

Fritz Bauer Institut  
*Geschichte und Wirkung  
des Holocaust*

**I.G. FARBEN**  
**AND THE BUNA-**  
**MONOWITZ**  
**CONCENTRATION CAMP**

ECONOMY AND POLITICS UNDER NATIONAL SOCIALISM

ACCOMPANYING PUBLICATION



# CONTENTS

Preface	5		
<b><u>THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUNA-MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP</u></b>	<b>7</b>		
1. What was I.G. Farben?	8		
2. The establishment of I.G. Auschwitz in April 1941	10		
3. The Auschwitz concentration camp	14		
4. Forced labourers at I.G. Auschwitz	16		
5. The SS	20		
6. The I.G. Farben staff	24		
<b><u>THE INMATES OF THE BUNA-MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP</u></b>	<b>28</b>		
7. Deportation	30		
8. Arrival	34		
9. Forced labour	37		
10. Skilled labourers	40		
11. Hierarchies amongst the inmates	42		
12. Caprice and abuse	45		
13. Provisions	47		
14. Hygiene	48		
15. Disease	50		
16. Selections – “selected for death”	53		
		17. Resistance	56
		18. Air raids	59
		19. Death marches	61
		20. Liberation	64
		21. The number of dead	66
		<b><u>I.G. FARBEN AFTER 1945 AND THE JUDICIAL RECKONING WITH ITS CRIMES</u></b>	<b>67</b>
		22. I.G. Farben after 1945	68
		23. The Nuremberg trial against I.G. Farben (1947/48)	70
		24. The verdicts during the Nuremberg trial	72
		25. The Wollheim trial (1951–1957)	76
		26. Testimony from the Wollheim trial (1951–1957)	78
		27. The Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (1963–1967)	80
		28. The political appropriation of the Fischer trial (1966) by the GDR regime	81
		29. The end of I.G. Farben i.L. (1990–2003)	82
		Imprint	85

# PREFACE

## I.G. FARBEN AND THE BUNA-MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP ECONOMY AND POLITICS UNDER NATIONAL SOCIALISM

### ON THE EXHIBITION

In 1941, the chemical corporation I.G. Farben established a chemical factory in the immediate vicinity of the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was the largest such factory operating in German-occupied Eastern Europe during the Second World War. It also played a key role in the violent programme of “Germanising” the region around Auschwitz. Aside from German skilled labourers, the corporation deployed thousands of inmates from the Auschwitz concentration camp on the enormous construction site, as well as POWs and forced labourers from all over Europe. In 1942, the corporation and the SS, which cooperated closely with one another, established the company-owned Buna-Monowitz concentration camp to house the increasing number of inmates. Thousands of inmates perished under the inhuman working conditions on site or were murdered in the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau once they were no longer able to work.

The German-language exhibition of the Fritz Bauer Institute explores the establishment, administration, and dissolution of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp. Historical photographs document the perspectives of the SS and the I.G. Farben corporation on the construction site and everyday life in the camp. These are contrasted with autobiographical texts by survivors, including Primo Levi, Jean Améry, and Elie Wiesel, as well as testimony given by former inmates at post-war trials. The exhibition closes with information on these trials and the efforts of survivors to receive compensation.

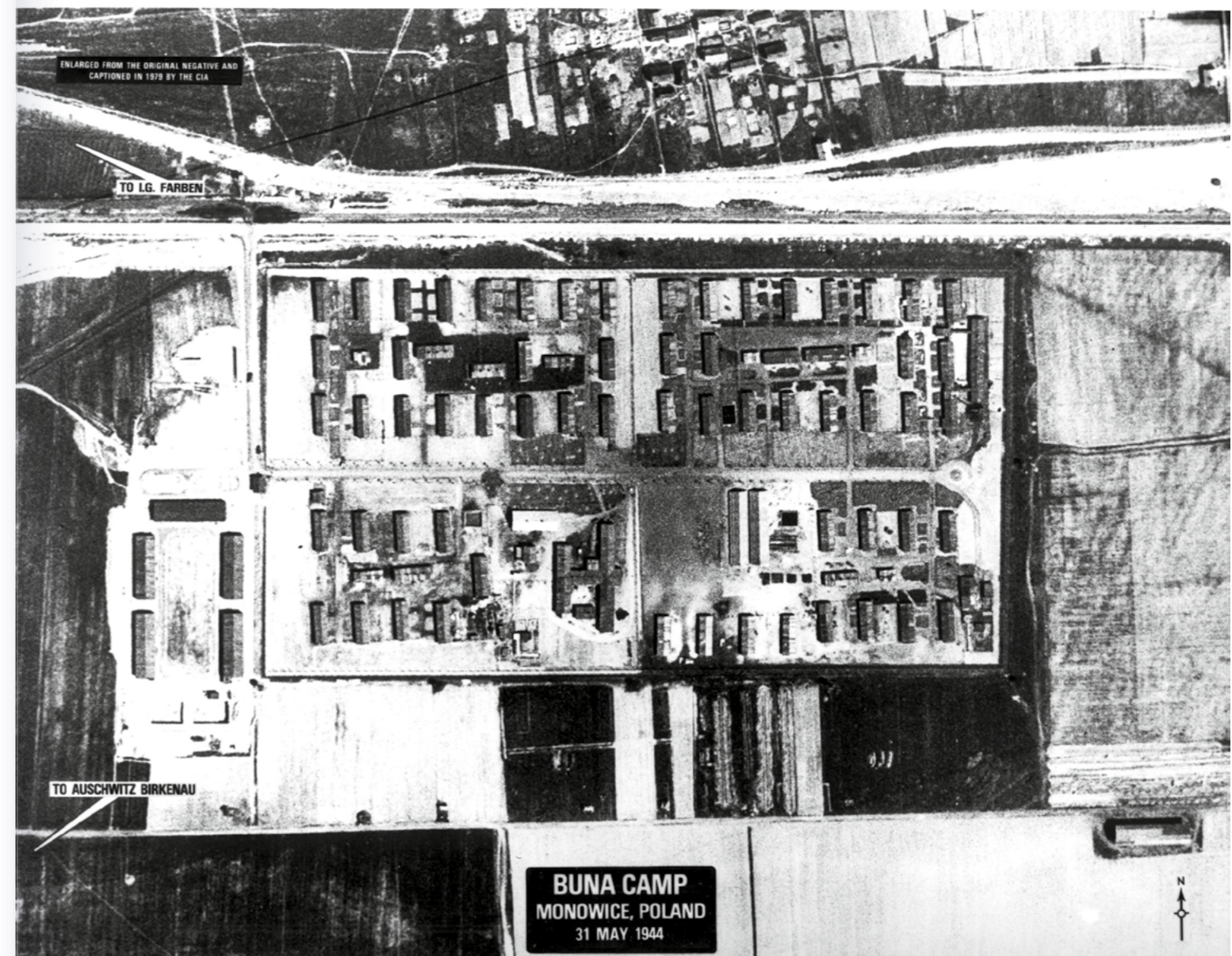
This accompanying brochure documents and illuminates the contents of the exhibition in broad strokes. It aims to place the preserved memories of former inmates of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp at the centre of attention. Its central components consist of texts that are partly literary and partly formulated as witness testimony for use in trials. The remaining elements provide information that helps contextualise these narratives and statements.

The exhibition is dedicated to the memory of the murdered and surviving inmates of the Buna-Monowitz camp. They are commemorated at the Wollheim Memorial on the grounds of the I.G. Farben Building, which today forms part of the Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main. Detailed information including survivor interviews can be found on the memorial website [[www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/home](http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/home)].

---

# THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUNA-MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP

---



**Aerial photograph of the Monowitz camp (Auschwitz III) taken by American aerial reconnaissance** (The photograph – like the captions added in 1978 – was turned to face north in order to standardise the maps of the camps.) | Auschwitz, 31 May 1944 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration



**Corporate Logo of I.G. Farben around 1925** | Leverkusen, Bayer AG, Corporate History & Archives

Established in 1925, the company “I.G. Farbenindustrie” (literally “Dye Industry Syndicate”) was not a syndicate in the traditional sense, but rather a joint stock company, meaning a discrete corporation that absorbed all the previously autonomous companies of the syndicate. After 1925, the term “Interessengemeinschaft” (syndicate) merely constituted part of the company’s proper name and was no longer written out in full, but rather abbreviated to “I.G.”.

## WHAT WAS I.G. FARBEN?

Germany’s first chemical factories emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, mostly producing synthetic dyes. During the First World War, these companies made enormous profits with explosives. Six of these companies joined together in 1925 to form the I.G. Farbenindustrie AG, one of the largest industrial corporations in the world at the time.

With the National Socialist rise to power in 1933, I.G. Farben quickly adjusted to the new political situation, financially supporting the Nazi Party’s electoral campaign that year. During the entire period of Nazi rule, the corporation contributed millions to various Nazi causes. Aside from such financial lobbying activities, the corporate leadership and workforce quickly Nazified themselves: By late 1936, eight senior managers had joined the Nazi Party (NSDAP), with employees in mid-management levels also improving their career prospects through membership in the party. At the same time, all employees and board members who were classed as Jews according to Nazi racial policy were forced to resign, relocated abroad, or dismissed.

I.G. Farben aligned its interests, research activities, and investments in the fields of explosives, chemical weapons, synthetic fibres, light metals, fuels, petroleum, plastics, and synthetic rubber with the economic preparations for the Second World War. The corporation thereby made a significant contribution to the armament policies of the “Third Reich”.

### COLLABORATION BETWEEN I.G. FARBEN AND THE NAZI REGIME

In 1935, the Central Committee of I.G. Farben established the “Vermittlungsstelle W” (Wehrmacht Liaison Office) in order to improve cooperation with the military. The office was headed by board member Carl Krauch, who would become one of the key players in the corporation’s collaboration with the regime.

In 1936, Krauch and a team he brought with him from I.G. Farben took over the department “Research and Development” in the “Amt für deutsche Roh- und Werkstoffe” (Agency for German Raw Materials). This department was tasked with replacing raw materials essential for the war effort with chemically manufactured materials in order to render Germany independent from imports. The Nazi regime’s regulations on the quality and quantity of materials were aligned with I.G. Farben’s investment plans and research activities.

In 1940, Krauch was appointed “Generalbevollmächtigter für Sonderfragen der chemischen Erzeugung” (Plenipotentiary for Special Questions Regarding Chemical Production) and subordinated directly to Hermann Göring. He was granted leave by I.G. Farben in order to fulfil his responsibilities as a government representative involved in wartime planning. Yet he retained all his functions in the corporation and continued to draw a salary.

#### **The Founding Companies of I.G. Farben**

BASF (Ludwigshafen), Bayer (Leverkusen), Farbwerke Hoechst (Frankfurt am Main), Agfa (Berlin), Weiler-ter Meer (Uerdingen), Griesheim-Elektron (Frankfurt am Main)

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF I.G. AUSCHWITZ IN APRIL 1941

Following the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, I.G. Farben started searching for a suitable location for a large chemical factory in Eastern Europe, settling in 1940/41 on the town of Oświęcim (Auschwitz), around sixty kilometres west of Cracow. The location was chosen for military, political, and economic reasons: The site was conveniently located in terms of transport, the region was rich in raw materials (coal, chalk, and water), and forced labourers could be deployed for construction from the nearby Auschwitz concentration camp.

On 7 April 1941, the I.G. Auschwitz was founded. The new chemical factory was a complex conception. Its first aim was to satisfy the military demand for synthetic fuels and synthetic rubber (Buna). Moreover, it was intended to supply the market in the occupied East with synthetic materials after the end of the war.

### WHAT IS BUNA?

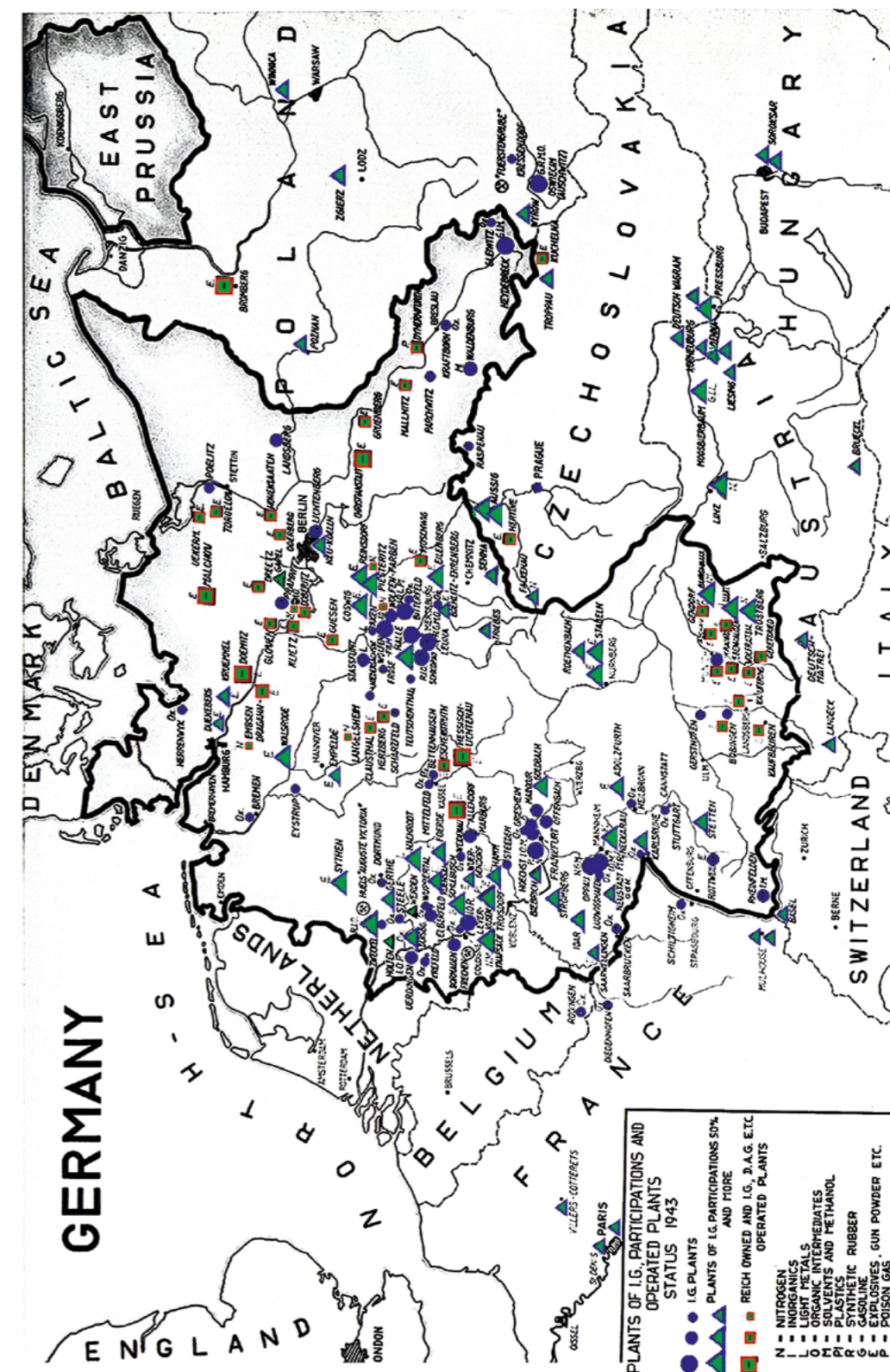
Global demand for natural rubber soared in the early twentieth century, as it was needed for the production of tyres in the rapidly expanding automotive industry. The corresponding price explosion prompted the chemical industry to start searching for a process to produce rubber synthetically. In 1929, I.G. Farben patented the production of a synthetic rubber, which it called Buna. However, due to high production costs during the global economic crisis, production had to be discontinued.

In 1933, I.G. Farben began negotiations with the Nazi regime concerning mass production of Buna in order to achieve independence from natural rubber. Four production plants were planned: in Schkopau (Buna I, production beginning in March 1937), Hüls (Buna II, production beginning in 1940), Ludwigshafen (Buna III, production beginning in late 1942), and Auschwitz (Buna IV).



Heinrich Himmler at the construction site | I.G. Auschwitz construction site, 1942 | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

Himmler, Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police, visited Auschwitz on 17 and 18 July 1942 and had I.G. Farben's chief engineer Dr Max Faust show him the construction project.



I.G. Farben factories in 1943 | Nuremberg, 1947 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration

During the Second World War, I.G. Farben profited from the acquisition of factories in the occupied territories. The corporation deployed forced labourers and concentration camp inmates in at least 23 locations.



**The I.G. Auschwitz construction site** | Auschwitz, around 1943/44 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

Construction activities at the factory involved the application of reinforced concrete and roof-tiling work. Some of the facilities had been completed by the time the site was liberated by the Red Army in January 1945; the mass production of methanol had been running since October 1943. Buna production had been planned to commence in February 1945.

# THE AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP

In April 1940, Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police, ordered the construction of the Auschwitz concentration camp. SS-Hauptsturmführer Rudolf Höß was appointed commandant. Following the gradual installation of gas chambers in Birkenau beginning in 1942, the camp would become the Nazis' largest extermination centre in the years 1943 and 1944.

Auschwitz was the site of the systematic mass annihilation of human beings using the poison gas Zyklon B, targeting especially Jews from all over Europe, but also Sinti and Roma. Auschwitz was also one of the largest forced labour camps for German industry. Inmates were deployed in over forty sub-camps to perform forced labour in agricultural operations, armaments factories, coal pits, and other production sites until such time as their strength was depleted.

Of the Jews deported to Auschwitz from all over Europe between 1942 and 1944, the SS selected tens of thousands to perform forced labour. Their family members were for the most part murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau immediately upon arrival.

