



# Building to Death: Prisoner Forced Labour in the German War Economy – The Neuengamme Subcamps, 1942–1945

Marc Buggeln

*Humboldt University Berlin*

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## ABSTRACT

In 1944 most concentration camp prisoners were not interned in the main camps but in subcamps. These subcamps were erected near important armament production sites, where the work power of the prisoners was needed. The conditions in these subcamps were sometimes even more terrible than in the main camps. In historiography, the phrase 'extermination through work' is often used in order to describe the subcamps. However, newer studies show that conditions differed enormously between camps. For this reason it is necessary to compare the conditions in the different subcamps systematically. My article discusses the reasons for the differences that have been put forward so far. Afterwards I show that an exploration of the subcamps of Neuengamme leads to somewhat different results, and I argue that, therefore, the phrase 'extermination through work' should be used more cautiously.

**KEY WORDS:** concentration camps, Holocaust, Nazi Germany, Second World War

500 foreign female concentration camp prisoners, political and criminal. Barracks camp, 11 guards, 17,000 m barbed wire, 380 Volts, tripwire ... The German foremen should be replaced by prisoners because the inmate overseers take a tougher line. Work performance is highly satisfactory. Productivity is higher than with the same number of German workers because work hours are longer and absenteeism is lower.<sup>1</sup>

Hamburg, summer 1944. The armaments industry in the northern German port city had just recovered from the devastating air raids of 'Operation Gomorrah' in July and August 1943 and was gearing up to boost its production of military hardware one last time for the German war machine and the *Endkampf* ('final struggle'). In order to achieve the targeted increase in production, the Germans planned to use thousands of concentration camp prisoners, whose transfer from Auschwitz to Hamburg had

already been agreed by the city's business and trade organizations. This prompted Rudolf Blohm and leading employees at his shipyards<sup>2</sup> to consult with the production managers of the Dräger-Werke<sup>3</sup> on their experience with forced labour using concentration camp prisoners. The managers of the Dräger-Werke had positive things to say about the work performance of the inmates. Aside from the ostensibly reassuring comment that 'the conditions sound harsher than they actually are', a tour of the plant revealed that the industrialists, and the SS organization which had dispatched the prisoners to the plant, had no pity for the concentration camp forced labourers and that it was a matter of life and death for the detainees. The fence surrounding the camp had a lethal level of voltage (380 Volts). All means available were used to prevent escapes; the only alternatives for the prisoners were to work or die.

Whether these prisoners actually even had this choice – or whether it was in fact a case of work *and* die – is one of the key questions raised by historians researching concentration camp subcamps. Following a major turning point in the war during the winter of 1941/42, these subcamps were built near vital wartime projects to make concentration camp prisoners available as workers for German industry. By spring 1944 at the latest, a vast network of subcamps extended across the entire Reich territory. Documenting the history of the subcamps is thus essential to our understanding of the final phase of the concentration camp system, which was created by the Nazi Party (NSDAP) in 1933 to detain political opponents. This system was expanded on a massive scale as the Germans stepped up their efforts to combat 'inner enemies' and detained large numbers of people in the areas occupied by the Wehrmacht. At the same time, due to the lack of workers in Germany, the concentration camp system gained increasing importance as a labour reserve.

Up until late 1942, there existed only around 80 subcamps. Just one year later, in late 1943, the SS had set up 186 subcamps throughout the entire area controlled by the Germans.<sup>4</sup> However, it was not until supplies of civilian forced labourers from the occupied territories began to dwindle that forced labour using concentration camp prisoners gained sweeping importance for wartime efforts to complete large projects. In the spring of 1944, due to the retreat of the Wehrmacht from a number of occupied territories, the General Plenipotentiary for the Employment of Labour had to admit that only a small fraction of the number of forced labourers originally anticipated could be supplied. From the spring of 1944, this led to a rapid increase in the number of subcamps built. In June 1944, there existed 341 camps; by January 1945, the number had grown to at least 662 subcamps – despite the considerably reduced amount of territory under German control. The rising number of subcamps was accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of inmates. Although the Concentration Camp Division of the Economics and Administrative Department of the SS (Amt D, WVHA) registered 110,000 prisoners in late summer 1942,<sup>5</sup> by the summer of 1944, this number had grown to 524,826 detainees<sup>6</sup> and in January 1945, the camp population had reached 714,211 prisoners, of which 202,674 were female.<sup>7</sup> Following a brief registration in a main concentration camp,<sup>8</sup> the majority of these

new arrivals were immediately transported to one of the many subcamps. As of late 1944, most of the prisoners – that is, at least 60 per cent, and closer to 80 per cent within the Reich territory – were detained in subcamps, which were under the control of main camps.

