentaries relate to the entire memorial site and in some cases, such as the tent camp, beyond it. Surviving installations as well as no longer visible areas of the camp will

be labelled as exhibits and provided with contextual information. Interpretation will be designed to communicate historical information along the recommended new circuit (see below) through the main sites and installations of the camp.

ESSENTIAL MEASURES

As part of the redesign, new information points will replace the various existing inscription systems from the decades since liberation. The old inscription systems and information panels will be removed as far as possible and archived in the new museum depot (see below). Historically significant old information panels or those that cannot be removed must be explained.

© Archiv der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen/Ralf Lechner



Different signage systems at the Memorial, photo 2005

THE NEW “MAIN ROUTE”

It can be assumed that all visitors, regardless of their age and situation, cultural and national origins, education and motivation, have a basic interest in the historical site and the story it tells. One of the key objectives of the redesign is therefore to devise a new route that satisfies this interest while taking account of the time constraints of the majority of visitors. Whether taking part in a guided tour or exploring the site individually, visitors should, at the end of the route, be familiar with the basic historical facts and hence capable of positioning and assessing the events. Those who wish to know more about the history of the camp will find detailed indications along the route on where to find further information, either at other sites or in the various exhibitions. The new circuit is the main discovery route and hence the educational core of the memorial.

Visitor behaviour in concentration camp memorials is similar to that in open-air museums. In contrast to classic museums, channelling visitor movement is very difficult because of the distances involved. Visitors who discover a site on their own, i.e. without a guide, often decide spontaneously to investigate – or ignore – a particular area or offer of information, depending on, for example, their curiosity about a specific object or its ease of access. A manifest interest in discovering the historical site in accordance with an educational plan, however it might be structured, cannot be automatically assumed. It is therefore all the more important to devise the new circuit in such a way that visitors follow it effectively of their own accord. This is possible only if the route is presented as a logical sequence of historically

important installations and buildings and associated content.

One of the most important guiding principles in this regard is the significance of individual areas of the camp in the subjugation, dehumanisation and killing of its inmates. The circuit will therefore be designed to include the main sites that characterised the life of camp inmates, for example their arrival at the camp, the stone quarry and the killing sites.

IMPORTANT SITES AND THEMATIC AREAS

The starting point for the new circuit will be the new entrance in front of the camp. From there the route will lead past the main camp buildings to the edge of the Wiener Graben stone quarry, which prompted the selection of Mauthausen as a site for a concentration camp in 1938. It will continue through the commemorative grove to the camp gate and from there to the roll-call area. Then the circuit will effectively follow along the route the inmates would have been taken after their arrival at the camp. The next stations will focus on their everyday experience (lack of food, mass accommodation, diseases, forced labour, etc.) and the sites where the subjugation and killing machinery of the concentration camp is most evident (bunker, killing installations). The circuit will return via the roll-call area to the commandant's building, where the focus will shift to the perpetrators. The route will end at the gate to the Garagenhof through which the American troops entered on 5 May 1945 to liberate the camp and its survivors.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONS

At suitable points, the new circuit will indicate additional sites and information for those wishing to explore the subject

more thoroughly. The following sites might be considered:

- hospital camp
- Wiener Graben stone quarry
- Ash Dump
- former execution site

The new circuit will also lead to the entrance areas of all exhibitions. Visitors will be provided with a brief idea of the content and form of the different presentations and encouraged to investigate them immediately or at a later date. The entrance areas should therefore be designed so as to offer a preview of the exhibition contents.

NATURE OF THE VISIT

For groups without a guide and for individual visitors, the new circuit will offer the most important means of understanding the topography and context of Mauthausen concentration camp and its history. The new audio/multimedia guide to be provided in future will assist in this, particularly for the many non-German-speaking visitors, who in the past had no access to sufficient and adequate information in their own language. Printed plans will also be handed out to visitors who do not wish to make use of the audio/multimedia guide.

The educational content offered by the memorial staff will also be organised according to the new circuit. As most visitors to the Mauthausen Memorial tend to be in guided groups, a large number of people will be moving around the site at one time, and at peak periods at the end of the school year many groups will be more or less in the same place at the same time. The communicator training should therefore enable them to choose alternative routes in the case of crowding or for specific educational aims.

ORIENTATION SYSTEM

In keeping with the memorial's central function as a place of discovery, the new circuit should permit clear orientation within the memorial site. This will be achieved through a new signage system to be developed in coordination with the new landscape design concept for the site as a whole. A design competition will be organised to determine the typography and form of the new interpretation system, which should not only communicate the key information but will also be a highly important instrument for guiding visitors through the site. It will also signpost the main infrastructural facilities at the memorial.