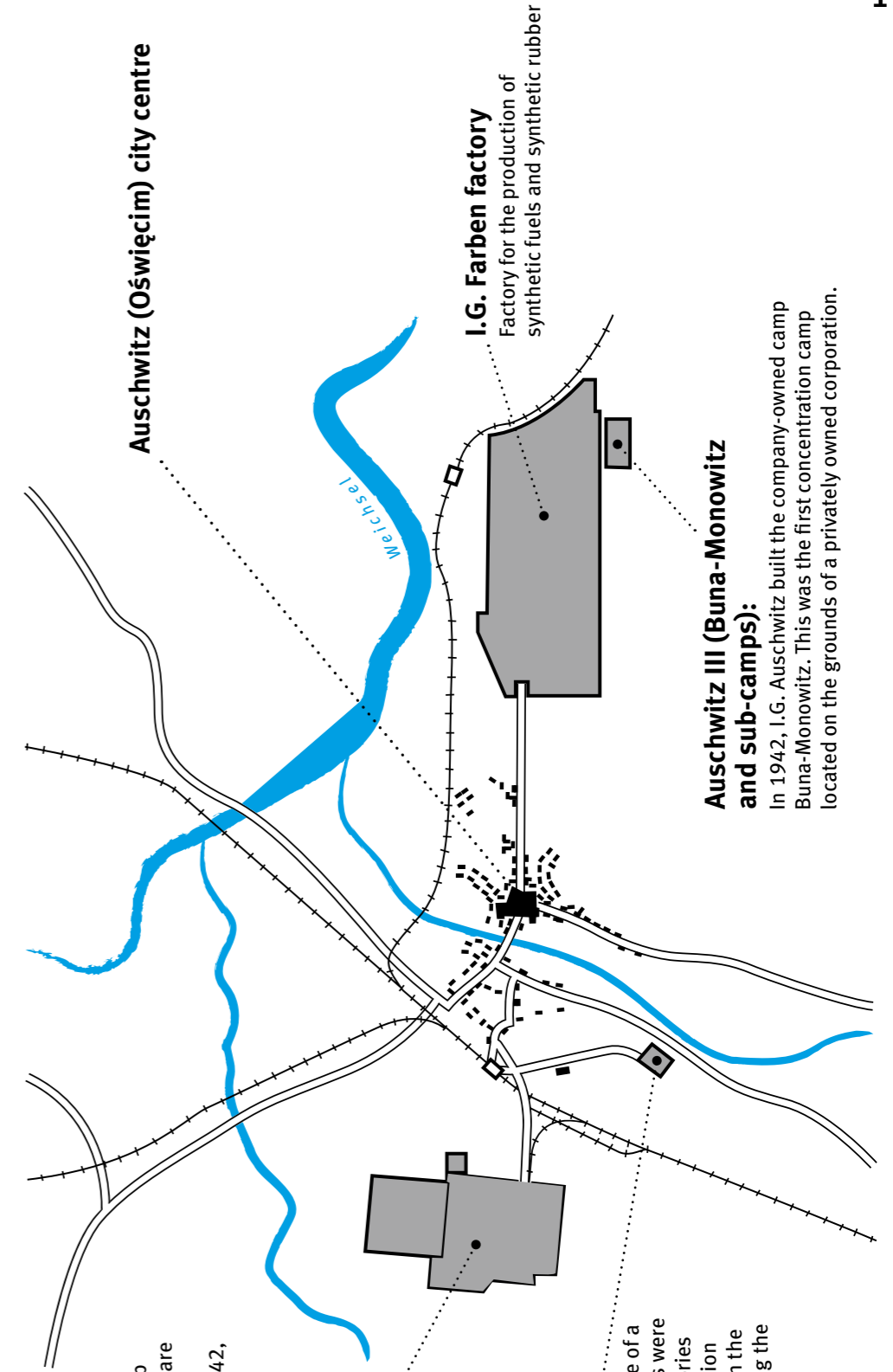


SS operational zone Auschwitz-Birkenau 1944 | edited photograph | Auschwitz, 26 June 1944 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration

Historical photograph of Auschwitz I, Birkenau, and Buna-Monowitz taken by American aerial reconnaissance

## SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW OF THE SS OPERATIONAL ZONE (INTERESSENGBIET)

Auschwitz-Birkenau around 1944



**Auschwitz II (Birkenau):**

The concentration and extermination camp lay in a restricted area of around forty square kilometres and was gradually expanded between 1941 and 1944. Beginning in 1942, facilities were established in Birkenau for systematic mass murder.

**Auschwitz I (main camp):**

The main camp was established on the site of a former barracks in May 1940. The inmates were deployed for forced labour in nearby factories run by the SS. Here, the camp administration in 1941 conducted the first experiments in the mass extermination of human beings using the poison gas Zyklon B.

**Auschwitz III (Buna-Monowitz and sub-camps):**

In 1942, I.G. Auschwitz built the company-owned camp Buna-Monowitz. This was the first concentration camp located on the grounds of a privately owned corporation.



## FORCED LABOURERS AT I.G. AUSCHWITZ

Large numbers of forced labourers from the Auschwitz concentration camp were deployed on the I.G. Farben construction site. The exploitation of inmates was a profitable business for I.G. Farben. For the deployment of forced labourers, the company paid about a third less than the standard wage tariff for free labour forces in the region.

When construction on the factory began in April 1941, the inmates had to march about six or seven kilometres every day from the Auschwitz main camp to the construction site. Later, they were brought there by train. The I.G. factory management regarded both the debilitating march, which further weakened the already malnourished inmates, and their time-consuming transport in freight cars as a useless waste of labour forces and working time. Hence, they demanded the construction of a sub-camp on the factory grounds. This was established in the autumn of 1942 on the site of the Polish village of Monowice, whose inhabitants had been expelled.



Prisoners from the Buna external labour detachment march through the town of Auschwitz. | Auschwitz, between April 1941 and July 1942 | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

	1942	1943	1944
January		2,900	7,000
February		1,500	7,000
March		3,000	7,800
April		3,200	7,200
May		4,000	9,200
June		4,000	10,100
July		5,000	10,100
August		6,000	11,500
September		6,400	10,100
October		6,600	9,800
November	2,300	6,400	10,600
December	3,700	7,000	10,500

Forced labourers deployed in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp | Antoni Makowski, "Organisation, Entwicklung und Tätigkeit des Häftlings-Krankenbaus in Monowitz (KL Auschwitz III)", in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, vol. 15 (1975)

Everyday life for the inmates of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp consisted of many hours of mostly heavy labour outdoors without the necessary protective clothing. The working day in summer lasted between ten and eleven hours and at least nine hours in winter. After returning to the camp, the inmates sometimes had to work another one or two hours on the camp's expansion.

Most of the inmates of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp, between 25,000 and 30,000 people, perished due to malnutrition, insufficient clothing, and difficult working conditions. Many were murdered on the construction site or sent to the gas chambers in Birkenau during selection (when inmates were sorted according to their "ability to work"; those "unable to work" were killed).



Inmates leaving the Buna-Monowitz camp to work on the factory site | Auschwitz, between 1942 and 1944 | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

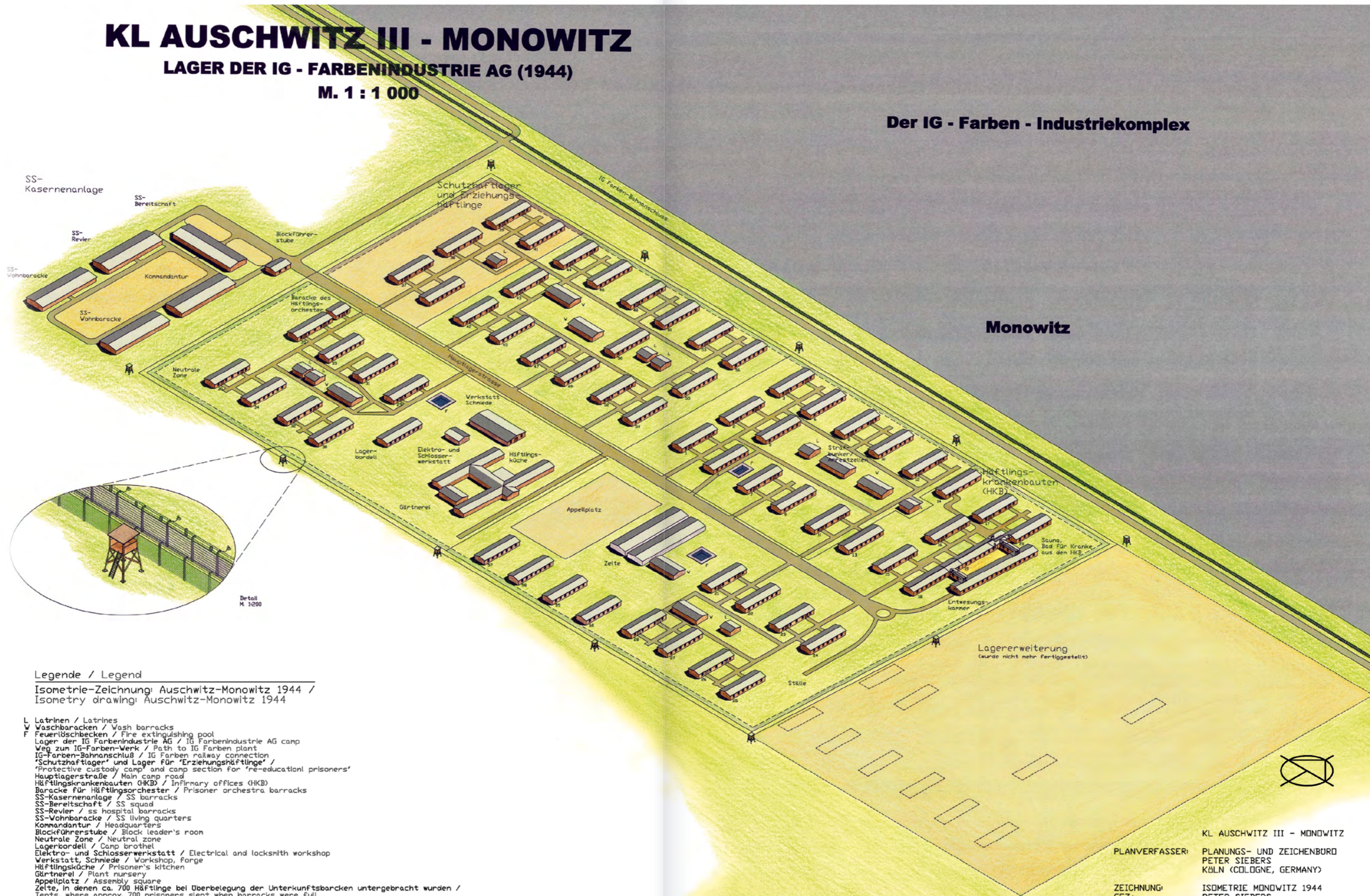
Following the morning roll call, the labour detachments were assembled. As soon as the SS had formed a cordon along the way to and around the construction site, the detachments marched out. The SS barracks can be seen in the background of the photograph.

# KL AUSCHWITZ III - MONOWITZ

## LAGER DER IG - FARBENINDUSTRIE AG (1944)

M. 1 : 1 000

### Der IG - Farben - Industriekomplex



Legende / Legend

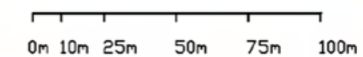
Isometrie-Zeichnung: Auschwitz-Monowitz 1944 /  
Isometry drawing: Auschwitz-Monowitz 1944

- L Latrinen / Latrines
- V Waschbaracken / Wash barracks
- F Feuerlöschbecken / Fire extinguishing pool
- Lager der IG Farbenindustrie AG / IG Farbenindustrie AG camp
- Weg zum IG-Farben-Werk / Path to IG Farben plant
- IG-Farben-Bahnanschluß / IG Farben railway connection
- 'Schutzhaftlager' und Lager für 'Erziehungshäftlinge' /  
'Protective custody camp' and camp section for 're-educational prisoners'
- Hauptlagerstraße / Main camp road
- Häftlingskrankenbauten (HKB) / Infirmary offices (HKB)
- Baracke für Häftlingsorchester / Prisoner orchestra barracks
- SS-Kasernenanlage / SS barracks
- SS-Bereitschaft / SS squad
- SS-Revier / ss hospital barracks
- SS-Wohnbaracke / SS living quarters
- Kommandantur / Headquarters
- Blockführerstube / Block leader's room
- Neutrale Zone / Neutral zone
- Lagerbordell / Camp brothel
- Elektro- und Schlosserwerkstatt / Electrical and locksmith workshop
- Werkstatt, Schmiede / Workshop, forge
- Häftlingsküche / Prisoner's kitchen
- Gärtnerel / Plant nursery
- Appellplatz / Assembly square
- Zelte, in denen ca. 700 Häftlinge bei Überbelegung der Unterkunftsbaracken untergebracht wurden /  
Tents, where approx. 700 prisoners slept when barracks were full
- Ställe / Stalls
- Geplante Lagererweiterung / Planned camp extension
- Entwesungskammer / Disinestation chamber
- Strafbunker, Arrestzellen / Punishment bunker, arrest cells
- Sauna / Sauna

KL AUSCHWITZ III - MONOWITZ

PLANVERFASSER: PLANUNGS- UND ZEICHENBÜRO  
PETER SIEBERS  
KÖLN (COLOGNE, GERMANY)

ZEICHNUNG: ISOMETRIE MONOWITZ 1944  
GEZ.: PETER SIEBERS  
MAßSTAB: 1 : 2500  
PLAN-NR.: AIII-M-02.07  
BLATT-GR.: 42.0 x 29.7  
DATUM: 17.07.2023



## THE SS

■ The SS administered and guarded the Buna-Monowitz camp and rented out concentration camp inmates to I.G. Farben to perform forced labour on the factory site. As early as March 1941, representatives of I.G. Farben and the SS in Berlin agreed on the conditions of forced labour service: I.G. Farben was to pay the SS three Reichsmarks per unskilled labourer and four Reichsmarks per skilled labourer per day. The inmates received no compensation whatsoever.

The SS guard details prepared the labour detachments each day. The SS men paid special attention to securing the camp towards the outside and to maintaining "order" towards the inside.

SS members deployed to secure the Buna-Monowitz camp and its sub-camps in January 1945:	2,006 men 15 women
Former SS members who were brought to justice after 1945:	4 men

P. 21: Excerpts from: **Orders from Heinrich Schwarz in the Commander's Office from 28 January 1944, among other things concerning the behaviour of the guards during deployment of inmate detachments (Point 11)** | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

The camp commandant constituted the highest commanding position in a concentration camp. He commanded the guard details and other staff deployed by the SS.

Kommandantur

Monowitz, den 28. Januar 1944.

K.L.Auschwitz - III

-345-

K o m m a n d a n t u r b e f e h l N r. 3/44

1. Wohnbaracken bei J.G.Farben.  
Durch das im Standortbefehl Nr. 3/44 v. 19.1.44 ausgesprochene Verbot ist das Betreten sämtlicher Wohnbaracken und Kantinen bei J.G.Farben verboten.  
Für  $\frac{1}{4}$ -Angehörige des Lagers Monowitz ist lediglich die "1000-Mann-Halle" und außerdem nach einer Vereinbarung mit dem Werk das "Feierabendhaus" für Unterführer freigegeben.
2. Belehrungen.  
Die Kompanie- und Stabscharführer haben laufende Belehrungen über ausgezeichnetes Benehmen der  $\frac{1}{4}$ -Angehörigen, militärische Haltung, Anständigkeit, Vermeiden von Streitigkeiten mit Zivilpersonen, übermäßigen Genuss von Alkohol, tadellosem Dienst- und Ausgangsansatz, das Verbot des Umgangs mit Polen und sonstigen Nationalitäten und absolute Schweigepflicht über Dienst- und Lagerangelegenheiten, abzuhalten.

[...]

11. Aus- und Einrücken der Häftlingskommandos.  
Auf wiederholte Vorkommnisse hin, mache ich nochmals ausdrücklich darauf aufmerksam, dass die Häftlinge geschlossen und hart an der rechten Strassenseite zu marschieren haben. Die Posten haben sich gleichmässig zu verteilen, aber unbedingt den zur Sicherheit erforderlichen Abstand von den Häftlingen zu halten. Es ist ferner darauf zu achten, dass die Häftlinge während des Marsches Sprechverbot haben. Die Kommando-Postenführer und auch Posten sind mir für die Ordnung innerhalb der Häftlingskolonnen verantwortlich.

f.d.R.

*Schwarz*  
 $\frac{1}{4}$ -Obersturmführer

Der Lagerkommandant

gez. S c h w a r z

$\frac{1}{4}$ -Hauptsturmführer

### Verteiler

2,	Stek.	Kommandantur I
1	"	" II
14	"	" III
9	"	$\frac{1}{4}$ -Standortverwaltung
1	"	Standortarzt
1	"	Lazarettabteilung.

Nr. 111 w. 4683 A  
PAŃSTWOWE MUZEUM OŚWIĘCIM

599. 2-Auzer 1/58



### CAMP COMMANDANT

**Heinrich Schwarz (1906–1947)**

Entry into the SS and NSDAP: December 1931

Civilian Profession: Reproduction photographer

Born in Munich in 1906. → Trained as a reproduction photographer and worked intermittently in this field. → Unemployed from 1926 to 1931. → Began a career with the Lager SS in 1939, initially in the Dachau and Mauthausen concentration camps. → Transferred to the SS Main Office “Budgeting and Construction” in June 1941. → Switched to the Concentration Camp Inspectorate in September 1941, working in the department “Inmate Deployment”. Stationed in the Auschwitz branch and intermittently in Birkenau. → Employed by the Auschwitz camp commandant, Rudolf Höß, as his assistant in August 1943. → Camp commandant of Buna-Monowitz and the surrounding sub-camps from November 1943 until their evacuation in January 1945. → Camp commandant in Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp in Alsace beginning 1 February 1945. → Sentenced to death by a French military court and executed in 1947.