Although a number of individual studies of subcamps have been conducted, a general systematic analysis of these results still remains to be done. This would be extremely important because the conditions in the individual subcamps varied considerably. For example, in the large subcamps that were set up to build anti-tank ditches on the German North Sea coast, approximately a third of the prisoners died within the first three months. By contrast, there was only one inmate fatality among the nearby prisoner detachment that built gyroscopic compasses for V2 rockets in Lütjenburg-Hohwacht. A systematic study of these differences would be essential because it would form the basis for answering wide-ranging questions, such as the connection between economics and politics in Nazi Germany.

Based on an examination of the special features of the Neuengamme (near Hamburg) concentration camp's subcamp system, which extended across northern Germany, the following article will endeavour to enhance current knowledge in this area. First, however, we will begin with a short presentation of the research results that have emerged to date because the main issues dealt with in this article derive from these findings. While the various developmental phases of the main camps have been well researched, there still has been no systematic examination of the subcamp system, which rapidly expanded from 1942 onwards. Consequently, as researchers such as Karin Orth, Michael Zimmermann and Ulrich Herbert have rightly pointed out, the development of a typology of the subcamps represents one of the main desiderata of forced labour research.<sup>9</sup>

In the former West Germany and the GDR, research on subcamps developed even later than studies of concentration camps, which were also neglected for many years. Up until the early 1980s in West Germany, the only organizations that dealt with the issue of subcamps groups were groups of former concentration camp prisoners, the Central Agency of the State Judicial Administration for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes, the offices of German government compensation programmes, and the International Tracing Service of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Bad Arolsen, Germany. These organizations published their findings, which for most subcamps consisted of no more than five to 10 lines of basic information.<sup>10</sup> At the time they were written, these were the only published findings on the vast majority of subcamps. To this day, these reports, which are often unreliable, remain the only source of information available on many of the smaller subcamps. This situation will improve over the coming years when the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum finishes compiling its encyclopaedia and the Centre for Anti-Semitic Research in Berlin publishes its own encyclopaedia.<sup>11</sup> The first two academic works to focus on the subcamp system as a main subject of research were the dissertations by Christa Naumann and Hans Brenner in East Germany.<sup>12</sup> These two 'pioneering studies' still

remain relevant today because they provide the first in-depth discussion of the importance of the subcamp system to the German armaments industry. Nevertheless, one facility looks very much like another in their work, despite the fact that there are significant differences between the individual subcamps.

After years marked by widespread indifference, it was not until the early 1980s that West Germany appeared to take notice of the phenomenon of forced labour.<sup>13</sup> Now, after 20 years, this interest in the subcamps has not waned and there currently exist an almost endless number of studies on individual subcamps. For instance, there are publications on more than half of the 87 subcamps of the Neuengamme concentration camp, and these works meet high academic standards.<sup>14</sup> The enormous scope of these individual studies stands in contrast to the comparatively minor efforts that researchers have made to subject these results to a systematic analysis. Over the years, however, this has been recognized as an area that requires attention and the situation should improve soon with the completion of a number of dissertations that are currently in progress.<sup>15</sup>

Austrian historians Bertrand Perz and Florian Freund have conducted the most fruitful studies that endeavour to compare the conditions in different subcamps. They examined the subcamps of the Mauthausen concentration camp and substantiated a theory, which had been proposed earlier, but not yet adequately corroborated, namely that the type of work that prisoners were dispatched to perform played a key role in their chances of survival.<sup>16</sup> Research into the issue of the involvement and motivation of private companies in exploiting concentration camp prisoners was primarily fuelled by a debate in the mid-1980s over the role of Mercedes-Benz. In order to channel earlier criticism of the carmaker's forced labour policies under the Third Reich, the company commissioned a number of historians to conduct a study that sought to prove that the Nazis had coerced the firm into such practices.<sup>17</sup> In response, a group of historians and members of the Mercedes-Benz works council compiled a counter study that achieved a new level of analytical excellence in researching how corporations exploited concentration camp prisoners.<sup>18</sup> Under pressure from the public, the firm saw no alternative but to initiate a critical study with free access to its archives. This study was published in 1994 and remains today one of the most important publications on the topic of forced labour and industry.<sup>19</sup>