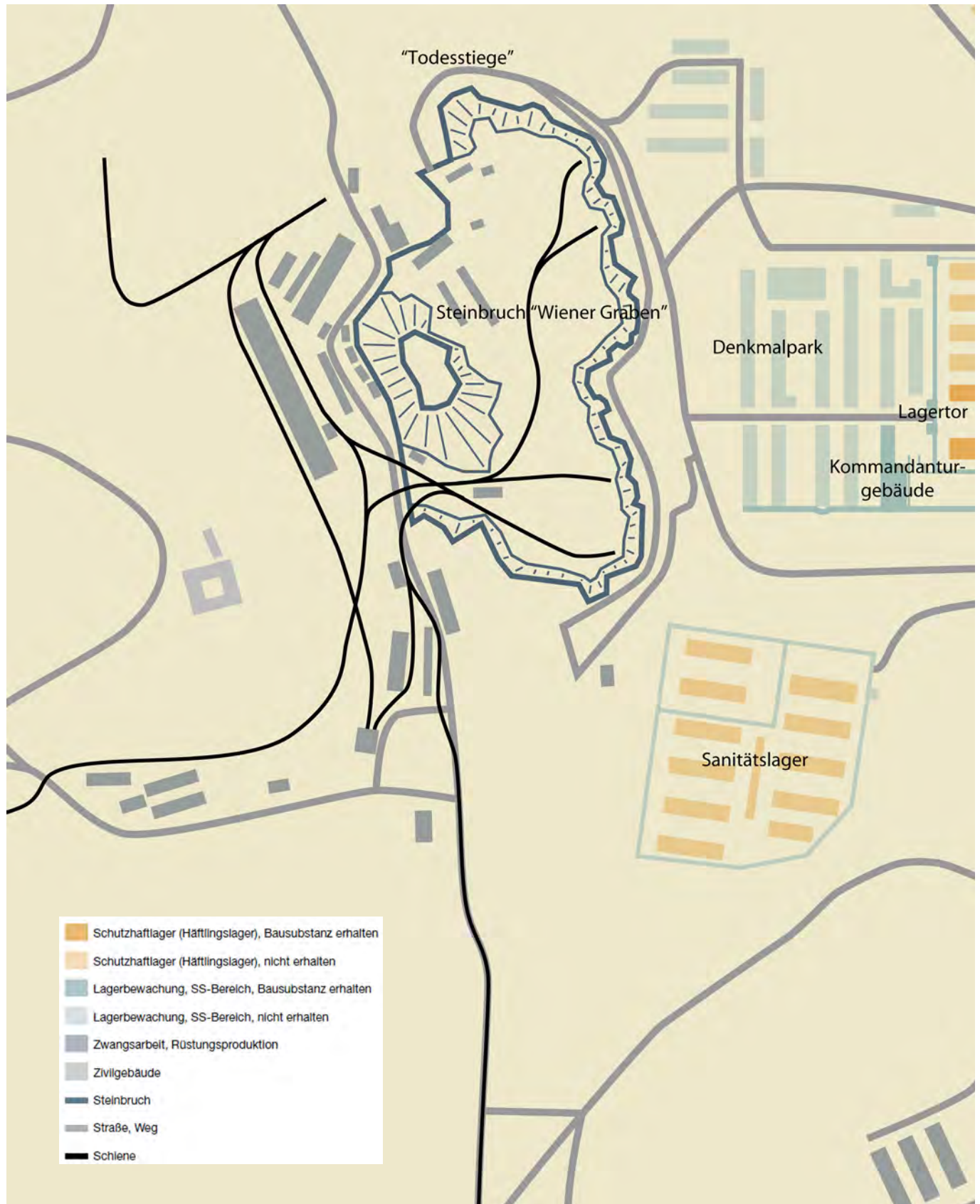
AUDIO/MULTIMEDIA GUIDE

Many individuals visit the Mauthausen Memorial without taking part in a guided tour. The multimedia guide will offer these visitors a virtual guided tour of the entire site. Apart from the new main circuit, the multimedia guide will offer visitors additional alternative routes. It must therefore be capable of leaving a recommended route at any time and returning to it.

Apart from general orientation aids, the multimedia guide will also provide historical context information about each station as well as additional material (photographs, films, etc.)

For the first time, this guide will enable visitors who do not speak German or English to listen to the commentaries at the information points, and particularly in the exhibitions, in their own language.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN



Mauthausen Memorial, site map



MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

OVERVIEW EXHIBITION: HISTORY OF MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP FROM 1938 TO 1945

The history of the Mauthausen camp complex cannot be explained solely on the basis of the surviving buildings. A modern historical museum is required to set the context in which the camp existed.

As part of the redesign of the memorial as a whole, the new overview exhibition will be of central significance. At the same time, it must be devised from the outset with the other information and exhibition modules in mind.

The main task of the exhibition on the camp history will be to provide an overview of the history of the Mauthausen concentration camp system as a whole and as an instrument of domination and persecution by the Nazi regime. In particular, it should present the various changes in function of the camp from an internment and forced labour camp to a killing centre and a complex system of satellite camps in which inmates worked increasingly for the armaments industry.

A further important function of the exhibition will be to place Mauthausen in a wider context. It should position the



© Fotoarchiv der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen

Detention camp with roll-call area under construction, SS photo, 1940

content of the thematic exhibitions within the Mauthausen concentration camp system as a whole and also situate the Mauthausen/Gusen concentration camp complex within the overall context of the Nazi camp system.