Photo: Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute



### “KOMMANDOFÜHRER”, “RAPPORTFÜHRER”

(detachment leader, report leader)

**Bernhard Rakers (1905–1980)**

Entry into the SA and NSDAP: March 1933

Entry into the SS: Autumn 1934

Civilian Profession: Baker

Born in Sögel in Emsland in 1905. → Completed a master craftsman’s certificate as a baker in 1930. → Applied as a guard in the early concentration camps in Emsland in 1934. Discontinued his training as a concentration camp guard following an accident. → Retrained as a cook. Worked in the camp kitchen in Esterwegen concentration camp. → Head chef in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp from 1936 to 1942. Transferred to Auschwitz due to misappropriation of foodstuffs. → “Kommandoführer” (detachment leader) in Buna-Monowitz from 1943 onwards, responsible for escorting inmates to and from the factory site in the morning and evening together with the SS guard detail under his command. Following complaints about his cruelty and brutality towards inmates, he was promoted to “Rapportführer” (report leader) in Buna-Monowitz. In this position, he was responsible among other things for the roll calls and the determination of manpower in the camp. → Head of the Gleiwitz II sub-camp (Deutsche Gas-Ruß-Werke GmbH; headquartered in Dortmund) from December 1944 to January 1945. → Head of the Weimar-Gustloff-Werke sub-camp of Buchenwald concentration camp from February 1945 onwards. → Arrested by the U.S. Army in 1945. → Sentenced to two and a half years in prison following a denazification trial in 1948 due to his SS membership (the court included his postwar imprisonment in the sentence, which was thus regarded as already served). → Returned to employment as a baker. → Arrested in 1950 and tried altogether three times by the Osnabrück regional court (1952–1959). → Sentenced to life in prison in 1953 following the first Rakers trial for the murder of inmates. → Amnestied in mid-1971 and returned to civilian employment.

Photo: Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute



### MEDICAL ORDERLY

**Gerhard Neubert (1909–1993)**

Entry into the SS: May 1940

Civilian Profession: Piano maker

Born in Johanngeorgenstadt in the Ore Mountains in 1909. → Completed training as a piano maker in 1927. → Began working in a furniture factory in 1931. → Conscripted to the Waffen-SS in 1940 with basic training in Prague. → Assigned to Auschwitz in mid-1942. Worked as a guard and operated the facility for disinfection of clothes while completing training in disinfection and nursing. → Began working as a medical orderly in the inmate hospital in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp in 1943, where he was involved in selections. → Following dissolution of the camp in January 1945, he served in the Buchenwald, Mittelbau-Dora (Boelcke-Kaserne), and Neuengamme concentration camps. → Arrested by the British Army in 1945, but released again after ten weeks. → Worked as a farm helper, carpenter, and foreman. → Employed in site management of a Bundeswehr unit from 1958 to 1963, before returning to work in the furniture factory he had been employed in before the war. → Indicted in the first Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, but not taken into pre-trial custody. The court discontinued prosecution due to the defendant’s ill health. → He was indicted again in the second Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (1965–1966) and sentenced to three and a half years in prison. → Released in 1971.

Photo: Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute



### CAMP PHYSICIAN

**Horst Fischer (1912–1966)**

Entry into the SS: November 1933

Entry into the NSDAP: May 1937

Civilian Profession: Doctor

Fischer was born in Dresden in 1912 and grew up as an orphan with relatives in Dresden and Berlin. → Studied medicine at Berlin University from 1932 to 1937. → Began working as a military physician with the Waffen-SS in 1939. → Transferred to Auschwitz in 1942. Eventually promoted to deputy to the Chief Physician. → Camp physician in the inmate hospital in Buna-Monowitz from November 1943 to September 1944 (Fischer was one of the highest-ranking SS doctors in Auschwitz). → Country practitioner in the GDR after 1945. → His identity was discovered in the mid-1960s following an investigation by the Ministry for State Security due to intensive contact with the West and “political unreliability” towards the GDR regime. → Found guilty of murdering several thousand people by the Supreme Court of the GDR in March 1966 and executed.

Photo: Frankfurt am Main, picture-alliance/dpa

## THE I.G. FARBEN STAFF

I.G. Farben despatched engineers, employees, and foremen to I.G. Auschwitz. The staff members received additional benefits for relocating, for example in the form of “severance benefits”, tax exemptions, and special social benefits including first-class healthcare. Moreover, they were offered a comprehensive leisure programme in order to counterbalance their work and to ease their “renunciation of the civilisation and lifestyle they were used to back home” (Walther Dürrfeld).

The I.G. Auschwitz personnel were categorised in accordance with Nazi racial hierarchies and housed in altogether twelve barrack camps, separated by origin and status. Jewish homes in the town of Auschwitz were confiscated in April 1941 and made available to the head employees of I.G. Auschwitz. The company management had housing estates and barracks constructed for the rest of the employees.



**Photographs of after-work and sports events** | Auschwitz, 1943/44 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

The company management of I.G. Auschwitz organised a comprehensive leisure programme including concerts, cinema and theatre shows, and sports events.



**Newly constructed housing estate in Oświęcim (Auschwitz) town** | Auschwitz, 1943/44 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

The company management afforded the engineers and employees special social benefits such as green spaces and beautification of their accommodations.

This photograph was submitted during the I.G. Farben trial by the defendant Walther Dürrfeld as evidence of the rapidly increased prosperity of the town and the entire region thanks to the I.G. company housing estate.

### PERSONNEL IN AUSCHWITZ ON 15 NOVEMBER 1942

German personnel:	4,944
Total personnel* at the factory:	20,555
*) excluding inmates of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp Aside from civilian workers, this included forced labourers (predominantly from Eastern Europe), POWs, and inmates from a re-education camp that was housed in several barrack camps in Auschwitz.	

I.G. Farben employees and members of other companies deployed to Auschwitz:

Personnel	INDUSTRIAL PERSONNEL			EMPLOYEES	
	Skilled labourers	Unskilled labourers	Trainees, retrainees	technical	commercial
German I.G. employees	331	483	1,776	111	535
Employees of other companies	1,122	386	22	91	87
Total German personnel	1,453	869	1,798	202	622

**Bernd Wagner** | *IG Auschwitz. Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung von Häftlingen des Lagers Monowitz 1941–1945*, Munich 2000, p. 331

**THE I.G. AUSCHWITZ CAMP SYSTEM**

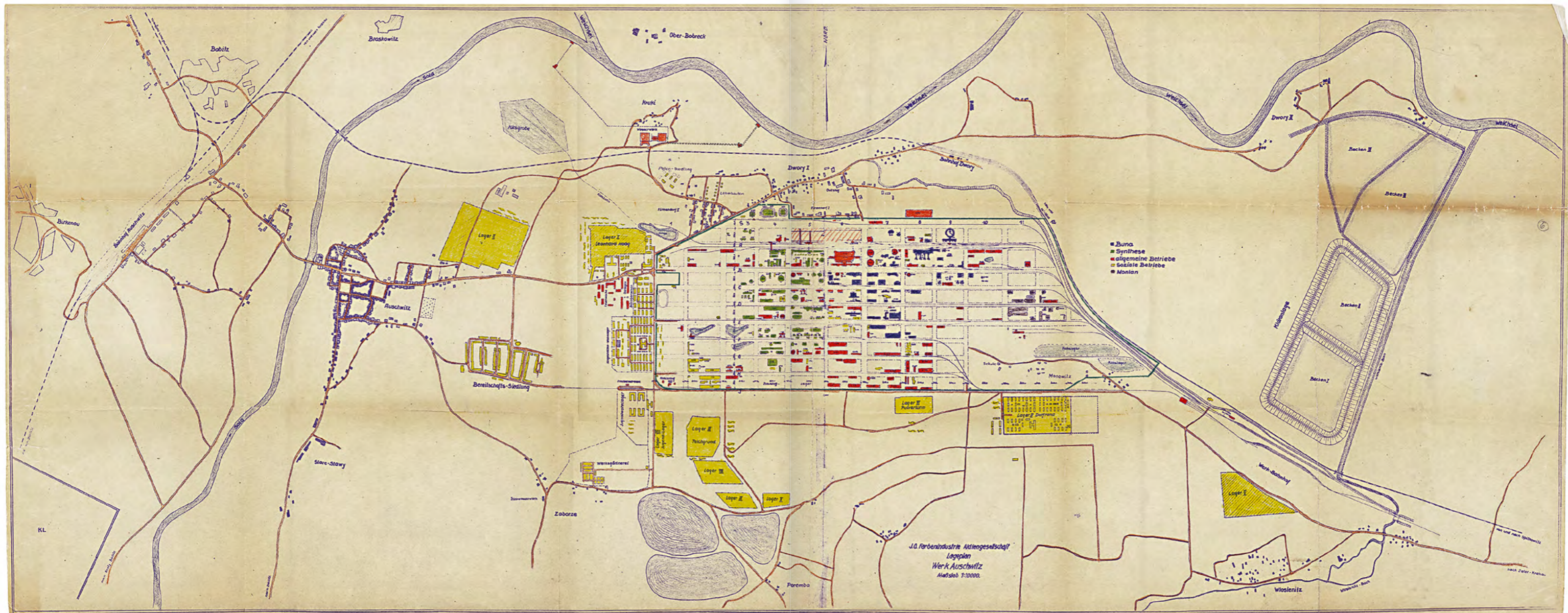
From the very beginning, there was a major labour shortage on I.G. Farben's large construction site. The company tried to counteract this by hiring foreign civilian workers. From 1940 onwards, it also turned to "Vermittlungsstelle W" (Agency W) in Berlin in order to procure POWs and forced labourers. These were housed in huge camp complexes surrounding the I.G. Farben factory buildings (marked yellow on the map).

The occupational safety as well as social welfare, political, medical, and hygiene conditions varied among the many foreign labourers depending on their "race" as defined by Nazi ideology. The wages for workers from the East (Ostarbeiter), Poland and the Baltics, as well as for Jews, Sinti, and Roma, were significantly lower than those of other foreigners or of German workers. Their accommodations and medical treatment were also worse and they received less food rations.

The concentration camp inmates were subjected to the most inhumane forms of forced labour. These mostly consisted of Jewish inmates who were deprived of all rights.

**Factory and camp complex of the I.G. Farben Auschwitz factory | Map to the scale of 1:10,000 | Late 1944 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute**

This site map created by the I.G. planners was used in the Nuremberg trials to illustrate the arrangement of the buildings.



# THE INMATES OF THE BUNA-MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP

*"The Buna is not [green]: the Buna is desperately and essentially opaque and grey. This huge entanglement of iron, concrete, mud and smoke is the negation of beauty. Its roads and buildings are named like us, by numbers or letters, or by weird and sinister names. Within its bounds not a blade of grass grows, and the soil is impregnated with the poisonous saps of coal and petroleum, and the only things alive are machines and slaves – and the former are more alive than the latter."*

**Primo Levi** | *If This is a Man*, translated by Stuart Woolf, New York 1959, p. 81



**Primo Levi** | Around 1960 | Milan, Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (Fondo fotografico Levi Anna Maria, inv. 363-016)

The author: Primo Levi (1919–1987) was born in Turin on 31 July 1919, where he studied chemistry. In late 1943, he was arrested as a member of the resistance. He was first interned in the Fossoli camp near Modena in January 1944 before being deported to Buna-Monowitz in February. Levi survived the difficult labour detachments in the first months, finally being deployed as a chemist in a skilled labour detachment in November 1944, going on to work in a weatherproof laboratory until January 1945. He contracted scarlet fever shortly before the camp was evacuated and was left behind in the inmate infirmary, where there was no longer any medical treatment available at this point.

Through luck and coincidence, he survived until the liberation by the Red Army on 27 January 1945, after which he returned to Italy and worked in the chemical industry until 1977. His autobiographical reports, stories, and novels received numerous literary awards and were translated into many languages. Levi died in 1987, in what was most likely a suicide.

The text: Primo Levi's report appeared in Italian as early as 1947 (with a new edition in 1958) under the title *Se questo è un uomo*. It is probably the best known and in terms of its impact the most influential report by a survivor of Buna-Monowitz. In it, Levi recounts his experiences during his one-year imprisonment in the camp. His descriptions are highly precise, clear, and sober, and he uses his personal experiences as a point of departure to reflect on the dehumanisation of the victims.

## DEPORTATION

■ The bureaucratically organised deportation of Jews from Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia began in the autumn of 1941. The deportees were first taken by train to ghettos in occupied Central and Eastern Europe. Trains began heading directly to Auschwitz from Nazi-occupied and Nazi-allied European countries in March 1942.

These transports of the Deutsche Reichsbahn, the German state railway company, which were marked as “special trains”, were prepared by Department IV B 4 (the “Judenreferat” or Jewish Department) of the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt, RSHA) in Berlin under the direction of Adolf Eichmann.

Some 650 of these transports, carrying over a million Jews, Sinti, and Roma, had Auschwitz-Birkenau as their final destination.

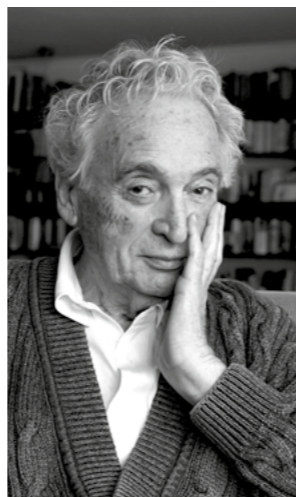
In Germany itself, officers collected the victims at home and interned them in public collection camps that had been established in exhibition halls or Jewish institutions such as synagogues. Once a transport had been put together, the Gestapo took the victims on foot or in trucks to the public railway stations, mostly freight stations, from where the trains departed.

*“My brother Hermann and I [...], as the first to climb into the carriage, sat ourselves down in a corner, below a hatch, a kind of window opening, installed so that the animals normally transported in here didn't suffocate on hot days. Our carriage was so full that it was impossible to lie down. Once the train was rolling, making no stops, one started to smell the first human necessities. Those who had the courage to shit directly into their trousers were the fortunate ones. [...] The degradation took on the most primitive forms, reaching its low point at the ramp in Auschwitz. We had been en route for almost four days, most of us covered in shit and stinking abysmally.”*

Imo Moszkowicz | *Der grauende Morgen. Erinnerungen*, Paderborn 2008, p. 79

The author: Imo Moszkowicz (1925–2011) was the son of a Jewish Russian shoemaker and grew up in Ahlen in the Münster region. In 1938, his father emigrated to Argentina. The family was supposed to follow on 10 November. However, their apartment, including all their travel documents, was destroyed during the pogrom night of 9 November. In 1939, the family was relocated to Essen. In April 1942, his mother and four siblings were deported to Izbica, a “transit ghetto” for the extermination camps of Sobibor and Belzec. His brother David was deported to Auschwitz, where he was shot dead on the ramp in February 1943.

Imo Moszkowicz | 2003 in his home in Ottobrunn | photo provided by Daniela Ebenbauer, Vienna



On 1 March 1943, Imo and his brother Hermann were deported from Dortmund to Auschwitz. Imo lost sight of his brother on the ramp. He was assigned to perform forced labour for I.G. Farben. Moszkowicz survived the death marches and was liberated by the Red Army in May 1945 in the vicinity of Liberec/Reichenberg.

After liberation, he began a career in theatre and stage direction. He performed as an actor and director on numerous large stages in the German-speaking world as well as in Santiago de Chile and Tel Aviv and directed over 200 TV films and series. He died in Munich on 11 January 2011.

The text: Moszkowicz published his autobiography in 1996, over fifty years after the events it described. The book addresses his inability to forget the persecution, forced labour, and other experiences of Buna-Monowitz: Repressed and unwelcome memories constantly imposed themselves on his everyday life and his work as an actor and director.

Moszkowicz does not offer a chronological historical report, but rather takes accounts of his life after liberation as a point of departure for memories of and reflections upon Auschwitz. Thus, he constantly jumps back and forth between different levels of memory, which he expresses in different linguistic forms. Only the constant return to positive memories makes it possible to deal with the unbearable.

DEPORTATIONS OF JEWS TO AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU	
France	69,000
Netherlands	60,000
Belgium	25,000
Germany/Austria	23,000
Italy	7,500
Norway	690
Slovakia	27,000
Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia/Theresienstadt Ghetto	46,000
Yugoslavia	10,000
Greece	55,000
Poland	300,000
Hungary	438,000
Other concentration camps	34,000
Approximate total	<b>1,100,000</b> <b>(1,095,190)</b>
FURTHER DEPORTATIONS	
Poles	147,000
Sinti and Roma	23,000
Soviet POWs	15,000
Others	25,000
Approximate total	<b>1,300,000</b> <b>(1,305,190)</b>

Franciszek Piper | *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz* | Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 1993



# Transportliste

29  
13. Osttransport vom 29.11.1942, 443  
29

Lfd. Nr.	Name	Vorname	geb. am	Ort	Beruf	ledig	verh.	Alter	arbeits-lähig	Wohnung Ort	Wohnung Straße	Kennkarten-Nr.	Kennzeichen-Nr.	Bemerkunge
1	Rotstein	Abraham Israel	1.6.96	Vilkaviskis	Arb.		ja	46	ja	Radinkendorf			23256	v. Bez. Potsdam
2	Rotstein	Edi Ella Sara	30.12.88	WIRbowitz	Arb.		ja	54	ja	dto.		Fr.P. 66/1942	23257	"
3	Loewenstein geb. Meyerhardt	Hilde Sara	26.9.01	Krojanke		ja			ja	dto.		Fr.P. L.172/39	23258	"
4	Prager	Bertud Sara	24.5.85	Berlin	ohne	ja		57	ja	Poststr. Augustenstr. 104			23259	von Mecklbg.
5	Simon	Louis Israel	16.6.77	Hagenow	ohne		ja	65	ja	" Ludwigstr. 31		400007	23261	"
6	Simon geb. Baumgarten	Johanna Sara	20.6.85	Verden	ohne		ja	57	ja	dto.			23261a	"
7	Gumpert geb. Sebatzky	Margarete Sara	11.1.88	Rummelsbg.	ohne		ja	54	ja	Ferchlin, Buchholzallee			23262	"
8	Elias	Methilde Sara	20.3.09	Berlin	ohne	ja		33	ja	Berlin, Gr. Hamburgerstr. 26			23441	"
9	Mayer	Irma Sara			Angest.	ja			ja	Seyn b/Koblenz			23615	von Seyn
10	Michel	Alfred Israel			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23614	"
11	Mayer	Liegbert Israel			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23616	"
12	Kallmann	Robert Israel			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23618	"
13	Kallmann	Hertha Sara			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23619	"
14	Katzenstein	Manfred Israel			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23620	"
15	Katzenstein	Martha Sara			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23621	"
16	Spiegel	Leo Israel			dto.	ja			ja	dto.			23629	"
17	Kunz geb. Mirisch	Rosa Sara	8.6.83	Krakau	ohne		ja	59	ja	Charl. Nielandstr. 35			23781	"
18	Schlesinger geb. Munderstein	Käthe Sara	23.2.98	Posen	Arb.		ja	44	ja	568, Lindenstr. 113			23831	"
19	Steinberg geb. Fensterheim	Chana	12.10.92	Zolina			ja	50	ja	N. 54, Dragonerstr. 43			23832	"
20	Steinberg	Gerda	11.1.27	Berlin b	ohne	ja		15	ja	dto.			23833	"

Auszug aus Transportliste der Geheimen Staatspolizei, Staatspolizeistelle Berlin, Welle 37 23, Osttransport 29.11.1942, 10.6.11.7, ITS Archives, Bad Arolsen  
Copy in conformity with the ITS Archives

**Excerpt from the Transport List** | Transport leaving 29 November 1942 from Berlin to Auschwitz | Bad Arolsen, Arolsen Archives

The Gestapo operated systematically and meticulously in the preparation of the transports. First, Jews were registered in their respective localities in collaboration with various local and communal offices. This register then served as the basis for the transports.