Thereafter, Mark Spoerer, one of the authors of the study, produced some of the most readable publications on the question of the willingness of industry to exploit the concentration camp labour force. In particular, he was able to prove that most industrial firms had requested of their own free will that concentration camp prisoners be dispatched to work in their factories. Spoerer showed that many requests did not come in response to pressure from either the government or the military, and that the companies in question hoped to reap benefits from the forced labour of these prisoners.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the use of prisoners in comparison to the use of civilian forced labourers apparently did not produce significantly higher profits, as has often been assumed.<sup>21</sup> If further research confirms this theory, then it will be necessary to

investigate the additional reasons that prompted entrepreneurs to request concentration camp prisoners. Analyses of the research conducted to date in this area have emphasized that it was often no longer possible to recruit other workers and that dispatches of concentration camp prisoners were the only way for companies to accept new orders and remain in business. It has also been shown that while the firms did not make particularly high profits using concentration camp prisoners, there is no doubt that they expected to post at least average returns.<sup>22</sup>

Another key question, which pervades virtually all research into subcamps, is how to weigh up the use of central dichotomies. Was there a primacy of racism or a primacy of economics? This is closely linked to the issue of whether there was a programme of 'annihilation through labour' as such,<sup>23</sup> and whether this served as a guideline for all forced labour by concentration camp prisoners. In the 1960s and 1970s, debate focused on the primacy of politics vs. the primacy of economics to evaluate the entire Nazi period. Later, starting in the 1980s, more integrative studies helped increasingly to put this debate to rest, in part because the primacy debate tended to erase differences of interest and portray institutions and organizations as monolithic structures.<sup>24</sup> Then, in the 1980s and 1990s, the question of politics vs. economics became a major focus of debate among researchers of forced labour and subcamps. Karl Heinz Roth<sup>25</sup> and, to a lesser extent, Rainer Fröbe emerged as proponents of the primacy of economics, although they took considerably more nuanced positions than those advanced by East German historians in the 1960s. Ulrich Herbert and Hermann Kaienburg were the main researchers to counter these arguments during the early 1990s. Herbert wrote an essay in which he insisted that a primacy of racism was the driving force for the SS until 1945, and in his study on the main camp in Neuengamme, Kaienburg concluded that 'extermination through labour' was the guiding principle of the SS until the end of the war.<sup>26</sup> Wolfgang Sofsky advanced this position even more explicitly in his description of an archetypical concentration camp.<sup>27</sup> It was not until recently that other research, primarily the work of Jens-Christian Wagner, finally shook this widely prevailing position and led to renewed reflection over a possible connection between the two extremes. In his study of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp and its subcamps, Wagner was able to show that the concept of an organized and intentional programme (starting in 1942) of 'extermination through labour' is misleading and that 'extermination' and 'labour' were often inextricably intertwined.<sup>28</sup>

Another important question is whether concentration camps were for the most part self-contained entities or institutions that had extensive connections to German society. In her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt described concentration camps as 'laboratories'. More recently, other authors, including Wolfgang Sofsky and Zygmunt Bauman, have adopted this metaphor and given it a prominent place in their writings. Like the term 'death factories',<sup>29</sup> this metaphor evokes a wide range of associations, some which are helpful, others misleading. The concept of a concentration camp as a self-contained entity – an idea closely linked to the notion of a laboratory – has proven to be one of the main barriers to research. It sweeps

aside the many connections between concentration camps and German society, often causing historians to lose sight of events that the general population actively sought to cover up or deny in the years that followed the Second World War.

In order to determine the knowledge and involvement of the population in the mass extermination, research to date has focused primarily on the main concentration camps.<sup>30</sup> However, since the subcamps were occasionally located within cities – making the concentration camp prisoners more visible than they were in the main camps and, consequently, rendering conditions in the subcamps more apparent to the general public<sup>31</sup> – it would appear that an examination of the subcamps should enhance our understanding of this chapter in history. Indeed, a number of articles have been published in recent years that reveal the many links between the general population and the subcamps.<sup>32</sup>

The present article sets out to examine three key issues in recent research, based on the subcamp system of the Neuengamme concentration camp. First, in order to provide some context, it is necessary to provide an overview of the establishment of the subcamp system in general and the development of the subcamp system of the Neuengamme concentration camp in particular. This is followed by an examination of Florian Freund's theory, which postulates that the type of work performed was a crucial factor in the mortality rate of the subcamps, as exemplified by a comparison of two construction labour subcamps, Bremen-Farge and Fallersleben-Laagberg. Based on the results of this comparison and additional examples, the following section deals with the question of whether there was a primacy of racism behind the treatment of prisoners in the subcamps. Finally, the article suggests some additional areas for future research.