CONTENT

The overview exhibition should provide a compact representation of the history of Mauthausen from 1938 to 1945. Mauthausen is to be understood here as the Mauthausen/Gusen camps and the network of satellite camps, which in turn are part of the overall Nazi concentration camp system. The exhibition must cover all aspects of the camp's history from 1938 to 1945 and its relationship to the history of Nazi concentration camps as a whole, even if some of these aspects are dealt with in the additional thematic exhibitions. The distinction between the overview exhibition and the thematic exhibitions is provided through the narrative perspectives, the type of narrative and the degree of detail.

The question of the specific and characteristic features of the Mauthausen camp system will permeate the entire exhibition. In an extensively chronological narrative the various phases of the camp's history will be presented by way of examples and short commentaries. The history of Mauthausen/Gusen will be set within the context of the changing historical, political and ideological framework. In this regard the presentation of inmates, perpetrators and their regional and economic surroundings is of particular significance.

The selection of the site and establishment of Mauthausen concentration camp will be discussed in the context of the enlargement of the concentration camp

system as a whole before the start of the war and the annexation of Austria to the German Reich.

While the forced labour in the SS quarry, the ideologically motivated extermination, structural changes in the armaments industry and expansion of the Mauthausen camp complex are narrated in their structural context, their specific impact on the life of the inmates offers a contrasting and supporting alternative commentary.

A further focus will be the final phase, from winter 1944–45 until the liberation of the camp, during which time the evacuation transports from other concentration camps made Mauthausen the last central camp within the German Reich, and the death marches and overcrowding caused an unimaginable rise in the death rate.

SITE AND CONSTRUCTION MEASURES

In contrast to the thematic exhibitions, the historical overview exhibition will be housed in a comparatively neutral place. In keeping with the forty-year tradition of using the former infirmary as a museum, the new overview exhibition will be housed on its ground floor.

A new spatial concept is required for this purpose, not least so as to offer places where visitors can stop and rest, and groups or individuals can pursue their research at a more intense level.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

THEMATIC EXHIBITION: MASS EXTERMINATION AT MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

Around half of the people deported to Mauthausen concentration camp died there, in Gusen or in one of the satellite camps. The mortality was particularly

high in the final phase of the Mauthausen concentration camp system, from the end of 1944 until the camp was liberated, and around half of the 100,000 victims died during these last few months.

The extremely high mortality rate compared with other concentration

ner during 10 shooting "expeditions" over a period of four months. (See protocol).

In the same room as above, where a stairway led down from the street, an "I" beam was stretched across about 10 feet high with ends imbedded in the concrete on either side. From this beam, nooses were suspended which accommodated six strangling victims at a time. Before departing, the SS cut out the beam but the imbedded ends are clearly seen.

The crematoriums were large brick structures containing a fire box for burning wood and coal and over this were the ovens (See photo) fitted with rounded supports at intervals for the bodies.



The bodies were carried into the ovens on steel stretchers and with a quarter turn were rolled out. The new crematorium with two ovens could handle twelve bodies at a time, 160 a day and with the old

Extract from the report by US secret service officer Jack Taylor with photo showing gas-delivery apparatus, May 1945

camps was not only a consequence of the detention conditions but also of targeted individual and mass extermination.

Many visitors to the memorial come to see the crematoriums, gas chamber and execution sites. These places are important areas of remembrance, but also focal points of revisionist historiography. This is the reason for a thematic exhibition on mass extermination. It will highlight the systematic killings in the context of the underlying extermination logic of the concentration camp and will also function as preparation for a visit to the remains of the gas chamber/execution site and crematorium.

CONTENT

Because the mass extermination exhibition is so physically close to the overview exhibition, it needs to be clearly separated from it in terms of content. While the overview exhibition describes the systematic mass killing at Mauthausen concentration camp and its satellite camps, this thematic exhibition will concentrate on the surviving written, pictorial and material sources that document it. It will shed light on the secrecy and attempts at concealment by the SS and also provide a direct response to revisionist denials which are based on these attempts. Particular importance will be attached to the contextualisation of the physical remnants (crematoriums, gas chamber, hospital camp, execution sites, etc.).

The exhibition will touch on the following themes: "unnatural deaths", Mauthausen as death camp (hospital camp), "shot while attempting to escape", official executions, killing through poisonous gas, "everyday dying", removal of corpses: crematorium ovens, mass

graves, organisation and concealment of the mass murder, perpetrators.

SITE AND CONSTRUCTION MEASURES

This exhibition will be located in a part of the basement of the former infirmary, because this area is close to the crematoriums. Access will be organised (possibly through structural alterations) so that visitors can enter the crematorium area only after having passed through the exhibition, making for a cognitive transition to the "aura" of the crematorium area.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

THEMATIC EXHIBITION: INMATES OF MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

More than 200,000 people from over forty countries were deported to Mauthausen, Gusen and the satellite camps between August 1938 and May 1945, including thousands of women, adolescents and children.