## ARRIVAL

■ The deportation trains arrived between the spring of 1942 and May 1944 at the “Old Ramp” near the Auschwitz freight station. In May 1944, the “New Ramp” inside the Birkenau extermination camp went into operation.

Upon arrival, the deportees were driven out of the carriages with shouts and blows from the SS men. The first selection was conducted by SS officers directly next to the train, and from March 1943 onwards exclusively by SS doctors. Two columns were formed while still on the ramp itself: The elderly, weak, children and younger teenagers, pregnant women, and women with children were taken directly to the gas chambers.

The survivors of the selections were taken on foot or on trucks to the Auschwitz main camp, the Birkenau extermination camp, or the I.G. Farben-owned Buna-Monowitz labour camp. There, they were forced to relinquish all their valuables and clothes, they were “deloused”, and were made to take a cold shower. Their hair was shorn off and an inmate number was tattooed on their lower left arm. Following so-called quarantine, they were assigned to a labour detachment in which they had to perform forced labour. If they were no longer able to work, the SS sent them to be gassed.

15 – 35 %	of deportees were deemed “capable of working”.
65 – 85%	were immediately murdered in the gas chambers.

“Finally, the train comes to a stop, and in the dawn we find ourselves on the Auschwitz railway platform. The carriage doors are torn open and we are compelled to exit with yells and screams. [...] Heart-wrenching scenes unfold as the women and children are separated from the men. We pass a few SS officers on the railway platform who examine us very superficially, one after the other. One is sent either right or left. I am sent right and notice that the men lined up on my side are younger and in good physical condition. The selection appears to be over. We are told that we are to march into the camp. The other group is loaded onto trucks.”

Willy Berler | *Durch die Hölle. Monowitz, Auschwitz, Groß-Rosen, Buchenwald*, Augsburg 2003, p. 51



Willy Berler | 1940 |  
Paris – Gerpennes,  
L’Harmattan – Quorum /  
Ruth Fivaz-Silbermann

The author: Willy Berler (1918–2008) was born in Czernowitz in Bukovina on 11 April 1918, the son of a merchant. He was a member of Zionist youth groups and in 1936 attended an agricultural school in Palestine. Following his parents’ wishes, he returned after a year and studied chemistry in Liège.

Following the occupation of Belgium in 1940, Berler escaped to France, yet returned a few months later due to financial difficulties. He was denounced and on 19 April 1943, he was deported to Buna-Monowitz. In the first days, he worked in the “timber yard detachment”. After a week of being forced to transport heavy tree trunks with his bare hands, he was so weak that he was sent to the infirmary. Out of compassion, the Blockältester (barrack senior) ensured that he was transferred to the main camp, Auschwitz I. From late January 1944 onwards, he worked in a plant-breeding laboratory in the SS Hygiene Institute in Rajsko. He survived the death march and was interned in the Buchenwald concentration camp, where he was liberated by the U.S. Army on 11 April 1945. Berler returned to Belgium, where he worked in industry and married his wife Ruth in 1947.

The text: Berler wrote his report after more than 55 years had passed. From this temporal distance, he gives a detailed account of the everyday life of the inmates, the behaviour of the SS and prisoner functionaries, as well as some of the procedures in the camp. He is especially concerned with historically contextualising the events with great precision. His language is plain, neutral, and sober. The choice of tense is conspicuous: The first-person narrator reports in the present tense, thus engendering a sense of immediacy.

“We came to a giant gate that was being guarded by SS men. Some brief barking. The gate opened. We saw the barbed wire, the guard towers, men in blue and white here and there, a large empty square, and a row of low wooden houses. [...] We had to [...] walk along a corridor. Male prisoners said to us in German – a couple in French: ‘Hand over everything you have, you may not keep anything. You can pick your things up again afterwards.’ [...] An order roared from above: ‘Take off all your clothes.’ 340 men completely naked, I had never seen anything like it before, it was somehow ridiculous. Some held their hands like fig leaves, others squirmed. Nobody laughed. The next step was the shower, lukewarm, with something resembling soap. Had we known what kind of showers the others were taking, completely naked, those who had stood in the right-hand line at the station, we would surely have felt extremely unwell in this moment.”

Paul Steinberg | *Chronik aus einer dunklen Welt*, Munich 1998, p. 46

**The author:** Paul Steinberg (1926–1999) was born in Berlin on 18 October 1926 to a Russian Jewish family. His mother died giving birth. In 1933, the family moved to France, followed by Italy, Spain, and then back to France again. In September 1943, the sixteen-year-old was arrested by French policemen, who brought him to the French transit camp in Drancy. He was deported from there to Auschwitz a few weeks later, where he was forced to haul bricks in Buna-Monowitz. Steinberg curried favour with the “Lagerälteste” (camp senior) and was assigned to an easier detachment after a few days, in which he had to clean warehouses.

Upon arrival in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp, Steinberg had claimed to be a chemist, hence he was assigned to the “chemistry detachment” in January 1944, to which Primo Levi also belonged. On 18 January 1945, he was forced along with thousands of other inmates on a death march to Gleiwitz, from where they were taken in open carriages to the Buchenwald concentration camp. There, he was able to pass himself off as a political prisoner and thus escaped being murdered along with the 1,200 or so Jewish inmates still remaining in the camp. Following the liberation of Buchenwald, Steinberg returned to Paris, where he worked as a salesman. He married and had two daughters. He died in Paris in 1999.

**The text:** Paul Steinberg decided to write down his memories of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp fifty years after the events. His report is broadly chronological, yet the level of the narrative repeatedly changes, on the one hand describing the brutalities inflicted in the camp while on the other hand reflecting on the effects these experiences had on him in the postwar period.

Steinberg tries to approach his eighteen-year-old self from his present-day position, to understand himself and his actions at the time. He is especially concerned with the question of how the daily atrocities and violence changed people, particularly how he himself changed and adapted in order to survive, while simultaneously feeling guilty for his actions.

### INMATE NUMBERS

The SS assigned numbers only to those deportees who were not murdered in the gas chambers immediately upon arrival. Every inmate received a consecutive number with which he or she was addressed in the camp instead of by name. At first, inmates in Auschwitz were marked with numbers on their clothing.

Since the clothing of deceased inmates was often stolen (especially in winter) and identification then became practically impossible, the SS began tattooing the numbers on the left lower arm of Jewish inmates from mid-1942 onwards. This practice was extended to all non-German inmates in 1943. It was unique to Auschwitz; in other concentration camps, inmates were marked only with numbers on their clothing.



**Paul Steinberg** | During a meeting of survivors in Frankfurt am Main in 1998 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

## FORCED LABOUR

■ The SS and corporate entities exploited the inmates both inside and outside the camp as a source of labour. On site, they were deployed in the camp administration, as labourers, and in the infirmary. Outside the camp, they were forced to work for I.G. Farben or were rented out to dozens of industrial companies.

The inmates were particularly afraid of the transport, soil, and cable detachments. In these labour detachments, which consisted of several hundred forced labourers each, the inmates were constantly and brutally beaten in order to increase their efficiency. Many collapsed during this difficult work and died.

Inmates working on the construction site were exposed to the elements without protection. Their clothing was insufficient to protect against heat and cold alike. In wintertime, hardly any inmates returned without frostbite. Sometimes as many as thirty inmates died per detachment per day. Work accidents on the I.G. Auschwitz factory site also claimed many lives. Yet the most common causes of death were emaciation and untreated disease.

Average life expectancy for inmates in Buna-Monowitz:	3 – 4 months
---	--------------

*“The first detachment we were assigned to was the cement detachment. The rail carriages, which looked exactly the same as those that had taken us to Auschwitz, were loaded with sacks of cement. Two inmates would stand in each carriage and lift a sack of cement, which they would then place on the shoulders of an inmate standing in front of the carriage. The latter would then march double-quick with his load to the cement storage site, where the sack would be taken off him by two other inmates and stacked. Then he would march double-quick back to the carriage. It all had to happen double-quick. ‘Double-quick, hurry hurry!’ My mind does not wish to recall how many people perished under this most difficult labour in the first days alone. It seemed like a test: Whoever survives this has a good chance of making it further, of living on.”*

Imo Moszkowicz | *Der grauende Morgen. Erinnerungen*, Paderborn 2008, p. 90

The author: Imo Moszkowicz ▶ see p. 30

The text: Upon arrival at the ramp in Auschwitz, Moszkowicz had prudently passed himself off as a carpenter. Having survived his stint in the “cement death detachment”, he found work as a carpenter, deployed in the production of wooden beams for a hall.

Since this work proceeded quickly, he was additionally assigned to haul iron wire. The inmates had to carry the wire on their shoulders from the camp square to the construction site. They tried to protect their shoulders with paper from torn-up cement sacks, an only partially viable strategy that was, moreover, forbidden.

*“Otto and I were forced to join the cable detachment. The work in this detachment was some of the most difficult imaginable. We were exposed to all kinds of weather conditions. Whether in searing heat in summertime or in bitter frost and deep snow in wintertime, a certain length of trench had to be dug every day for the cables. Groups of four or five inmates had to fill wagons with soil and push them uphill, accompanied by almost uninterrupted beatings from the SS men and the prisoner functionaries, who thereby wished to speed up the work for I.G. Farben. This meant that hardly a day passed without inmates having fingers or toes, sometimes whole hands and feet severed by the wagons. The mutilated inmates were sent to the infirmary, but one never saw any of them come out alive again.”*

**Tibor Wohl** | *Arbeit macht tot. Eine Jugend in Auschwitz*, Frankfurt am Main 1990, p. 48

The author: Tibor Wohl (1923–2014) was born in Rarbok/Rohožník in Czechoslovakia on 28 June 1923 and grew up in a bourgeois family with his younger brother Paul. In 1936, the family moved to Prague. They tried to flee to Ecuador in 1939, but were deceived by a conman. In December 1941, the family was interned for forced labour in Theresienstadt, from where they were deported to Auschwitz in October 1942. Wohl lost sight of his family upon arrival and never saw them again.

In Buna-Monowitz, he was deployed for heavy transport labour and in the cable detachment. He was subjected to experiments with electric shocks by SS doctors, including Horst Fischer, during a stay in the infirmary. Following a short stay in the “Schonungsblock” (the so-called convalescence block) in the spring of 1944, Wohl met a Czech man, Arnost Tauber, and joined the resistance. Through these contacts, he was assigned to the disinfection station, where he worked until the dissolution of the camp.

Wohl was forced on the death march to Gleiwitz on 18 January 1945. He managed to escape with two comrades during an attack by partisans and hid until he was liberated by the Red Army on 27 January.



**Tibor Wohl** | During a meeting of survivors in Frankfurt am Main in 1998 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

Wohl returned to Prague, where he married and had two children. In 1969, he fled with his family to Austria, where he found work running a fitting shop. Towards the end of his life, he lived in Frankfurt am Main.

Wohl testified against Gerhard Neubert during the second Frankfurt Auschwitz trial and against Horst Fischer in the GDR in 1966.

The text: Already in 1948, Wohl authored a manuscript in Czech recounting his experiences. He only wrote a German-language version thirty years later, following his retirement. The latter was intended to help uncover the truth about Auschwitz. Yet Wohl’s hope that he could thereby shake off “a burden after so many years” remained unfulfilled. As he writes in the preface: “I want to forget, but I cannot.”

Wohl offers a detailed report on everyday life in the camp at Buna-Monowitz, eschewing any reflections on either the postwar period or the time before his imprisonment. The text is structured chronologically in ten chapters and describes various aspects of life in the camp: arrival, the lethal working conditions, the permanent harassment and beatings, time in the infirmary, and the selections. He begins his memoir with his deportation to Auschwitz and ends it with his liberation by the Red Army. Yet he excludes many experiences that affected him personally and about which he later testified in court, such as Fischer’s pseudo-medical torture experiments.



**Inmates unload cement sacks from train carriages intended for the construction site of the I.G. Farben factory** | Auschwitz, between 1942 and 1945 | Unknown photographer | Washington, D.C., United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

## SKILLED LABOURERS

As construction of the factory progressed, the focus of the labour activities shifted. Increasing numbers of inmates were deployed as qualified skilled labourers, working as fitters, masons, carpenters, painters, or welders. Beginning in 1944, there was a greater proportion of production detachments in which inmates performed highly qualified work in chemical laboratories. A small number of inmates even maintained correspondence and compiled statistics in writing detachments. However, inmates were typically deployed for risky and lethal labour, such as the bomb disposal detachment created in 1944 to salvage unexploded ordnance following air raids on the factory site.

*"A machinist, for example, was a privileged man, since he could be used in the planned IG-Farben factory and had the chance to work in a covered shop that was not exposed to the elements. The same holds true for the electrician, the plumber, the cabinetmaker, or carpenter. A tailor or a shoemaker perhaps had the good luck to land in a room where work was done for the SS. For the bricklayer, the cook, the radio technician, the auto mechanic, there was the light chance of a bearable work spot and thus of survival. The situation was different for the inmate who had a higher profession. There awaited him the fate of the businessman, who likewise belonged to the Lumpenproletariat of the camp, that is, he was assigned to a labor detail, where one dug dirt, laid cables, and transported sacks of cement or iron crossbeams."*

Jean Améry | *At the Mind's Limits. Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*, translated by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld, Bloomington 1980, p. 3

The author: Jean Améry (1912–1978) was born Hans Meyer on 31 October 1912 in a Jewish family in Vienna. The name Améry is an anagram of Mayer and Jean is the French version of Hans. Following the premature death of his father, Améry grew up with his mother. He left school at the age of twelve. Having completed an apprenticeship in bookselling, he worked for a few years as an assistant in the bookshop of the Leopoldstadt adult education centre. He educated himself further by attending literary and philosophical lectures at the University of Vienna. In late 1938, he fled to Belgium. After being arrested in 1940, he managed to escape. In July 1943, he was arrested again in Brussels and interned in Fort Breendonk, where he was tortured by the SS.



Jean Améry | In Paris in the mid-1970s | Marbach, Deutsches Literaturarchiv

On 15 January 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz. He was assigned as a clerk in Buna-Monowitz in June. In January 1945, Améry was deported to the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp, then to Bergen-Belsen, where he was liberated by British troops on 15 April 1945.

Améry returned to Brussels and wrote for various newspapers, particularly in Switzerland, as a cultural journalist. He became known in the German-speaking world as an engaged critic of cultural and current events. In 1978, he took his own life.

**The text:** From 1964 onwards, Améry wrote five essays about Auschwitz. These texts were initially broadcast on radio before appearing in 1966 under the title *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne* (Beyond Guilt and Atonement) with the Munich-based Szczesny publishing house. The texts were conspicuous at the time because the author used the first person to address his own victimhood.

Améry does not offer a chronological account of his experiences in Auschwitz. He is explicitly opposed to fact-based memoirs and instead writes from the rebellious "subjective constitution of the victim". He describes individual experiences of persecution, torture, forced labour, and life in the Buna-Monowitz camp in a radically reductive form, reflecting upon these experiences from the perspective of a survivor and intellectual. He is thus more adamant than Primo Levi, for example: He is explicitly opposed to German postwar society's efforts at reconciliation.

*"When I'm asked whether I.G. Farben exacerbated our fate in Monowitz or whether they could have improved our situation, I would like to say that they could have acted differently. A bookkeeping detachment was created, consisting of Jewish inmates, about fifty to seventy of them. The I.G. Farben people recruited this detachment personally. These Jewish inmates immediately received clothes, properly tailored [...] inmate clothing and good shoes. Their block was equipped with quilts and clean bedding. These people were fed by I.G. Farben itself at lunchtime. They would mostly bring their own supper back with them, a very good supper by the standards of the time, and would give away their camp soup. One could identify these people visibly. They were better fed. The other inmates were not well off."*

Paul Herzberg | Testimony from 27 November 1952 in the Wollheim trial

## HIERARCHIES AMONGST THE INMATES

COMPOSITION OF THE INMATES IN BUNA-MONOWITZ IN THE WINTER OF 1944/1945	
Jews from all over Europe "Reich Germans"	90 – 95 %
Poles	3 – 5 %
Others	1 – 3 %
	1 – 2 %

■ The SS and I.G. Farben controlled the inmates through a so-called self-administration, which was strictly hierarchical in its organisation. The selected individuals deployed to this end were described as prisoner functionaries. Nazi racial ideology played an important role in their position within these hierarchies. While Jews made up the largest group of inmates, they were rarely appointed to administrative positions. Mostly "Reich Germans" or Poles designated as "political", "criminal", or "asocial" were appointed as prisoner functionaries.

Prisoner functionaries enjoyed numerous benefits: They were housed in separate rooms in the blocks or in separate blocks with low occupancy rates. Through their position in the inmate hierarchy, they were able to establish a network of social dependencies. This included the procurement of better clothing or good food, but also the extortion of sexual services from young inmates. They were also able to procure privileges for their own group. Most of them used their positions to ensure their own survival.

### DESIGNATION THROUGH TRIANGLES

Each inmate in Buna-Monowitz had to sew a strip of cloth onto the left breast of their jacket and the right leg of their trousers at pocket height. These strips were about four centimetres wide and around twelve centimetres long. In addition to the inmate number, these depicted a triangle indicating the "reason for arrest".