## I. The Subcamp System

The course of the Second World War led to the establishment of a network of subcamps whose primary purpose was to supply prison labour for the German armaments industry. The end of the German offensive near Moscow and the Russian counteroffensive launched in late December 1941 marked the ultimate failure of the military plans of attack that Germany had pursued up until that stage of the war. Instead of releasing a number of divisions from the army to work on the labour market, as had been planned, the Wehrmacht focused on 'reforming and replenishing powerful offensive units' as its primary objective.<sup>33</sup> Calling up additional German workers for active duty in the Wehrmacht led to even more severe shortages on the domestic labour market. This added another element to Germany's wartime equation. In addition to the ability to control the production of military hardware and the distribution of the required raw materials, access to dwindling labour reserves became an additional important factor in the internal power structure of the Third Reich.<sup>34</sup>

Until the end of 1941, concentration camp prisoners were only occasionally and unsystematically dispatched outside SS production plants and construction sites.

Construction of the Bunawerk plant for I.G. Farben in Auschwitz became in many ways a model for the later use of prisoner forced labour in industry. From the spring of 1941, approximately 1000 prisoners from the concentration camp, located seven kilometres away, had to work at the plant every day and then march back to the barracks. The initiative for their use came from the company – in close cooperation with Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring – and not from the SS. At this early stage, the prisoners were exclusively used by I.G. Farben as construction site labourers. No one had thought of using prisoner forced labour for production purposes. What's more, the pilot project ran into teething problems and the number of prisoners used declined during 1941 to roughly 100 individuals.<sup>35</sup>

It was not until 1942 that the use of prisoner forced labour gradually became more widespread in German industry. According to Jan-Erik Schulte, even as late as January and February 1942, the SS still had, to a large extent, no guiding principles in response to the rising number of requests received from companies and the Wehrmacht for using prisoners as labourers. During this period, the SS was primarily preoccupied with its own settlement projects in areas that remained to be conquered to the east – projects for which SS leader Heinrich Himmler and the Economics and Administrative Department of the SS planned to use prisoner forced labour on a large scale.<sup>36</sup> It was not until Albert Speer was named Minister of Armaments in February 1942 and Thüringen Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel was promoted to General Plenipotentiary for the Employment of Labour in March 1942 that the SS was in danger of being relieved of its command over the prisoners. This led to a meeting in mid-March 1942 between the head of the SS-WVHA, Oswald Pohl, and leading members of Albert Speer's staff to negotiate the use of concentration camp prisoners for forced labour in the armaments industry. At this point in time, the SS still enjoyed a relatively strong position in the negotiations and there was very little resistance to its demands that the prisoners should remain in the main camps as much as possible and that the companies would have to build production plants near the internment facilities. Top SS officials hoped that over the coming months this approach would allow them to gain direct control over the production of military hardware in the concentration camps. They wanted the companies to assist only with the construction and installation of the production facilities. However, very few firms were willing to accept these conditions. At the same time, the SS also agreed to the establishment of subcamps where prisoners would be housed near existing plants and the SS would have no say in the production process.<sup>37</sup>

The next decisive development came roughly half a year later. Acting under pressure from the armaments industry and the Wehrmacht, Speer called on Hitler to limit the influence of the SS and expressed his opposition to plans calling for the SS to assume control of all armaments production. Hitler concurred with Speer's views to a great extent and, from September 1942, the influence of the SS was limited to deciding whether prisoners were assigned to companies, in which case the SS focused primarily on security issues connected with the camps and work sites.<sup>38</sup>

The process of dispatching concentration camp prisoners to the armaments industry remained largely unchanged from September 1942 to the summer of 1944. Companies, the Armaments Ministry and the Wehrmacht would apply to the SS for the transfer of prisoners, and the SS would usually only object if there were evident security concerns. From the summer of 1944, however, the Armaments Ministry increasingly superseded the official authority of the SS in this area. The 'Geilenbergstab',<sup>39</sup> which was established on 30 May 1944, had the power to request prisoners over any objections raised by the SS. Finally, in October 1944, Speer's Armaments Ministry received full decision-making authority in this area.<sup>40</sup> From then on, companies had to submit their requests directly to the Armaments Ministry and the SS was only able to demand certain security measures. It is important to underscore this development because it belies the false impression, often conveyed in the past, that the Nazi Party and the SS wielded absolute power, and the Wehrmacht and industry could do nothing to oppose them.<sup>41</sup>