The inmates of the camp were permanently exposed to and in danger of death. Hunger, exhaustion, disease, violence, mistreatment and fear were a constant part of their daily life. The terror regime within the concentration camp was designed to systematically destroy the inmates both physically and mentally.



© L'Humanité

Unidentified inmates in front of the "Wailing Wall", SS photo

The exhibition will focus on the inmates of Mauthausen and their experience of the concentration camp. This will ensure a different narrative approach to the one in the overview exhibition. This perspective not only respects the dignity of the inmates but will also offer a personalised and biographical approach to the fate of individuals and groups of inmates.

CONTENT

The enforced community of inmates was not a homogeneous group in which everyone was equally exposed to the extermination and regime of terror. In reality the situation changed continuously and was dependent on a number of factors. A picture of the reality of camp life can be formed on the basis of these parameters. Focal points will include the composition of the community and changes in it, the origins and socialisation of the inmates, the deportation story of individual groups of inmates and the hierarchy imposed by the SS within the community.

These overriding factors and their impact on the community will be contextualised and contrasted by means of a narrative of everyday life in the concentration camp. This narrative will be built around central concepts such as the loss of individuality, hunger, lack of material provisions, life in the block, daily schedule, fear, life in the presence of death, disease, hygiene, sexuality, solidarity, survival strategies, competition, resistance, and individual and collective escape attempts.

Apart from the sociological description of everyday life, the narrative of individual fates will be an important aspect of this exhibition module. The subjective viewpoint of the inmates and typical biographies of male and female inmates

will provide a nuanced picture of the camp reality.

SITE AND CONSTRUCTION MEASURES

This exhibition will be housed in the former kitchen barracks. Because of the building's condition and indoor climate, structural alterations will be required there. The hitherto inaccessible basement, as an essential component of food logistics in the former concentration camp, will be incorporated in the exhibition and thus placed directly in the context of the inmates' living conditions.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

THEMATIC EXHIBITION: THE STONE QUARRY

Mauthausen concentration camp was established at a phase in the Nazi terror system in which – alongside the systematic extension of the persecution policy – economic considerations

played an increasing role. In its early stages Mauthausen was characterised by the persecution of large groups of people and their exploitation as forced labour in the quarries of the Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke owned by the SS, whose political and economic objectives combined and influenced daily life at



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Wiener Graben quarry, SS photo, 1941

Mauthausen in the most brutal manner. However, the two components of forced labour on the one hand and the physical and mental destruction of inmates on the other were by no means in alignment. The historical development of Mauthausen between 1938 and 1945 was marked by a permanent clash of different interests that had a great impact on the survival conditions and experiences of the inmates.

The Wiener Graben quarry epitomises the combination of economic exploitation and extermination. Its development reflects the evolution of the camp. In the post-war iconography the quarry is also a central symbol of the suffering and exploitation of the inmates.

CONTENT

The Wiener Graben quarry was the primary forced labour site in Mauthausen. In view of its symbolic significance and iconographic transformation, the original industrial installations in the quarry need to be visualised and set in their historical context. The exhibition will start with a topographical discovery of the quarry by means of models and other visual media with a view to giving an idea of what the quarry used to look like. The infrastructural links with the DeSt branches in Gusen and St. Georgen will also need explaining.

The exhibition will describe the economic and political function of the quarry and its central significance in the experience of different groups of inmates. Particular attention will be devoted to the various actors such as DeSt, the SS personnel, civilian companies and other beneficiaries with their differing interests.

A summary representation of the wider conditions will place the forced labour

of the inmates in the quarry in a political and economic context. A further focus will be the organisation of the work, including specific procedures and deliberate killings in the quarry. This will also involve looking at individual experiences of inmates working in the quarry. As a separate theme, work as a deliberate form of psychological and physical torture and the systematic destruction of certain groups of inmates will also be dealt with. In addition, the exhibition will show the transformation of the camp and quarry from 1943 into an armaments production site and the associated changes in the forced labour.

SITE AND CONSTRUCTION MEASURES

The Wiener Graben quarry itself is the ideal site for this thematic exhibition, either outside or indoors. It will be accessible from two sides: either through the quarry access road from below or on foot down the "Stairs of Death". Basic information about its topography and history will also be provided at the edge of the quarry, between the GDR monument and the start of the Stairs of Death. Visitors should also be able to survey the entire quarry from above.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

THEMATIC EXHIBITION: SS PERSONNEL AT THE CONCENTRATION CAMP MAUTHAUSEN

Over 10,000 members of the SS worked for various lengths of time in the Mauthausen concentration camp system,

making it the camp with the highest number of SS personnel, even if many of them were stationed during their careers in other camps as well.

This exhibition will deal with the general subject of “the perpetrators”. There

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SS parade in the Garagenhof, the commandant's barracks, at this point still a wooden building, are visible at the top left, SS photo, 1940

is no single type of perpetrator but a complex combination of institutions and actors, willingness to kill and structural conditions, individual intent and group dynamics. While it will be made clear that those involved in the crimes at Mauthausen concentration camp did so in complicity because of the functional division of labour, the personal responsibility of individual perpetrators must also be pointed out.