Almost ninety percent of inmates in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp wore a downward-pointing red triangle, which was used to designate all opponents of the regime, meaning in principle also Jewish inmates. For the latter, however, the red triangle overlapped a yellow triangle pointing up, so that the two triangles formed a Star of David, although the Jewish inmates sometimes simply wore a yellow strip above the red triangle. All non-German inmates were additionally marked with a capital letter within the triangle indicating their origin, so for example "P" for Poles, "F" for Frenchmen, and "I" for Italians.

The SS tended to choose "asocials" (marked with a black triangle and making up about eight percent of the inmate population) and "criminals" (marked with a green triangle and making up about five percent of the inmate population) to serve as prisoner functionaries.

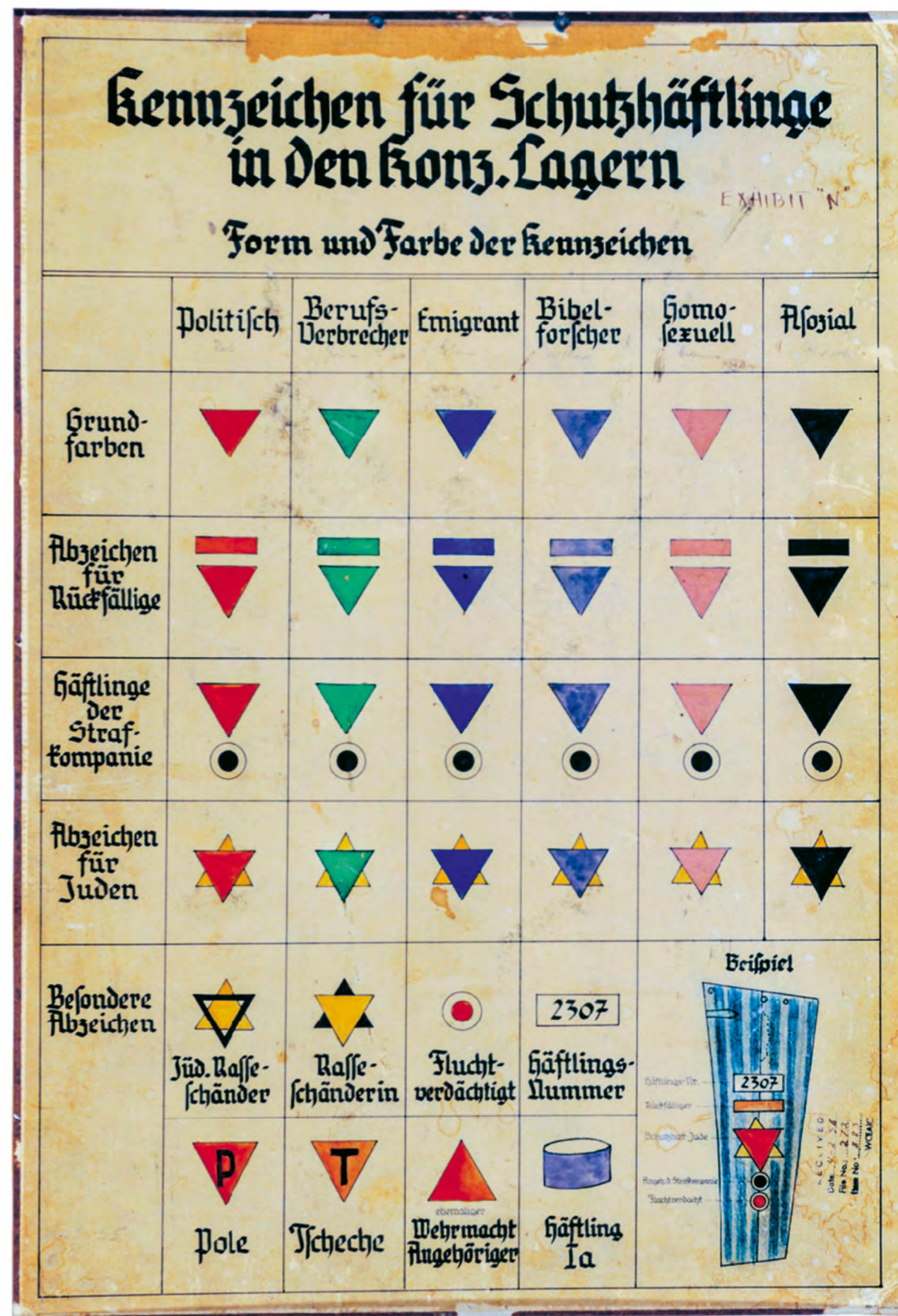


Table of designations that had to be worn by inmates in the camps | Washington, D.C., United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Monowitz 13. 1. 1944/5		134	
Sch. Deutsche	160	Franzos	6
Polen	68	Jugoslav.	11
Holländer	12	Kroaten	6
Russen	7	Griechen	1
Sonstige		ZIGEUNER	2
Schutzhäftlinge gesamt		289	
B.V. Deutsche	25	Polen	
B.V. Häftlinge gesamt		25	
A.S.O. Deutsche	30	Polen	2
A.S.O. Häftlinge gesamt		32	
P.S.V. Deutsche	168	Polen	11
P.S.V. Häftlinge gesamt		179	
Biebelforscher	1	§175	2
Erziehungshäftlinge		226	
Juden Deutsche	598	Holländer	218
Polen	339	Belgier	189
Franzos	1039	Norwegen	4
Slovaken	10	Griechen	343
Tschechen	78	Italiener	110
Ungarn	3013	KROATEN	1
Juden gesamt		9054	
Lagerstärke:		9806	

The last register of inmates in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp from 13 January 1945 | Auschwitz, 13 January 1945 | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

The prisoners were divided into “protective custody prisoners” (political prisoners, opponents of the regime, and workers), “Gypsies” (Sinti and Roma), “ASO” (“asocials”, including prostitutes, frauds, and conmen), “BV” (“Berufsverbrecher”, meaning career criminals, including beggars, pimps, and “work-shy” people), “PSV” (inmates from police preventative detention), “§ 175” (homosexuals), “Bibelforscher” (meaning Jehovah’s Witnesses and members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Reform Movement), “Erziehungshäftlinge” (“reformatory inmates”, sentenced to hard labour to “re-educate” them), and “Jews”.

## CAPRICE AND ABUSE

■ The SS generated a permanent atmosphere of terror in Buna-Monowitz. Members of SS guard details were allowed to brutally torment the inmates and murder them at will. Prisoner functionaries were also allowed to abuse and even kill inmates. Such applications of violence were tolerated and even encouraged by the SS.

The I.G. Farben employees, from workers through to management, exacerbated the inmates’ situation. They reported the smallest transgressions to the SS in order to ensure these were punished or to trigger selections. Management additionally operated on the basic assumption that the inmates could only achieve the desired efficiency through compulsion, violence, and punishment. Former inmates also recalled little acts of assistance by “good” civilian workers who passed on foodstuffs.

Willy Berler had a fever and was resting momentarily on the construction site: “This time, it was neither an SS man nor a prisoner functionary who caught me, but a German civilian, a foreman at I.G. Farben. The civilian employees, foremen at I.G. Farben [...] treated Jews on the construction site in exactly the same manner [...] as the SS. Although this guy knew exactly what awaited me, he rushed to report me to a prisoner functionary. What happened next was routine. The prisoner functionary beat me first, then he reported to the on-duty SS man. That same evening, during rollcall, I received the corresponding disciplinary penalty: ‘Twenty-five blows on the back.’”

Willy Berler | *Durch die Hölle. Monowitz, Auschwitz, Groß-Rosen, Buchenwald*, Augsburg 2003, p. 78

The author: Willy Berler ▶ see p. 35

## PUNISHMENTS

Many foremen used the prisoner functionaries as a means to compel the inmates to work. This is how they passed on the pressure to finish the complex according to schedule. They were generally required to report the inmates’ efficiency to the camp administration. An inmate who achieved less than 75 percent the efficiency of a German worker, or just once achieved between 50 and 60 percent, received between 10 and 25 blows with a stick.

Aside from the inmates’ efficiency, the foremen were also required to report any “misdemeanours”. The most frequent punishment for these were 25 blows on the back with a stick, usually administered by a prisoner functionary under SS supervision.

*"I regard it as my duty to mention one foreman in particular, namely foreman Kuss from Leipzig. He was small and slender and particularly nice to us. When the SS approached, he would call out 'Six' to warn us. Even though I never personally asked him for help, I know that he helped several of us. One day he disappeared and we never saw him again. It was said that he had been shot dead. I was not able to find out anything further, but it was common knowledge that he was anti-Nazi. We were all sad to have lost him. He was one individual who was able to restore our faith in humanity."*

Joseph Schupack | *Tote Jahre. Eine jüdische Leidensgeschichte*, Tübingen 1984, p. 161

The author: Joseph Schupack (1922–1989) was born in the small Polish town of Radzyń, a typical Jewish shtetl community with around 5,000 Jews. His childhood and youth were characterised by increasing harassment, constant threats, violence, and hate. Following the German invasion, the situation deteriorated. The Jews of the town were deported to Treblinka, where Schupack's entire family was murdered. He managed to flee to Warsaw with forged documents in late November 1942. An attempt to smuggle further forged papers into the Międzyrzec Ghetto failed and he was forced to remain in the ghetto. Following its liquidation in late April 1943, Schupack was deported to the Majdanek extermination camp, which he survived by chance. In July 1943, he was brought to Buna-Monowitz along with 500 other inmates. There, he was forced to work in an electrical detachment in a hall, thus sheltered from rain and cold. In January 1945, he was forced on the death march to Gleiwitz, before being deported to the Mittelbau-Dora camp near Nordhausen on a transport lasting several days. There, he was made to work in weapons production. After a few weeks, he was interned in Bergen-Belsen, where the inmates were housed in nearby Wehrmacht barracks due to overcrowding. They had to survive for days without food until the camp was liberated by the British Army on 15 April 1945.

After liberation, Schupack married a Holocaust survivor in 1946. The couple decided to stay in Germany and had two children.

The text: Schupack wrote down his memories after forty years of repression upon the behest of his wife and sons. He structured them thematically and chronologically. The individual chapters mark stations on his path of suffering: He describes the living conditions in his hometown, the increasingly deteriorating situation after the German invasion, his escape to Warsaw, his journey to the Międzyrzec Ghetto, its liquidation, and his deportation to the concentration camps at Majdanek, Auschwitz, Mittelbau-Dora, and Bergen-Belsen. Schupack always explicitly cites the names and fates of his murdered friends and relatives in order to preserve their memories.



Joseph Schupack | In the 1940s with his wife Balla | Amsterdam Publishers

## PROVISIONS

■ The provisions in Buna-Monowitz were completely insufficient, consisting primarily of soup: At around twelve o'clock, each inmate on the construction site received 750 ml of "Buna soup", so-called because it tasted of Buna, i.e. rubber. It consisted of nettles, grass, and other greens, sometimes augmented with a potato, and thus had practically no nutritional value. After roll call in the evenings, the inmates would again receive soup, this time consisting mostly of potatoes.

The food in Buna-Monowitz contained hardly any protein, vitamins, or fat. It regularly led to diarrhoea, since the inmates' emaciated bodies were practically no longer capable of producing stomach acids or intestinal juices. Through malnutrition and insufficient calories, the hardworking men lost between two and four kilograms per week. Whoever was unable to acquire additional food would become totally weakened after about three months. In camp slang, these people, who would typically soon fall victim to a "selection", were called "Muselmänner".

### FOOD RATIOMS FOR INMATES

Morning:	"Coffee substitute", about 1/5 of a loaf of low-quality bread, 8–20 grams of margarine
Midday:	"Buna soup"
Evening:	Soup
Once per week:	30 grams of low-quality sausage (external labour detachments: 3 times per week), 100 grams of curd cheese, 50 grams of marmalade

*"At 5:30 a.m., the beginning of the daily trials was marked with the fateful call 'Get up!' There followed a short toilet break for those who still cared about their cleanliness. Then bread was handed out along with a square of margarine, a slice of sausage or a piece of cheese. [...] The bread was swallowed up. In communal silence, everyone paid attention that not even a crumb fell to the ground. A carefully sharpened spoon handle was used to cut the piece of bread, spread the margarine, and halve the slice of sausage. One chewed slowly in order to produce saliva and aid digestion. [...] Then came the morning roll call, only brief, so that the departure for the factory was not delayed."*

Paul Steinberg | *Chronik aus einer dunklen Welt*, Munich 1998, p. 71

The author: Paul Steinberg ▶ see p. 36



## HYGIENE

It was almost impossible to maintain a minimum standard of hygiene in the camp. There were only five sanitary barracks for thousands of inmates. The floors of the dark, draughty washrooms were covered in mud. The water was not fit for consumption, it stank horrendously, and often cut out for hours on end. The inmates were supposed to shower once a week, but they only received a piece of sandy, fat-free soap once a month, which would disintegrate immediately. Hygiene products or utensils (such as toothbrushes) were not available. Many inmates infected themselves one after the other with barber's itch by sharing a single razor per barracks.

The inmates' clothing would be collected every six to eight weeks and disinfected with steam. It was never washed and only mended sporadically. Lice inspections would lead to the disinfection of all clothing of a given block, but not to fundamental measures against the pests themselves. This was one of the causes of an outbreak of typhus in 1942, for example.



**Toilet building in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp** | Auschwitz, 1945 | Unknown Photographer | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

In Buna-Monowitz, there were six toilet buildings, so-called latrines, like this one in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. These consisted of simple pit toilets without a flushing system, which were completely befouled since the inmates frequently suffered from gastrointestinal diseases.

*"Although there was a washroom in every block in Monowitz, there were no toilets. That was a luxury that I only got to know later in the Auschwitz main camp, a former military barracks. Where I found myself then, by contrast, there was only a 'shitting house': a rack of boards above a pit. [...] The situation was compounded by the fact that ordinary inmates were not always permitted access to the latrines."*

**Willy Berler** | *Durch die Hölle. Monowitz, Auschwitz, Groß-Rosen, Buchenwald*, Augsburg 2003, p. 60

The author: Willy Berler ▶ see p. 35

The text: After a few months in Buna-Monowitz, Berler managed to get transferred to the main camp, Auschwitz I, with the help of the Blockältester (barrack senior). The main camp had been established on the site of a former military barracks and, following expansion, consisted of 28 walled brick buildings. The hygienic conditions there were a little better than the simple barracks in Buna-Monowitz.

## DISEASE

Due to miserable working conditions and totally insufficient provisions, clothing, and accommodations, the inmates were physically weak and hence very susceptible to infections and disease. Moreover, the lack of protective work clothing, along with accidents and corporal punishment, led to numerous injuries. The former inmate Dr Robert Waitz testified in 1962 that under “normal conditions” about ninety percent of the inmates in Monowitz would have had “to be admitted to hospital”.

The equipment of the inmate infirmary fell far short of the necessities of a hospital. The infirmary lacked not only qualified staff members and sufficient provisions but also the most important medicines as well as bandages, appliances, rooms, and beds. Skin diseases and purulent infections were treated with simple creams, which often had no effect.

Inmates who became chronically ill, whose illness exceeded a certain duration, who experienced too many regressions, or who suffered from highly infectious diseases were sent to Birkenau and murdered in the gas chambers.

### Frequently occurring diseases in Buna-Monowitz:

Oedema, skin infection, diarrhoea, common cold, bronchitis/pneumonia, arthritis, hypothermia, chickenpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhus, scabies, phlegmon, gastrointestinal ulceration, acute ear infection, hernia, emaciation, and injury.

	1942	1943	1944
January		760	730
February		540	155
March		540	230
April		840	280
May		560	95
June		235	60
July		185	125
August		240	130
September		195	70
October		220	385
November	250	450	15
December	590	170	10
Total	840	4,890	2,285

**Number of inmates taken from the inmate infirmary in Buna-Monowitz to Auschwitz (main camp) and Birkenau (monthly statistic)** | Data taken from a diagram of relocations, cited in Antoni Makowski, “Organisation, Entwicklung und Tätigkeit des Häftlings-Krankenbaus in Monowitz (KL Auschwitz III)”, in: *Hefte von Auschwitz*, vol. 15 (1975)

### Leonardo De Benedetti |

With his colleague Roberto Guastalla (on the right) in the courtyard of the Ospedale Mauriziano in Turin, 1935 | Milan, Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (Fondo Guastalla Pons Alda, inv. 619-016)



“The rush of patients was always extreme and exceeded the capacities of the various departments. In order to make room for new arrivals a certain number of patients had to be released each day. They had not always recovered entirely and were thus still in a generally weakened condition. Nevertheless, they had to resume work on the following day.”

**Leonardo De Benedetti, Primo Levi** | “Bericht über die hygienisch-medizinische Organisation des Konzentrationslagers für Juden in Monowitz (Auschwitz–Oberschlesien) 1945–1946”, in: Primo Levi, *So war Auschwitz. Zeugnisse 1945–1986*, Munich 2017, pp. 41–42

The author: Leonardo De Benedetti (1898–1983) worked as a doctor in Rivoli until he was forced to give up his practice in 1938 due to the Racial Laws. He tried to flee to Switzerland with his wife in December 1943, but the couple were arrested by fascist forces. They were first brought to the Fossoli camp, where De Benedetti met Primo Levi.

On 22 February 1944, the couple was deported to Auschwitz. His wife was murdered in the gas chamber immediately upon arrival, while De Benedetti was taken to Buna-Monowitz. Over the following months, he was assigned to heavy labour detachments. He survived four selections, during which he cited his profession. In December 1944, he was deployed as an orderly in the inmate infirmary. After his liberation in January 1945, De Benedetti worked for the Soviet forces as a doctor in the Auschwitz main camp and in Kattowitz. Following his return to Italy, he resumed practice as a doctor. He testified as a witness in several postwar trials.

The author: Primo Levi ▶ see p. 29

The text: Following the liberation of Auschwitz, the Soviet commandant’s office commissioned the chemist Primo Levi and the doctor Leonardo De Benedetti to compile a report on the hygienic and medical organisation of Buna-Monowitz. This document was Levi’s first text, which already evinced the sober and neutral tone for which his autobiographical account *If This Is a Man* would become so famous.

“My bunkmate transferred his scabies onto me. The itch started between my fingers and then spread over my entire body. [...] Treatment for scabies took place every evening. One had to stand in line in front of the infirmary, in the cold, with a hundred other infected people. We were slathered with a disgusting liquid that stank strongly of sulphur. Then I would have the bandages replaced on my ulcers, which kept spreading. [...] Dysentery tipped my miserable constitution over the edge. [...] In the KB [Krankenbau, infirmary] one was entirely powerless against this diarrhoea, the mutual

product of physical depletion, brackish water, and soup made from white turnips, beetroot, and cabbage.

The poor inmates were given an extravagant product christened kaolinite, which was nothing more than a kind of sticky plaster [...] that one could not choke down without gagging."

Paul Steinberg | *Chronik aus einer dunklen Welt*, Munich 1998, p. 73

The author: Paul Steinberg ▶ see p. 36

The text: In the winter of 1943/44, Paul Steinberg caught jaundice, then dysentery, then erysipelas. He was admitted to the infirmary in a deathly ill condition, yet the young man survived thanks to the help of the doctors Waitz, Ohrenstein, Feldbaum, and other French inmates with whom he was connected through a network of mutual assistance that continued after his release from the infirmary.

## SELECTIONS — “SELECTED FOR DEATH”

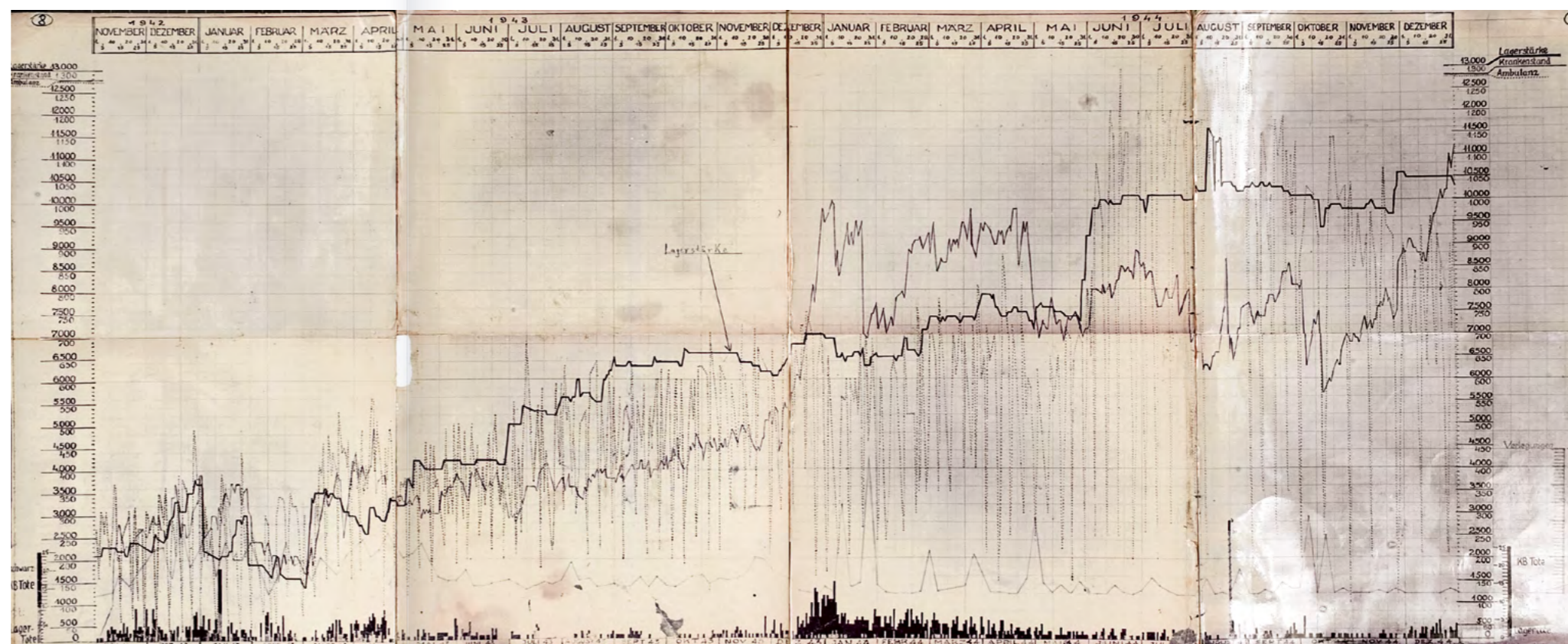
■ Inmates who were no longer deemed “capable of working” were sent by the SS doctors to be murdered in the gas chambers in the Birkenau extermination camp. Those who were still “capable of working” had to continue working until they also turned into “Muselmänner”. Weak inmates were permanently in danger of falling victim to selections. Beginning in April 1943, selections took place only among Jewish inmates.

The management of I.G. Auschwitz would instigate selections with the SS commandant’s office whenever the inmates’ efficiency began to decline in the estimation of the I.G. Farben employees. Selections were additionally carried out in order to make space in the infirmary.

Due to the wildly differing accounts of surviving inmates and the incomplete preservation of documentation, it is no longer possible to determine the number of selections that took place in the camp. It is clear, however, that the SS carried out a selection at least once a quarter. In October 1944, for example, around 2,000 inmates were selected in Buna-Monowitz and gassed in Birkenau.

Diagram depicting the camp population, sickness rates, and inmate infirmary occupancy from November 1942 to December 1944 | Auschwitz, January 1945 | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau

Sickness rates were recorded in the typing room of the inmate infirmary. There was a rule in the camp that only five percent of all inmates were allowed to be reported as ill at any one time.



*"The number of selectees can be clearly deduced from the graphic depiction of the inmate population in Monowitz. [...] Whenever the graphic depiction of the inmate population dramatically fell, a selection had taken place. For selections, meaning killing in the gas chambers, inmates were taken out of the infirmary as well as the camp blocks. Selections took place more frequently in the infirmary than in the camp. One may assume that in wintertime, selections took place when around ten percent of all inmates were incapable of working. In the summer, selections were carried out already when six to seven percent of inmates were incapable of working."*

**Robert Elie Waitz** | Judicial hearing from 26 June 1962 during the Auschwitz trial

The author: Robert Elie Waitz (1900–1978) was born in Neuvy-sur-Barangeon, France, on 20 May 1900. After completing school in 1917, he studied medicine in Paris. In 1933, he became an associate professor at the University of Strasbourg. Following the German invasion of France in May 1940, he became active in the French resistance. In July 1943, he was deported to Auschwitz, where he was deployed as an inmate doctor in the "Innere Ambulanz" (department of internal medicine) in the inmate infirmary of the Buna-Monowitz camp. In January 1945, Waitz was forced on the death march to Gleiwitz, from where he was taken to Buchenwald. He worked there as a volunteer in the typhus block until liberation by the U.S. Army in April 1945.

Waitz returned to Strasbourg, where he was appointed to a chair at the university in 1946. As early as 1947, he published a report on his work in the inmate infirmary. He also testified as a witness in several postwar trials.

---

*"I first heard the term 'selection' in Monowitz. It meant 'selected for death'."*

**Curt Posener** | Testimony during the Wollheim trial from 20 November 1952

*"The site management frequently addressed complaints to the SS camp management since so many sick inmates were not able to follow the work procedure. The site management demanded that sick inmates incapable of working be exchanged for healthy inmates. This exchange meant that sick inmates incapable of working were sent to be gassed in Birkenau and that*

*new inmates were requested from Auschwitz. This fact was discussed quite openly among the German foremen and civilian employees, and it repeatedly occurred that German foremen would use this circumstance as a threat to incite the inmates to greater efficiency."*

**Curt Posener** | Sworn testimony from 3 June 1947 during the I.G. Farben trial

The author: Curt Posener was born into a Jewish family in Hohensalza (today Inowrocław) in the Posen region on 14 October 1902. When the town became Polish after the First World War, he was expelled to Germany. He finished middle school in Frankfurt an der Oder and completed a commercial apprenticeship. He later worked in Hamburg and was a member of a communist resistance group. He was repeatedly arrested, but always managed to get away. He tried unsuccessfully to acquire a residence permit in Denmark in 1936. In 1937, he was sent back to Germany and handed over to the Gestapo. He was first interned in the Dachau concentration camp, followed by Buchenwald in September 1938, and then Auschwitz in October 1942. He worked as an administrator for I.G. Farben in the "Technical Camp Buna" in Buna-Monowitz.

Posener testified as a witness in several postwar trials.

## RESISTANCE

### “Everyday” Resistance

Given the everyday living conditions of concentration camp inmates, even mutual assistance must be regarded as an act of resistance against the concentration camp system. Everyday humane, cultural, or religious acts required a strength that the emaciated inmates often could not muster. Nevertheless, survivors reported about improvised holiday celebrations, educational work, and religious gatherings.

### “Organised” Resistance

Despite the strict guarding and limited opportunities to communicate with the outside world, a small number of inmates managed to put up organised resistance against the SS and the conditions in the camp.

*“We tried to put up resistance in any form possible, for example through acts of sabotage in the workplace. However, we had to reckon with the most severe reprisals and punishments, even for such minor infractions as dropping a sack of cement so that it tore open. Before marching back into the camp, we would sometimes hang a hosepipe into a cement truck and turn on the tap.”*

**Fritz Kleinmann** | in: Reinhold Gärtner, Fritz Kleinmann (eds), *Doch der Hund will nicht krepieren ... Tagebuchnotizen aus Auschwitz*, Thaur 1995, p. 98

**The author:** Fritz Kleinmann (1923–2009) was born the third of four children in Vienna. His father, Gustav Kleinmann, had been born in the Polish town of Zabłocie and worked as an upholsterer. The Jewish family lived in poor conditions. In September 1939, Fritz Kleinmann and his father were deported to Buchenwald along with other men of Polish Jewish origin. He ended up in the newly established masonry school. When his father was assigned to be deported further, Kleinmann volunteered to join him. On 18 October 1942, the pair were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, ending up in Buna-Monowitz shortly thereafter. Kleinmann initially worked in road construction until he was assigned as a mason. He thus had the opportunity of working together with civilians, who assisted him with occasional gifts of food. He also joined a resistance group.

When the camp was evacuated in January 1945, Kleinmann jumped off the train as it was passing through Austria and tried to get to Vienna. He was captured and imprisoned. Since he was taken for a deserter and classed as an “Aryan”, he ended up in the Mauthausen concentration camp. On 5 May 1945, he was liberated there by the U.S. Army. He returned to Vienna, where he reunited with his father. With much effort, he built up a new livelihood for himself.

**Fritz Kleinmann** |  
With his father Gustav Kleinmann in Vienna, 1945 | photo provided by Peter Kleinmann, Vienna



**The text:** The book includes his father’s secret diary, which he kept under mortal danger, as well as an autobiographical text by Fritz Kleinmann recounting his memories of his time in Buchenwald and Auschwitz. Therein, he recalled the severe mistreatment he had suffered, but also the solidarity he experienced from the political prisoners, first in the Buchenwald concentration camp, then in Buna-Monowitz. Kleinmann reported that he only survived Buchenwald thanks to the huge support he received from fellow inmates, for example from terminally ill dysentery patients, who relinquished half their rations in the infirmary to children and young people. The solidarity between father and son during their entire captivity is especially noteworthy. In 2019, Jeremy Dronfield published a book on Fritz Kleinmann’s story entitled *Der Junge, der seinem Vater nach Auschwitz folgte (The Boy Who Followed his Father to Auschwitz)*, Quill Tree Books, Engl. transl. published 2023).

*“We inmates conferred every evening about how we could deal with the untenable food situation and the catastrophe this spelled for all of us. We came to the conclusion that one of us would have to dare to undertake the extremely dangerous experiment of informing outside parties – for example, important individuals at I.G. Farben – and to prove to them how impossible our situation was. Some inmates tried to enlighten I.G. Farben foremen and other supervisors in their workplaces about the reasons behind the declining efficiency of the inmates, their physical weakness, and the consequent collapses at work. The result was that these foremen reported among other places to the camp administration, whereupon some of the inmates were punished most severely by the SS.”*

**Heinrich Schuster** | Sworn testimony from 13 October 1947 during the I.G. Farben trial

**The author:** Heinrich Schuster was born on 9 May 1907 in Voitsberg in Austria. He was arrested in Klagenfurt in 1940.

In April 1942, he was deported as a political prisoner first to the Auschwitz main camp before being brought to Buna-Monowitz in October. There, he was briefly responsible as “Lagerälteste” (camp senior) for the organisation of the infirmary, although he had no medical training whatsoever. Fellow inmates described him as “humane”, yet his lack of qualifications had negative consequences for the patients: The mortality rate was extremely high. In March 1943, he was taken to the Jawischowitz sub-camp and after a few months to Birkenau. He tried to escape during a death march in January 1945. He was caught after two days and interned in Dachau, where he was liberated by the U.S. Army on 29 April.

"Yet I must confess that I felt, and still feel, great admiration for both my religiously and politically committed comrades. They may have been 'intellectual' in the sense we have adopted here, or they may not have been, that was not important. One way or the other, in the decisive moments their political or religious belief was an inestimable help to them, while we sceptical and humanistic intellectuals took recourse, in vain, to our literary, philosophical, and artistic household gods. Whether they were militant Marxists, sectarian Jehovah's Witnesses, or practicing Catholics, whether they were highly educated national economists and theologians or less versed workers and peasants, their belief or their ideology gave them that firm foothold in the world from which they spiritually unhinged the SS state. Under conditions that defy the imagination they conducted Mass, and as Orthodox Jews they fasted on the Day of Atonement although they actually lived the entire year in a condition of raging hunger. They held Marxist discussions on the future of Europe or they simply persevered in saying: the Soviet Union will and must win. They survived better and died with more dignity than their irreligious or unpolitical comrades, who often were infinitely better educated and more practiced in exact thinking."

Jean Améry | *At the Mind's Limits. Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*, translated by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld, Bloomington 1980, pp. 12–13

The author: Jean Améry ▶ see p. 40

The text: These words stem from Améry's first essay entitled "An den Grenzen des Geistes" (At the Mind's Limits) from the volume *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne*, first published in 1966. Here, he explores the question of why humanistic ideals are of little help to the intellectual concentration camp inmate, or why they can even be conducive to self-destruction. Due to their humanistic worldview, intellectuals are incapable of fathoming the SS's logic of annihilation, unlike their "unintellectual" comrades. Intellectuals are not able to gain any "wisdom" from the camps, the experiences only serving to damage their positive identities.

## AIR RAIDS

■ The I.G. Farben factory in Auschwitz-Monowitz was photographed on 4 April 1944 during an American reconnaissance flight. Further flights over the site were conducted between late May and mid-August 1944.

On 20 August 1944, the U.S. Air Force attacked the factory buildings. The aerial bombardment caused significant damage to I.G. Auschwitz's production facilities. Three more raids were to follow. On 13 September, an estimated 300 individuals were injured or killed, including SS men.

The last air raid by the U.S. Air Force on the I.G. Farben factory took place on 19 January 1945, one day before the evacuation of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp began.



Aerial photograph of the I.G. Farben site taken by American aerial reconnaissance | Auschwitz, 26 June 1944 | Washington, D.C., United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

*"Who would have thought that a mortal danger suddenly arose that we not only welcomed but even yearned for? I cannot recall exactly whether it was sirens or the hum of bombers that united 'masters' and 'slaves' – everyone ran for cover. Oh, what a wonderful sight: watching the SS, the 'masters' and 'uppermost of the master race' as they forgot all dignity, leaving their prisoners to their own devices and racing to save their own miserable lives. I had the impression that – as long as the air raids posed a danger – they would not lift a finger if someone tried to escape during this chaos. I was just about to share this exhilarating observation with my father when the sonorous drone of the approaching aircraft appeared directly above us. All those present threw themselves on the ground, my father and I ending up in a ditch by the wayside."*

**Henry Wermuth** | *Atme, mein Sohn, atme tief. Die Überlebensgeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, p. 206

**The author:** Heinz – who went by Henry – Wermuth (1923–2020) was born on 4 April 1923. His parents were from Poland. He lived together with them and his sister Hanna in Frankfurt am Main, the city of his birth. In 1937, Wermuth began an apprenticeship in his uncle's leatherwear factory. On 28 October 1938, the family was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Poland. They found refuge with relatives in Cracow, but had to move to Bochnia in 1940, where a ghetto was eventually created in March 1941. On 24 August 1942, his mother and sister were deported to the Belzec extermination camp and murdered. Wermuth and his father Bernhard were forced to work in various camps. The pair were deported from the Plaszow concentration camp to Buna-Monowitz in July 1944. In mid-January 1945, father and son were taken to the vicinity of Nordhausen and Osterode am Harz to work on tunnel construction, before being brought to Mauthausen. His father was hit on the head and died on the train en route to Mauthausen, just a few days before the liberation of the camp by the U.S. Army on 5 May 1945. Wermuth was the only member of his family to survive. He moved to London, where he married and had two children.

**The text:** Wermuth had already decided in 1943 to write down his life story. After the war, doubts about whether such unimaginable atrocities could even be captured in words held him back from realising this project. He was also aware that he had already forgotten many names, dates, and even events in the meantime. A cousin finally convinced him to record his story nonetheless.

In his account, Wermuth describes in clear language and in chronological order his youth in Frankfurt am Main, his deportation to Poland, and his subsequent imprisonment in various concentration camps. The report ends with his liberation by the U.S. Army and the first days of regained freedom.



**Heinz (Henry) Wermuth** | With his father Bernhard in the 1930s | London, Ilana Metzger

## DEATH MARCHES

Thousands of people perished in the final months before liberation on death marches and transports as well as in the camps. The SS evacuated the camps in and around Auschwitz and forced some 56,000 inmates west.

On the evening of 18 January 1945, all 10,000 inmates in the Buna-Monowitz camp had to gather on the square and form columns of 1,000 inmates each. Most of the inmates possessed little more than their thin inmate uniforms, blankets, food bowls, and cloth shoes with wooden soles. On that evening and the following evening, too, the emaciated inmates were driven on foot through snow and storms by SS men. The SS shot dead whoever fell behind or slumped down on the wayside. In Gleiwitz, around sixty kilometres from the Buna-Monowitz camp, the inmates were herded into open cattle trucks and transported to other concentration camps, the journey often taking several days.