The crimes at Mauthausen were not only committed by members of the SS, however; they formed part of a complex network. This institutional and administrative framework will also be explained.

CONTENT

The former commandant's building functions as an exhibition building and an exhibit in its own right whose room arrangement reflects the organisation of the SS personnel in the camp. In the presentation of the various organisation units, departments and/or sections of the camp, their involvement in the crimes committed at Mauthausen must be indicated. To ensure that individuals are not hidden behind the organisational structures, they should be named in a biographical context and with respect to their direct responsibility for individual crimes.

A general overview of the organisation and ideology of the SS and its development is essential for an understanding of the complex network in which the SS personnel acted. The focus of this module, however, will be on the presentation of the situation in Mauthausen and the actors involved in it. In addition to the commandant's staff and the guards, the civilian camp personnel from the surrounding region

and the authorities and companies involved also need to be examined. The following themes will be addressed: the concentration camp as a place of work, "crime as work", shared responsibility for the conditions in the camp, mortality and deliberate killings, but also everyday life and leisure activities of the SS, such as their relationship to and contact with the local population.

A further point relates to the SS personnel after the war and the treatment by the judiciary of the actions and perpetrators in Mauthausen, as well as the life and careers of the SS personnel after 1945.

SITE AND CONSTRUCTION MEASURES

The exhibition is to be sited so that the theme of the SS personnel does not compete for attention with or overshadow the victims and their suffering. The ideal site would be the ground floor of the commandant's building. For this, archaeological investigation of the building, which was constructed in 1942-43, is required. The original room structure will be retained and major alterations and additions after liberation will be removed. In addition, the camp commandant's briefing room (Ziereis Room), which is mostly intact but has hitherto been inaccessible, will be incorporated in the exhibition, ensuring that its conservation is not endangered but without imbuing it with an inappropriate aura.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

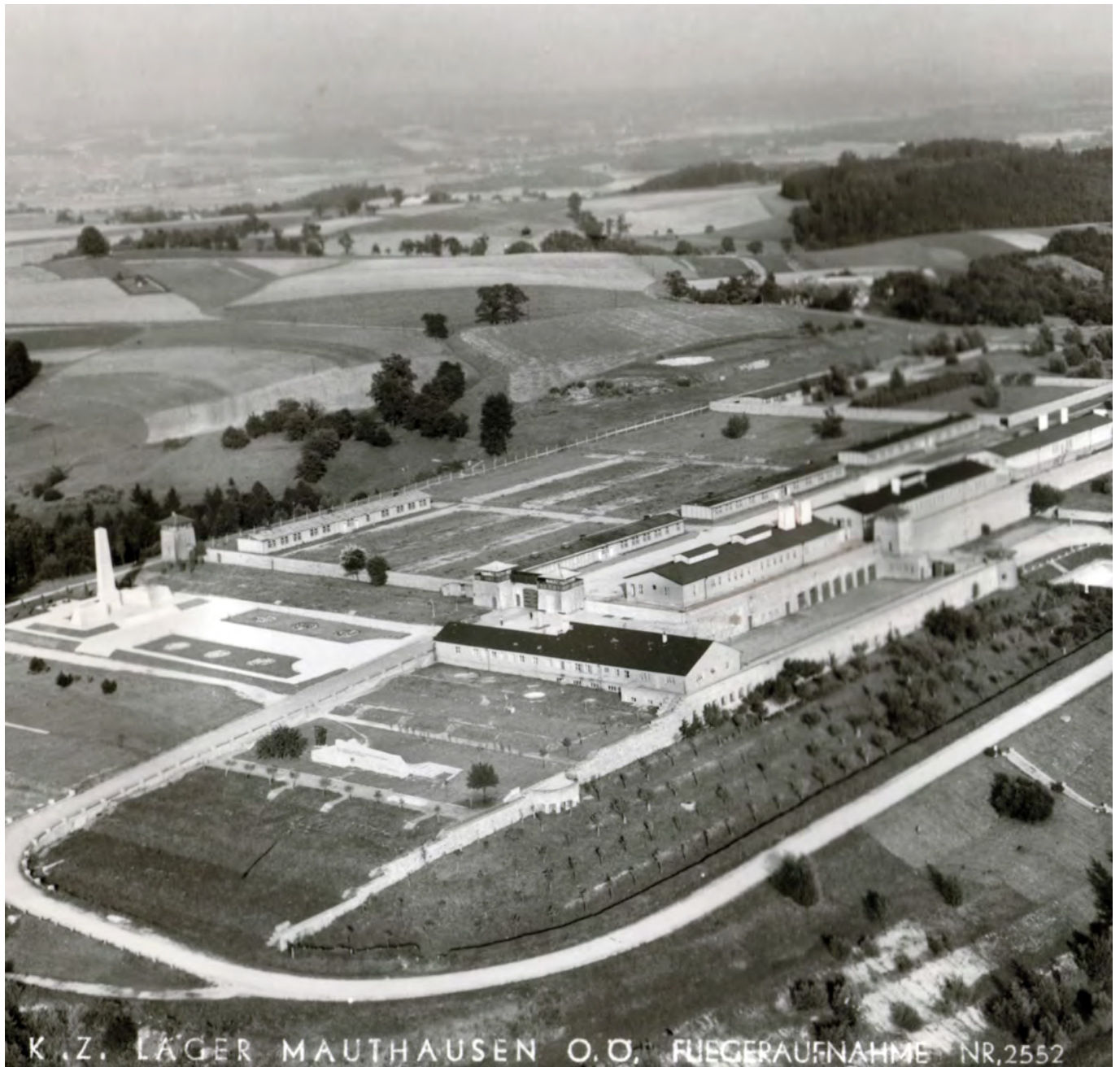
THEMATIC EXHIBITION: HISTORY OF THE MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL

Concentration camp memorials are not “authentic sites” in which the former conditions can be preserved directly and without alteration.

The sites of the former camps have been extensively modified, in some cases

destroyed, symbolically transformed and redefined. They are an amalgam of historical remains, cemetery, memorial and museum.

The Mauthausen memorial itself, erected in 1949, can now look back on a sixty-year history. It is a historical testimony in two senses. The present-day Mauthausen Memorial represents both the time of the



© Fotoarchiv der KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen

Aerial photo of Mauthausen Memorial, late 1950s

concentration camp and the post-war attitudes and interpretations. Because of this dual significance of concentration camp memorials it is important to provide information not only about the Nazi era but also about post-war attitudes. The birth and history of the memorial and its forms and symbolisation must be examined along with the attitude of Austrian society and the Austrian state to the Nazi era, for which Mauthausen stands as a representative example.

During the exhibition “The memory of Mauthausen” in 2004, a module for the history of the Mauthausen Memorial was developed, which can currently be seen in the Visitor Centre. Some of the most important elements in this exhibition could be used for the exhibition on the history of the mauthausen memorial. Additions and clarifications as well as extensions to the former exhibition are required, however.

CONTENT

The enlarged exhibition module on remembrance and attitudes to Mauthausen concentration camp will deal on two levels with the history since May 1945. The first level will involve a chronological narration of the development of the memorial, with the following themes: liberation, handing over of the former site to the Republic of Austria in 1947, founding of the memorial in 1949, erection of national monuments during the Cold War, establishment of a contemporary history museum in the 1960s, and its evolution into a central Austrian place of remembrance, learning and presentation.

The second level will look at the wider historical context of Mauthausen's development into a place of remembrance.

It will examine remembrance strategies outside of Mauthausen as a place but having an influence on Mauthausen and its satellite camps – such as the debate on the use of the remains of the camp and the erection of a memorial, the respective national commemorations, formation of remembrance associations, their rituals and symbols, forms of honouring the dead, conversion into a museum, and political education. The discussion on restitution and compensation for victims should also be addressed here, as well as political and revisionist interventions in connection with Mauthausen as a historical and symbolic place of remembrance.

SITE AND CONSTRUCTION MEASURES

In order to distinguish it from the thematic exhibitions devoted to the history of the camp before 1945, this module should be housed in a building constructed after 1945. The current bookshop in the Visitor Centre would be ideal for this purpose.

INFRASTRUCTURE

VISITOR CENTRE: FUNCTIONS AND FUTURE UTILISATION

The Visitor Centre was opened in 2003 on the site of the former SS workshop barracks. The main aim in creating this new building was to physically separate the historical site from the modern infrastructure and to provide a clearly defined service tailored to the different visitor groups. It was designed to offer museum, teaching, logistic and administrative functions.

The new building provided space for visitor information, additional permanent and temporary exhibitions, public archive and library, film projections, seminars

and events, service facilities and finally a modern administrative structure. The building was also designed to serve as a portal, i.e. the start and end point of a visit to the memorial.

In future, the Visitor Centre can be used to best advantage only by focusing on its core functions as a teaching centre and venue for special exhibitions and cultural events. In addition, the necessary functional infrastructure for visitors and those pursuing historical research should be made available there so as to relieve the historical parts of the site. An important step in this regard is to remove its portal function. Its future functions should be:

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Mauthausen Memorial Visitor Centre, which opened in 2003

- teaching centre/“clearing house”: public archive with library, audiovisual centre, infrastructure for seminars and workshops;
- extended museum: venue for events and special exhibitions with flexible exhibition space;
- administrative offices;
- thematic exhibition on the history of the Mauthausen Memorial in the current bookshop;
- cafeteria.

ENTRANCE AREA

Following construction of the Visitor Centre, most visitors still went right past this building in spite of being directed to it. The relocation of the car park in 2006 to a lot south of the Visitor Centre improved the situation somewhat, but half of the visitors to Mauthausen still fail to make use of the Visitor Centre. This might be partly attributable to the nondescript appearance of the building, chosen deliberately out of consideration for the historical substance. The entrance must therefore be removed from the Visitor Centre to the car park area.