On 27 January 1945, Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army. In the entire camp complex of Auschwitz some 7,000 ill and emaciated inmates had remained, including 650 in Buna-Monowitz.

*"At six o'clock the bell rang. The death knell. The funeral. The procession was beginning its march. 'Fall in! Quickly!' In a few moments, we stood in ranks. Block by block. Night had fallen. Everything was happening according to plan. The searchlights came on. Hundreds of SS appeared out of the darkness, accompanied by police dogs. The snow continued to fall. The gates of the camp opened. It seemed as though an even darker night was waiting for us on the other side. The first blocks began to march. We waited. We had to await the exodus of the fifty-six blocks that preceded us. It was very cold. In my pocket, I had two pieces of bread. How I would have liked to eat them! But I knew I must not. Not yet. Our turn was coming: Block 53 ... Block 55 ... 'Block 57, forward! March! [...]' When the SS were tired, they were replaced. But no one replaced us. Chilled to the bone, our throats parched, famished, out of breath, we pressed on."*

**Elie Wiesel** | *Night*, London 2006, pp. 84, 87

**The author:** Elie (Eliezer) Wiesel (1928–2016) was born in Sighet in Romania on 30 September 1928, the third child of a Jewish merchant. He had two older sisters, Hilda and Beatrice (Bea), and a younger sister, Tzipora. His grandfather, Rabbi Dodye Feig, was a deeply religious Chassid who exerted a strong influence on the young Wiesel.

In 1940, the Romanian territory of Northern Transylvania, including Sighet, was ceded to Hungary. In the spring of 1944, the Wehrmacht occupied Hungary and the Wiesel family had to move into the ghetto in Sighet. In May 1944, they were all deported to Auschwitz. His mother Sarah Wiesel and his youngest sister Tzipora were murdered immediately upon arrival. Elie Wiesel and his father Shlomo were forced to perform heavy transport labour for I.G. Farben. In January 1945, they were forced on the death march via Gleiwitz to the Buchenwald concentration camp. Shlomo Wiesel, who was completely emaciated, died on 29 January 1945. Elie Wiesel was liberated by the U.S. Army on 11 April 1945.

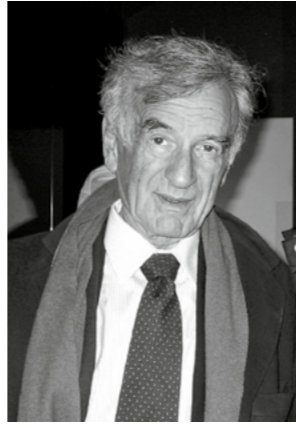
He went to France, learned French, studied at the Sorbonne, and began to work as a journalist. In 1955, he emigrated to New York. From the mid-1960s onwards, he began to lobby on behalf of persecuted persons in various regions around the world. In 1986, Wiesel received the Nobel Peace Prize.

**The text:** Wiesel wrote down his memories of his time in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp in Yiddish during a trip to Brazil in 1954. The book was first published in Buenos Aires in 1956. A revised and abridged version appeared in French in 1958 under the title *La Nuit*.

The text opens with the German occupation of Hungary and ends with the liberation of Buchenwald. It is not divided into chapters, but rather into many short narrative segments divided by blank lines – moments of silence. The scenes are impressive, allowing the feelings and observations of the narrator, Eliezer, to come to the fore. The events are neither interpreted nor contextualised. Some passages incorporate literary images, such as a vision of fire on the deportation train, which indicate the progression of the narrative. Wiesel thereby produces cultural and theological possibilities of interpretation that extend beyond a mere report. The text can be viewed as a literary form of eyewitness testimony.



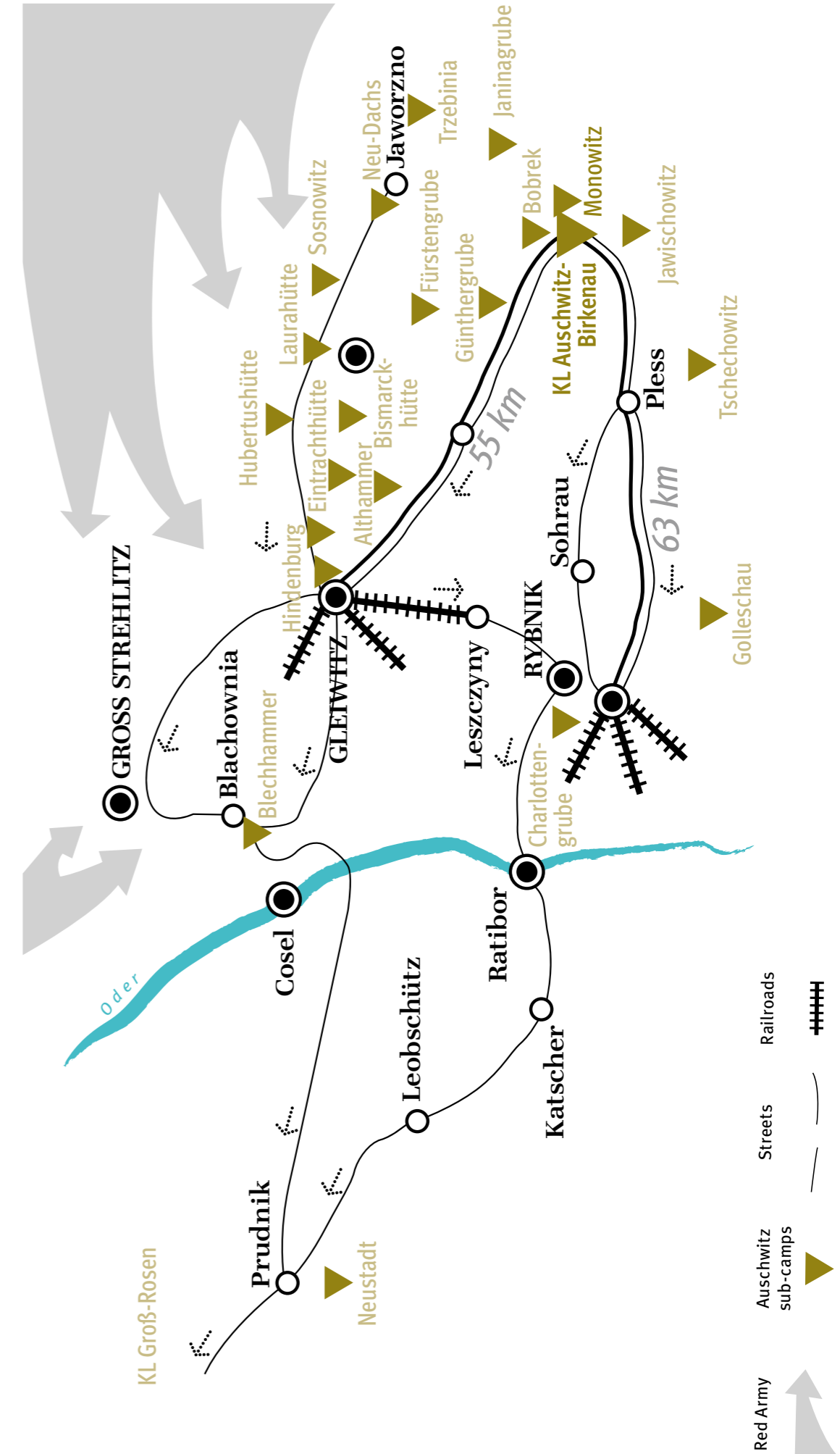
**Transport of inmates in open freight cars in January 1945 | Kolín (Czech Republic), Januar 1945 | Unknown photographer | Oświęcim, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau**



**Elie Wiesel | In Rome, 2003 | photograph by Marcello Pezzetti, Cologne**

### SCHEMATIC DEPICTION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MARCH ROUTES

of inmates from the Auschwitz concentration camp in January 1945





## LIBERATION

"In the Buna-Monowitz infirmary eight hundred of us remained. Of these, around five hundred died of their illnesses or of cold or hunger before the Russians arrived, and two hundred others, in spite of aid, in the days immediately following. The first Russian patrol came in view of the camp around midday on January 27, 1945. Charles and I were the first to catch sight of it: we were carrying to the common grave the body of Sómogyi, the first of the men in our room to die. We overturned the stretcher onto the dirty snow, because the grave was by now full, and no other burial could be given: Charles took off his cap, to salute the living and the dead. Four young soldiers on horseback, machine guns under their arms, proceeded warily along the road that followed the perimeter of the camp. When they reached the fences, they paused to look, and, with a brief, timid exchange of words, turned their gazes, checked by a strange embarrassment, to the jumbled pile of corpses, to the ruined barracks, and to us few living beings. ... They didn't greet us, they didn't smile; they appeared oppressed, not only by pity but by a confused restraint, which sealed their mouths, and riveted their eyes to the mournful scene. It was a shame well-known to us, the shame that inundated us after the selections and every time we had to witness or submit to an outrage: the shame that the Germans didn't know, and which the just man feels before a sin committed by another. It troubles him that it exists, that it has been irrevocably introduced into the world of things that exist, and that his goodwill availed nothing, or little, and was powerless to defend against it. So for us even the hour of freedom struck solemn and oppressive, and filled our hearts with both joy and a painful sense

of shame, because of which we would have liked to wash from our consciences and our memories the monstrosity that lay there; and with anguish, because we felt that this could not happen, that nothing could ever happen that was good and pure enough to wipe out our past, and that the marks of the offense would remain in us forever, and in the memories of those who were present, and in the places where it happened, and in the stories that we would make of it."

Primo Levi | *The Complete Works of Primo Levi*, ed. Ann Goldstein, New York 2015, pp. 211–212

The author: Primo Levi ▶ see p. 29

The text: In his second autobiographical report *La tregua* (1963, English: *The Truce*), Levi describes the odyssey of his journey home after his liberation in Auschwitz, via Ukraine and Belarus back to Italy, which took many months. He describes war-torn Europe and connects his impressions thereof with reflections on the return of an Auschwitz survivor into human society.

## THE NUMBER OF DEAD

Estimates on the number of dead in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp vary. A significant reason for this is the systematic destruction of documents by both the SS and the employees of I.G. Farben. Aside from the partially preserved inmate register and death registers of the Buna-Monowitz camp, survivors also gave estimates of the numbers murdered there. Their figures range from at least 23,000 to at most 40,000 dead. The consensus in recent research is that altogether 30,000 inmates of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp perished in the camp itself, on the I.G. Auschwitz construction site, and in the gas chambers of Birkenau.

Between 1940 and 1945, around 200,000 inmates who had been registered upon arrival perished in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp complex. Another 900,000 were murdered in the gas chambers without being registered.

The number of victims in Auschwitz-Birkenau\* 1940–1945:

VICTIM GROUPS	UNREGISTERED DEPORTEES MURDERED IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL, IN THE GAS CHAMBERS, OR THROUGH EXECUTIONS	REGISTERED INMATES WHO PERISHED IN THE CAMPS	TOTAL
Jews	865,000	95,000	960,000
Poles	10,000	64,000	74,000
Sinti and Roma	2,000	19,000	21,000
Soviet POWs	3,000	12,000	15,000
Others	keine Angaben	12,000	12,000
Total	880,000	202,000	1,082,000

\* The term Auschwitz-Birkenau refers to Auschwitz I (main camp), Auschwitz II (Birkenau), and Buna-Monowitz as well as the sub-camps (Auschwitz III).

Franciszek Piper | *Die Zahl der Opfer von Auschwitz* | Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 1993

## I.G. FARBEN AFTER 1945 AND THE JUDICIAL RECKONING WITH ITS CRIMES

## I.G. FARBEN AFTER 1945



**The I.G. Farben Building in the Postwar Period** | Frankfurt am Main, around 1950 | Walter Elkins, usarmygermany.com

■ In 1945, the Allies confiscated the assets of I.G. Farben. In West Germany, the corporation was divided up in 1952 into its large founding companies: BASF, Bayer, Hoechst, and Cassella, each of which was granted capital corresponding to their respective company size. The four companies received a net capital of 1.64 billion Deutschmarks, equivalent to ninety percent of I.G. Farben's "Western assets".

As of October 1953, shareholders were able to exchange their I.G. Farben shares for stock portfolios in the successor companies. Bayer, BASF, and Hoechst were able to distribute dividends of ten percent each as early as 1956.

In 1955, "I.G. Farbenindustrie in Liquidation (i.L.)" was established as a joint stock corporation to serve as the legal successor to I.G. Farben. It existed until 2003. Its purpose was to settle any open claims made against the corporation and to secure any claims I.G. Farben had on assets held abroad, especially in the GDR.

There were fifteen factories belonging to I.G. Farben located in the Soviet occupation zone at the end of the war. With a value of 520 million Reichsmarks, they made up 26.7 percent of the corporation's assets. The Soviet military administration transformed the majority of these factories into Soviet stock corporations intended to serve toward payment of reparations. Factory facilities, such as the factory in Bitterfeld, were also dismantled and taken to the Soviet Union as reparations. Following the conclusion of reparation payments to the Soviet Union in 1953, ownership of the Soviet stock corporations was transferred to the GDR, where they became state-owned property.

Following the collapse of the GDR in 1990, I.G. Farben i.L. tried to enforce its old claims on forests, apartments, holiday homes, and factories on property totalling 151 million square metres. However, in 1995 the Federal Administrative Court upheld the expropriations of I.G. Farben property executed in early 1949 since these had occurred on the basis of occupation law.

I.G. Farben's central administrative building in Frankfurt am Main was used by the U.S. Army from 1945 onwards. Following the departure of American troops in 1995, the property was acquired by Goethe University Frankfurt. Students as well as an increasing number of teachers successfully insisted on the preservation of the name "I.G. Farben Building".

### THE FACTORY SITE IN OŚWIĘCIM AFTER 1945

After the Red Army took control of the factory site on 27 January 1945, parts of the facility were dismantled and reconstructed at an industrial centre in Western Siberia. The remaining production sites of I.G. Auschwitz were used virtually unchanged until the 1980s as a large chemical combine by the Polish People's Republic for the production of synthetic materials, among other things.



**Synthesis facilities for the production of methanol and isooctane on the I.G. Auschwitz construction site** | Auschwitz, around 1943/44 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

## THE NUREMBERG TRIAL AGAINST I.G. FARBEN (1947/48)

■ The Nuremberg trials against leading representatives of Nazi Germany took place from November 1945 to April 1949.

Beginning in 1947, the sixth of the follow-up trials saw 24 leading managers of I.G. Farben appear before a U.S. military court.



**View of the dock during the Nuremberg trial against members of I.G. Farben | Nuremberg, 1947/48 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration**

The accused doggedly denied responsibility for the crimes that occurred in the Buna-Monowitz camp and on the I.G. Farben factory site. Yet they failed in their defence strategy of attempting to portray the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp as a “normal labour camp” and the work being conducted at the factory site as regulated and not overly demanding activity.

CHARGES		Charges I, III, and V were tried in court for the first time in legal history at Nuremberg.
I.	Preparing an aggressive war	
II.	Plunder and theft in annexed and occupied countries	
III.	Participation in the slave labour programme and genocidal politics of the Nazi regime	
IV.	Membership in a criminal organisation	
V.	Planning a conspiracy against the peace	

The twelve prosecutors faced 87 defence attorneys representing the defendants. During the course of the proceedings, innumerable documents were presented by the prosecution and co-prosecution and numerous witnesses were heard, including survivors of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp and British former POWs. The defence could muster little opposition. Their strategy was therefore aimed at shifting responsibility for the crimes onto the political authorities, with the argument that corporate management had been coerced into the armaments programme and forced to deploy concentration camp inmates. Resistance had apparently been impossible.



**Seven British former POWs took the stand as witnesses for the prosecution | Nuremberg, November 1947 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration**

British POWs were sent to Auschwitz between September 1943 and January 1945. They were forced to work on the I.G. Farben construction site, but were treated slightly better than other groups of forced labourers. In their statements, they reported witnessing the mistreatment and murder of inmates by the foremen, prisoner functionaries, and SS men, as well as the bad food and thin clothing provided to the inmates.

## THE VERDICTS DURING THE NUREMBERG TRIAL

■ The verdicts were pronounced at the end of July 1948. These were rather lenient given the severity of the charges: Thirteen defendants were sentenced to prison, ten were acquitted.

VERDICTS	
Point I	Acquittal
Point II	Guilty. The nine defendants were sentenced to prison terms of between one and a half and five years.
Point III	Guilty. The judges deemed there was enough evidence to prove that the defendants had deployed forced labourers, POWs, and concentration camp inmates on their own initiative. The five defendants directly responsible for the site were found guilty.  Acquittal. However, the defendants were acquitted on the charge of complicity in mass killings and medical experiments.
Point IV	Acquittal
Point V	Acquittal

**The five defendants indicted on Point III** (participation in the slave labour programme and genocidal politics of the Nazi regime) | [All photographs](#): Nuremberg, 1947/48 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration



### FACTORY MANAGER OF I.G. AUSCHWITZ (FROM 1944)

**Walther Dürrfeld (1899–1967)**  
Fitter with a doctorate in engineering  
Entry into the NSDAP: 1937

From 1942 to 1945 Dürrfeld lived with his family on a company housing estate in Auschwitz. He initially served as technical head of the I.G. Auschwitz factory construction project before being appointed factory manager in 1944. → Arrested by the U.S. military police in 1945. → Indicted in the Nuremberg trial in 1948 and sentenced to eight years in prison. → Released early in 1951.



### BOARD MEMBER OF I.G. FARBEN (FROM 1938) AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BUNA FACTORY IV AND OF FUEL PRODUCTION IN AUSCHWITZ (FROM 1944)

**Otto Ambros (1901–1990)**  
Doctorate in chemistry and agriculture  
Entry into the NSDAP: 1 May 1937

Ambros was an active proponent of employing concentration camp inmates. → Between 1941 and 1944, he visited the construction site of I.G. Auschwitz altogether eighteen times. → Arrested in 1946, worked for BASF until trial. → Indicted in the Nuremberg trial in 1948 and sentenced to eight years in prison. → Released early in 1951. → Appointed to numerous board of director positions from 1954 onwards and worked as a business consultant.