FUNCTIONS

The entrance area will be the starting point for a visit and the logistical hub for controlling the flow of visitors. All relevant information such as key historical data, infrastructure, exhibitions, communication and in-depth research facilities, arrival and indications of events must be offered there. Entrance tickets, audio guides and written information material will also be available. This will be provided by memorial staff in direct contact with visitors. The bookshop currently located in the Visitor Centre will also be moved here.

In addition to these logistical functions, the entrance area will also set the mood for the visit to the memorial.

SITE

The majority of visitors arrive by car or bus. The car park is thus important as the starting and end point for a visit to the memorial.

The entrance area will be to the west of the car park in the direction of the route normally chosen by visitors on their way to the historical buildings. As such it will be ideally situated for providing initial information about the memorial.

For this purpose a small but adequately proportioned building must be constructed.

MUSEUM DEPOT

The Mauthausen Memorial does not have a professional museum depot equipped in accordance with conservation and archiving standards. To rectify this fundamental shortcoming, a museum archive is to be installed in the former infirmary.

A research project is currently underway at the Mauthausen archive to make a complete inventory and documentation of all artefacts at the memorial and in the archive in Vienna. In future, these objects are to be stored all together in the new museum depot on site. The establishment of the depot will also provide the urgently required infrastructure for future collection activities during the redesign project.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL REDESIGN

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE MEMORIAL

The memorial is not currently accessible by public transport, nor is the road to it systematically signposted for private cars. As part of the redesign it would be useful to provide local signposting for Mauthausen and Gusen with uniform design and typography.

Public transport to Mauthausen should also be improved. A shuttle bus service from Mauthausen station to the memorial should be set up as a pilot project in collaboration with the public transport authorities. A bus service with Mauthausen Memorial as an official bus stop would make the memorial more visible to visitors and would provide the long overdue access by public transport.

WEBSITE

The new Mauthausen Memorial website www.mauthausen-memorial.at went

online in 2003. The entire site was recently translated into English. It contains contributions by renowned experts and offers comprehensible background information about the history of Mauthausen, its satellite camps and the memorial and also has photos and drawings, interviews with former inmates, and important practical information in preparation for a visit to the memorial, an online visitor registration system and the latest news. A separate website for Gusen Memorial www.gusen-memorial.at went online in 2005 and is linked to from the Mauthausen site.

The website will be supplemented in future through the addition of further information to prepare for a visit to the memorial, teaching material and research functions.

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Everyday utensils from Mauthausen concentration camp

Mauthausen Memorial - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.mauthausen-memorial.at/index_open.php

mauthausen memorial
KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen

Das Konzentrationslager Die Außenlager ZeitzeugInnen Das Archiv Besuchernfo Aktivitäten Service

Geschichte 1938-1945
 - KZ-System Mauthausen
 - Das Leben im Lager
 - Die Häftlingsgesellschaft
 - Krankheit, Gewalt, Tod
 - Die SS
 - Österreichische Juden
 - "Aktion 14f13"
 - Todesmärsche
 - Geschichte nach 1945
 - Befreiungsfeier 2009
 - Befreiungsfeier Archiv
 - Denkmäler

Geschichte des Konzentrationslagers Mauthausen



Im August 1938, fünf Monate nach dem "Anschluss" Österreichs an das Deutsche Reich, wurde in der Nähe der oberösterreichischen Kleinstadt Mauthausen von der SS ein Konzentrationslager errichtet.

Die Gründe für die Errichtung lagen in der Absicht der SS ein spezielles Männer-Konzentrationslager für den österreichischen Raum einzurichten sowie größere Haftkapazitäten für den geplanten Krieg zu schaffen.

Als Standort wurde Mauthausen deshalb ausgewählt, weil sich dort Granitsteinbrüche befanden. Die von der SS gegründete Firma DEST, die mit der Produktion von Baumaterial beauftragt war, sollte diese Steinbrüche erwerben und wirtschaftlich nutzen. Die KZ-Häftlinge sollten als billige Arbeitskräfte in den Steinbrüchen eingesetzt werden.

Das Konzentrationslager erfüllte für die SS zwei Funktionen: die Bekämpfung des politisch-ideologischen Gegners, indem man ihn einsperrte, folterte und tötete, und damit auch nach außen hin Schrecken verbreitete, und die maximale Ausbeutung seiner Arbeitskraft. Bis zum Jahr 1943 stand die Vernichtung des "Gegners" jedoch immer im Vordergrund.

Mauthausen wurde vorerst als einziges KZ als Lager der Stufe III klassifiziert, als Lager mit den härtesten Haftbedingungen. In den ersten Jahren mussten die Häftlinge in Mauthausen und Gusen beim Lageraufbau und in den Steinbrüchen arbeiten. Misshandlungen, Bestrafungen, Krankheiten, der ständige Hunger und die Allgegenwart des Todes bestimmten den "Alltag" im Lager und auf den Arbeitsstätten.

Im "Mordlager" Mauthausen wurde von der SS auf vielfältige Weise gemordet: Die Häftlinge wurden erschlagen, erhängt, erschossen, kranke Häftlinge ließ man errieren, verhungern oder tötete sie durch Herzinjektionen oder Giftgas.