### BOARD MEMBER OF I.G. FARBEN (FROM 1934) AND HEAD OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (FROM 1940)

**Carl Krauch (1887–1968)**  
Doctorate in chemistry  
Entry into the NSDAP: 1937

Appointed “Wehrwirtschaftsführer” (war economy leader) and “Plenipotentiary for Special Questions Regarding Chemical Production with the Führer’s Representative for the Four-Year Plan” (GBChem). → Krauch used his political connections to solicit Heinrich Himmler’s assurance in February 1941 that he would offer all possible assistance in the construction of a new Buna factory in Auschwitz. → Indicted in the Nuremberg trial in 1948 and sentenced to six years in prison. → Released early in 1950 due to good conduct. → Subsequently a member of the board of directors of the Buna factory in Hüls.



**BOARD MEMBER OF I.G. FARBEN  
(FROM 1925) AND HEAD OF THE TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE (FROM 1932)**

**Fritz (Friedrich Hermann) ter Meer (1884–1967)**

Doctorate in chemistry

Entry into the SA and NSDAP: 1937

As a board member and head of I.G. Farben's Technical Committee, ter Meer was instrumental in the choice of location as well as in project planning for I.G. Auschwitz.

→ Indicted in the Nuremberg trial in 1948 and sentenced to seven years in prison.

→ Released early in 1950. → Head of the board of directors of the Bayer AG dye factory from 1956 to 1964 as well as a member of the board of directors in various other companies.



**BOARD MEMBER OF I.G. FARBEN  
(FROM 1937) AND HEAD OF PETROL  
SYNTHESIS AT I.G. AUSCHWITZ (FROM 1941)**

**Heinrich Bütetisch (1894–1969)**

Doctorate in chemistry

Entry into the SA and NSDAP: 1937,  
and into the SS: 1939

Indicted in the Nuremberg trial in 1948 and sentenced to six years in prison. →

Released early in 1951. → Member of the board of directors of Ruhrchemie AG, Deutsche Gasolin AG, and Feldmühle, Papier- und Zellstoffwerke AG from 1952 onwards.

*"We were of the general opinion that the inmates who came to Monowitz had been saved from the fate that would have awaited them in the Auschwitz concentration camp."*

**Otto Ambros** | Sworn testimony from 29 April 1947 during the I.G. Farben trial



**View of the visitor gallery during the Nuremberg trial against I.G. Farben** | Nuremberg, 1947/48 | Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Administration

	DEFENDANT	SENTENCE
1.	Carl Krauch	6 years
2.	Hermann Schmitz	4 years
3.	Georg von Schnitzler	5 years
4.	Fritz Gajewski	Acquitted
5.	Heinrich Hörlein	Acquitted
6.	August von Knieriem	Acquitted
7.	Fritz ter Meer	7 years
8.	Christian Schneider	Acquitted
9.	Otto Ambros	8 years
10.	Ernst Bürgin	2 years
11.	Heinrich Bütetisch	6 years
12.	Paul Häfliger	2 years
13.	Max Ilgner	3 years
14.	Friedrich Jähne	1 ½ years
15.	Hans Kühne	Acquitted
16.	Carl Lautenschläger	Acquitted
17.	Wilhelm Mann	Acquitted
18.	Heinrich Oster	2 years
19.	Carl Wurster	Acquitted
20.	Walther Dürrfeld	8 years
21.	Heinrich Gattineau	Acquitted
22.	Erich von der Heyde	Acquitted
23.	Hans Kugler	1 ½ years

The trial against the defendant Max Brüggemann was detached and postponed indefinitely due to illness. By 1951 at the latest, all those who had been sentenced to prison had been released early.

## THE WOLLHEIM TRIAL (1951–1957)

■ In 1951, Norbert Wollheim sued I.G. Farben i.L. in a civil trial for remuneration of withheld wages for the forced labour he performed in Buna-Monowitz, as well as for damages. As in the Nuremberg war trials previously, the defence denied any responsibility for the fate suffered by the forced labourers.

On 10 June 1953, the Frankfurt regional court ruled in Wollheim's favour and ordered 10,000 Deutschmarks to be paid by I.G. Farben i.L. The latter appealed the sentence, as the corporation's representatives wished to avoid setting a precedent.

In the meantime, a large number of other survivors had also decided to sue the company. Wollheim and his lawyer Henry Ormond turned to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany (Claims Conference), a consortium of Jewish organisations that lobbies to this day for compensation for Jewish victims of National Socialism.

The appeal process ended in 1957 with an out-of-court settlement between I.G. Farben on the one hand and Wollheim, as well as the Claims Conference, on the other. I.G. Farben had to pay altogether 30 million Deutschmarks to compensate the former forced labourers in the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp.

### WHO RECEIVED COMPENSATION?

The payment of 27 million Deutschmarks to Jewish survivors was administered by a foundation set up especially by the Claims Conference. Applications were reviewed exclusively by former Auschwitz inmates. Special attention was paid to ensure that no one received compensation who had served as a prisoner functionary or had in any other way participated in crimes committed against inmates. The Claims Conference divided the money and the returns on interest among some 5,900 applicants, including 1,800 needy next of kin.

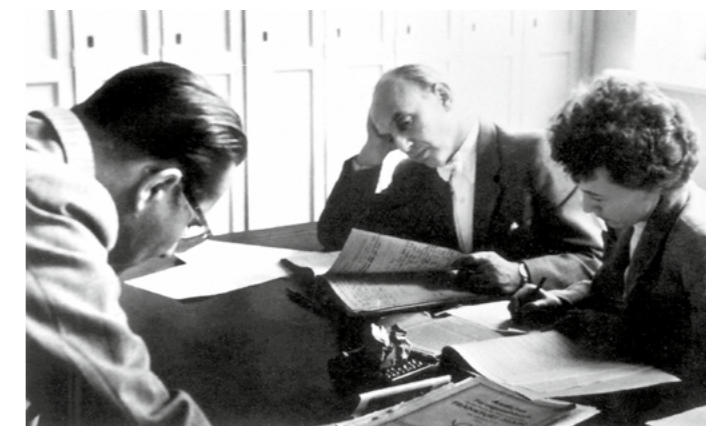
In the meantime, I.G. Farben i.L. organised the payment of three million Deutschmarks to non-Jewish forced labourers. After several rounds of negotiations, I.G. Farben also agreed to compensate those who had been persecuted by the Nazis as Jews on "racial" grounds but who did not regard themselves as Jews. By 1962 it became clear that three million Deutschmarks would not be enough to compensate this particular group of non-Jews. I.G. Farben therefore demanded the repayment of two million Deutschmarks from the Claims Conference. Following lengthy negotiations, it was agreed in July 1963 that the Claims Conference would repay 750,000 Deutschmarks.

Former victims of political persecution from both Eastern and Western Europe were not included in this agreement.



**Norbert Wollheim during a speech in 1948** | Lübeck, 6 June 1948 | Washington, D.C., United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Before his deportation to Auschwitz, Norbert Wollheim (1913–1998) had been active in a Jewish youth movement. In 1938/39, he took over the organisation of "Kindertransports" to the United Kingdom. In 1943, he was deported to Auschwitz together with his family. His wife and son were murdered immediately upon arrival. Wollheim survived forced labour in Buna-Monowitz, a death march in 1945, and several months thereafter in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After the end of the war, he assisted in the reconstruction of Jewish institutions and in the fight for compensation. In 1951, he emigrated to the United States with his second wife and two children.



**The Frankfurt-based lawyer Henry Ormond (centre) during research for the Eichberg trial, which took place at the Frankfurt regional court in 1946 in connection with the Nazi euthanasia killings** | Frankfurt am Main, 1952 | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

Henry Ormond (1901–1973) was born Hans Ludwig Jacobsohn in Kassel and, until being banned from working in 1933, served as a circuit judge in Mannheim. Following his arrest in 1938, he was deported to the Dachau concentration camp. Released in 1939, he emigrated via Switzerland to the United Kingdom, where he changed his name. In 1945, he returned to Germany as a member of the British Army. In 1950, he began working as a lawyer, representing numerous victims of National Socialism, including Norbert Wollheim, in many trials.

## TESTIMONY FROM THE WOLLHEIM-TRIAL (1951–1957)

■ The witness testimony at the Frankfurt regional court was entirely contradictory: Some witnesses described Buna-Monowitz as hell on earth, others made it seem like a convalescent camp. This is especially clear in testimony regarding the “Buna soup” that was served to inmates on the I.G. construction site at midday.

### BUNA SOUP

I.G. FARBEN	
<p><b>Max Faust</b> I.G. Senior Engineer</p> <p>Hearing on 4 December 1952 during the Wollheim trial</p>	<p>“In 1941, following another round of negotiations with the SS, we received permission to give the inmates a vegetable soup at midday. This was the famous Buna or bunker soup. To this end, we needed to receive additional provisions, foodstuffs, vegetables, and so on. We did not receive any fat for the soup. We told ourselves that if we could at least give these people a hot soup at lunchtime, it would be something.”</p>
<p><b>Heinz Frank</b> Head of the I.G. factory</p> <p>Hearing on 29 January 1953 during the Wollheim trial</p>	<p>“We handed out a special soup that the inmates enjoyed eating. I was personally tasked by Dr Dürrfeld for a while to supervise the quality of this meal. I found that this was in itself a tasty soup that in any case contributed greatly to countering the monotony of the meals and especially in wintertime produced a certain inner warmth.”</p>
<p><b>Rolf Brüstle</b> I.G. employee</p> <p>Hearing on 19 February 1953 during the Wollheim trial</p>	<p>“I was often tasked with supervising the provisions all over the factory and would like to state that the Buna soup had a daily calorie content of 300–500 calories. That is not much, but a warm soup on the construction site was in our estimation a great help to the inmates.”</p>

FORMER INMATES	
<p><b>Benedikt Kautsky</b></p> <p>Testimony from 30 January 1953 during the Wollheim trial</p>	<p>“The labour in Buna was difficult. The food was worse than it ever was in other camps. After a short while, a couple of weeks later, we received the so-called Buna soup, which was handed out by the I.G. and could be eaten during lunchbreak at the workplace. At first, it was not always bad, sometimes it would include beans or something similar. After a few days, the soup became totally unpalatable and only the famished continued eating it.”</p>
<p><b>Marcel Stourdze</b></p> <p>Testimony from 15 January 1953 during the Wollheim trial</p>	<p>“The soup that we received from the I.G. at lunchtime was a water gruel, with 3–4 potatoes swimming in a pot of 30–40 litres. The I.G. had various soups of this kind cooked at varying levels of quality, for the foremen, the POWs, the civilian labourers, and so on. The water was left over for the inmates.”</p>
<p><b>Jonas Silber</b></p> <p>Testimony from 29 January 1953 during the Wollheim trial</p>	<p>“Given the provisions, the labour being performed in most detachments was too difficult. Even for us doctors, who worked under a roof, in 1942/43, when we received the same rations, it was impossible to perform our work. The Buna soup was warm water. It is lunacy to even speak of it. We also received the Buna soup in the camp. One could not quell one’s hunger with Buna soup.”</p>



## THE FRANKFURT AUSCHWITZ TRIALS (1963–1967)

■ The first Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (1963–1965) was one of the largest trials staged against Nazi criminals in the Federal Republic of Germany. During the trial, the crimes committed by the staff members were made public. Two accused “nurses”, the SS medical orderlies Gerhard Neubert and Emil Hantl, had worked in the inmate infirmary in Buna-Monowitz. Hantl was sentenced to three and a half years in prison.

During the second Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (1965–1966), another two SS members from Auschwitz were indicted. Neubert was also indicted again, since his first trial had been discontinued due to ill health. The jury court sentenced him to three and a half years in prison. During this trial, it became clear that it was increasingly difficult to find survivors who were willing to take on the burden of testifying as witnesses. Given the growing distance to the time of the events, the witness testimony was also proving increasingly unreliable.

During the third Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (1966–1967), three former prisoner functionaries were indicted. As henchmen of the SS, they had rendered themselves guilty towards their fellow inmates. The former “Lagerälteste” (camp seniors) of Buna-Monowitz, Josef Windeck and Bernhard Bonitz, were each sentenced to life in prison while the trial against Erich Grönke was discontinued.

Former defendants of the Nuremberg trials were also called upon to testify during the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials. Then as before, they showed no remorse and rejected all responsibility. During his witness testimony, Carl Krauch denied having known anything about the events unfolding in Monowitz.

*“One thing is clear, namely that the longer inmates were deployed with us, the more their medical conditions improved.”*

Walther Dürrfeld in his hearing on 9 April 1965 during the first Frankfurt Auschwitz trial

## THE POLITICAL APPROPRIATION OF THE FISCHER TRIAL (1966) BY THE GDR REGIME

■ In the GDR, the prosecution of war crimes was essentially discontinued in the 1950s. The judicial reckoning with the Nazi era was regarded as a West German problem. It was thus more or less a coincidence that Horst Fischer, then living in the GDR, was in 1964 revealed to have been a high-ranking concentration camp doctor.

Following the trials of former Nazi medical personnel accused of participating in the regime’s “euthanasia” programme, the GDR leadership tried to avoid so-called war crimes trials against doctors, since these had caused significant consternation amongst the medical profession in the GDR. The Fischer trial in 1966 was an exception since this could be exploited as a “GDR Auschwitz trial” to demonstrate the state judiciary’s will to prosecute, taking place as it did right between the two Frankfurt Auschwitz trials. This trial was intended to “expose” the leading functionaries of I.G. Farben as instigators of the Nazi state and its crimes in Auschwitz. The trial procedure and outcome were carefully orchestrated by the Ministry for State Security (MfS) and in no way corresponded to constitutional principles. The outcome was fixed from the outset: “The highest penalty will be applied”, as the recommended sentence of the MfS stated.

Following a ten-day trial, Fischer was pronounced guilty. He confessed during the trial to what several Auschwitz survivors had testified: He had participated in selections on the ramp in Birkenau, in the Auschwitz I camp, and in the infirmary of the I.G. Farben-run camp of Buna-Monowitz.

This trial was intended to demonstrate the GDR’s judicial reckoning both with Nazi medical crimes and with Auschwitz as a crime scene. At the same time, this spelled an end to the GDR’s engagement with the recent past.

## THE END OF I.G. FARBEN I.L. (1990–2003)

From the 1980s onwards, Holocaust survivors, critical shareholders, and political organisations began to protest vehemently against I.G. Farben i.L. Its opponents demanded the dissolution of the corporation and the distribution of its remaining assets among the former forced labourers.

During its General Meeting in 1999, the board proposed establishing a foundation to compensate former forced labourers of I.G. Farben. The endowment capital of three million Deutschmarks was to be raised by selling a piece of corporate property. The interest returns of around 200,000 to 300,000 Deutschmarks annually were to be used to compensate former forced labourers of I.G. Farben. Hans Frankenthal, a Monowitz survivor and one of the initiators of the protests against I.G. Farben i.L., pointed to the scandal underlying this declaration of intent: Due to the high number of claims, this sum would be ridiculously small, meaning that “in the end everyone will just receive a postage stamp”.

Nevertheless, the proposal to establish a foundation was approved by a large majority of shareholders. In 2001, the foundation “I.G. Farbenindustrie” was established, albeit with a capital of merely 500,000 Deutschmarks. The aim of the foundation was to compensate former forced labourers, but this never happened. The interest returns of the endowment capital would not have sufficed to this end. In 2003, I.G. Farben i.L. declared bankruptcy.



**Resistance fighter Peter Gingold (1916–2006) during a demonstration against I.G. Farben** | Frankfurt am Main, around 1990 | Kassel, Silvia Gingold



**Renaming on the Campus Westend** | Frankfurt am Main, 2015 | Werner Lott | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

In 2015, the Grüneburgplatz in front of the I.G. Farben Building was renamed Norbert-Wollheim-Platz. This name change was initiated by Holocaust survivors and students. Negotiations with the Goethe University and with the City of Frankfurt am Main had already begun in the late 1990s.



**Wollheim Pavilion** | Frankfurt am Main, 2015 | Werner Lott | Frankfurt am Main, Fritz Bauer Institute

The Norbert Wollheim Memorial on the site of the I.G. Farben Building consists of a pavilion on the perimeter of the property and of steles in the park in front of the university main building that portray private pictures of former inmates of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp. Its website is [www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/home](http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/home). The number 107984 above the door of the pavilion was Norbert Wollheim's inmate number.

# IMPRINT

Brochure accompanying the travelling exhibition  
“I.G. Farben and the Buna-Monowitz Concentration Camp”

Frankfurt, 2023

**DIRECTOR OF THE FRITZ BAUER INSTITUTE:**

Prof. Sybille Steinbacher

**CURATOR:**

Dr Nassrin Sadeghi

**PROJECT MANAGER:**

Gottfried Köbler

**SCHOLARLY ADVISOR:**

Werner Renz

**EDITING OF THE REVISED AND THE ENGLISH EDITION:**

Dr Sara Berger

**ISOMETRIC ILLUSTRATION OF AUSCHWITZ-MONOWITZ, 1944:**

Peter Siebers

**ADMINISTRATION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT:**

Manuela Ritzheim

**DESIGN:**

Funkelbach — Büro für Architektur und Grafikdesign

**TRANSLATION:**

Dr Tim Corbett


**PROOF-READING:**

Penelope Krumm

The travelling exhibition has its origins in an exhibition designed for a meeting of survivors of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp in the former administrative building of I.G. Farben on the present-day Campus Westend of Goethe University, which took place in October 1998.

The travelling exhibition, revised and newly designed in 2018, and the accompanying brochure are based on research findings that have been collected on [www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/home](http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/home). This website contains detailed information as well as interviews with 25 survivors of the Buna-Monowitz concentration camp.

We wish to thank all lenders for their permission to reproduce historical visual material in this brochure. Should we have failed to properly identify all copyright owners despite our extensive research, we request that they get in touch.

Funding for the English translation of this volume was provided by  Bayer

Fritz Bauer Institute | Norbert-Wollheim-Platz 1 | 60323 Frankfurt am Main  
[www.fritz-bauer-institut.de](http://www.fritz-bauer-institut.de)