Ab dem Jahr 1943 kam es auf Grund der verstärkten Rüstungsbemühungen und später der Verlagerung der Rüstungsindustrie in unterirdische Anlagen zu einer Funktionserweiterung des Konzentrationslagers. Die Mehrzahl der Häftlinge wurde von nun an zur Zwangsarbeit in Rüstungsbetrieben herangezogen. So entstanden

Mauthausen Memorial website

Gusen Memorial - Windows Internet Explorer


http://www.gusen-memorial.at/index.php

mauthausen memorial
KZ-Gedenkstätte Gusen

mauthausen memorial
KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen

Das Konzentrationslager Errichtung Häftlinge Zwangsarbeit Vernichtung Die SS Befreiung Nachgeschichte Ausstellung Zeileiste

Plan und Luftaufnahme 1945 Luftaufnahme 1945 Luftaufnahme 2001 Plan und Luftaufnahme 2001



ERINNERUNGEN AN GUSEN

- Infopunkte
- Schutzhaftlager (Häftlingslager)
- Lagerbewachung, SS-Bereich
- Zwangsarbeit, Rüstungsindustrie
- Unterirdische Rüstungsproduktion
- Zivilgebäude
- Steinbruch
- Straße, Weg
- Schne

Listendarstellung Download Druckversion

Das Konzentrationslager Gusen

Diese Luftaufnahme zeigt das Konzentrationslager Gusen I und II im Jahre 1945 und wurde zur besseren Orientierung durch eine schematische Darstellung der Lagerbauten ergänzt. Durch Klicken auf die Karteireiter über dem Bild kann zum Vergleich das Luftbild von Gusen aus dem Jahr 2001 aufgerufen werden. „Plan und Luftaufnahme 2001“ zeigt, welche Gebäude des Konzentrationslagers nach 1945 verschwunden, und welche heute noch übrig sind.

Gusen Memorial website

MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP

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Freelance member of Mauthausen Memorial staff since 2000; responsible for the archive since 2002; co-editor of the *Mauthausen-Studien* series; curator of the permanent exhibition at Gusen Memorial and of the exhibition "The crematoriums of Mauthausen".

FLORIAN FREUND

Historian at the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna; involved in research projects since 1981; researcher at the Documentation Archive of Austrian Resistance from 1987 to 1999; member of the editorial board of the magazine *Zeitgeschichte* and the Gesellschaft für Zeitgeschichte since 2000; member of the Historical Commission of the Republic of Austria from 1999 to 2002.

HARALD HUTTERBERGER

Administrative director of Mauthausen Memorial since 1988; curator of numerous exhibitions on resistance and persecution under the Nazis and the post-war history of Mauthausen concentration camp; involvement in historical exhibitions at Stadtmuseum Nordico, Linz; awarded the Prix de la Fondation Auschwitz – Jacques Rozenberg, Brussels, 2003.

YARIV LAPID

Responsible for the educational infrastructure of Mauthausen Memorial since 2007; prior to that work for Israeli NGOs dealing with religious and political conflicts in Israel; director of cooperation with German-speaking countries at the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem.

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STEPHAN MATYUS

Freelance member of Mauthausen Memorial staff since 1997; responsible for the Mauthausen Memorial photo archive since 2000; co-editor of the *Mauthausen-Studien* series; co-curator of the international photo exhibition "The Invisible Part"; co-author of the concept for the future Loibl-Nord memorial.

BERTRAND PERZ

Deputy director of the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna since 2006; deputy chairman of Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies; member of the board of the Documentation Archive of Austrian Resistance; member of the Art Restitution Committee of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture; member of the Historical Commission of the Republic of Austria from 1998 to 2003.

BARBARA GLÜCK

Since 2005 head of the section within the Federal Ministry of the Interior responsible for the Mauthausen Memorial; co-editor of the Annual Report of the Mauthausen Memorial; member of the Austrian delegation in the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research since 2008; overall responsibility for the redesign of the Mauthausen Memorial.

JÖRG SKRIEBELEIT

Director of the Flossenbürg Memorial since 2000; responsible for the fundamental restructuring of this European place of remembrance; overall responsibility for the permanent exhibition "Flossenbürg concentration camp 1938-1945"; member of the advisory committee for the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin.

FRANZ SONNENBERGER

Appointed to the Museum Industriekultur in Nuremberg in 1981; head of "museen der stadt nürnberg" since 1994 and responsible for their successful restructuring and renewal; initiator of the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rallying Grounds opened in 2001; one of the main initiators of the planned "Memorium Nuremberg Trials"; early retirement since autumn 2008.

HEIDEMARIE UHL

Historian at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Institute for Cultural Studies and Theatre History and lecturer at the universities Vienna and Graz; Fellow of the IFK Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften in Vienna since 2000 and the Centre for Comparative History of Europe at the Free University of Berlin since 2006; guest lecturer at the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna since 2007 and the Hebrew University Jerusalem since 2009.

ROBERT VORBERG

Collaboration in projects of "Die Aussteller" association; freelance member of the Mauthausen Memorial archive staff since 2006; curator of the exhibition "The crematoriums of Mauthausen".