Neuengamme concentration camp had 87 subcamps, making it a medium-sized forced labour camp complex intended to help drive the German war economy. The camp was created on the basis of a cooperation agreement between the SS and the Inspector General of Construction in Berlin, Albert Speer. In 1938, the SS agreed with Speer to use prison camp labour to manufacture the bricks and stones required for Speer's planned building projects. To this end, two men with the rank of Sturmbannführer in the SS, Arthur Ahrens and Dr Walter Salpeter, founded the Deutsche Erd- und Steinwerke (DESt) on 29 April 1938.<sup>42</sup> In late August 1938, the DESt purchased an old brickworks in the Hamburg district of Neuengamme and thus laid the foundation for the creation of a new concentration camp for the region of north-western Germany, a project that had been in the planning for three years. Hamburg Gauleiter Karl Kaufmann was presumably behind the initiative to establish the camp. Kaufmann's goal here was to meet the longstanding demands of the Hamburg police authorities for a concentration camp.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, Kaufmann worked closely with Speer on ambitious construction plans for Hamburg. Hence, the planning for the Neuengamme concentration camp fulfilled two objectives at the same time. First, at the outset of Germany's military campaign, the concentration camp was to serve as an internment facility to detain all individuals suspected of opposing the war. Second, the plans called for using prison labour to make Hamburg the leading port of the 'Greater Europe' that the Nazis intended to conquer.<sup>44</sup> The first 100 prisoners from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp arrived in Neuengamme in December 1938. At first, the camp served as a subcamp of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and was not declared an independent main camp until Himmler visited Hamburg in 1940.<sup>45</sup>

The Neuengamme concentration camp played an important role in early attempts to use prison labour for the armaments industry. During initial negotiations on the subject in the spring of 1942, Walther Schieber, a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Arms and Munitions, proposed that a subcamp be built near the Francke-Werke

plant in Bremen.<sup>46</sup> However, after this option had to be dropped, the first Neuengamme subcamp was built at the Phrix-Werke plant in Wittenberge. The company had applied for concentration camp prisoners primarily because the construction of a yeast factory was not considered of military importance. Consequently, it was unlikely that the Employment Office would dispatch other forced labourers. After long negotiations, the SS agreed to provide the prisoners because Himmler hoped that yeast would prove to be an important food supplement for the Waffen-SS. When the camp in Wittenberge was built in August 1942, it was one of the first subcamps built for a private company. The facility established in October 1942 at the Reichswerke Hermann Göring in Salzgitter-Drütte was also one of the first subcamps in Nazi Germany.

Thereafter, work to expand the Neuengamme subcamp network came to a virtual standstill. In 1943, only two new facilities were erected; one was built at the instigation of the German navy in Hanover-Stöcken to guarantee the production of submarine batteries, the other for the construction of the 'Valentin' submarine pens in Bremen-Farge, the most important new building project of the German navy.

It was not until early 1944 – when it became clear that the Germans could no longer mobilize large numbers of new foreign civil forced labourers – that they turned to concentration camp prisoners as the last available labour reserve. Subsequently, a large network of subcamps rapidly spread across northern Germany. The number of camps rose exponentially, from four at the beginning of the year to roughly 70 by the end of the year. Most of the new subcamps were established in the second half of 1944; in the first quarter, there were four new camps, in the second eleven, and 24 new facilities in both the third and fourth quarters. In the last year of the war, yet another nine new subcamps were built. In other words, three-quarters of the Neuengamme subcamps only came into existence in the last 12 months before the Nazis capitulated.

A comparative analysis of the 87 subcamps reveals the following types of facilities. There were approximately 30 production camps where the majority of the prisoners were involved in the industrial production of military hardware and other goods. There were also roughly 20 construction camps where the majority of detainees were put to work building production plants, residential housing and bunkers. In addition, there were six subcamps where prisoners were forced to do excavation work (digging anti-tank trenches for the 'Friesenwall'). This work was similar to the labour performed in the construction camps. Separate mention should also be made of seven subcamps where most prisoners were dispatched to work underground, although the labour was a mixture of construction and production work. At roughly 20 camps, inmates primarily had to remove bombs and rubble. Ten of the Neuengamme subcamps fall under the category of 'small camps', with fewer than 100 prisoners, and 25 of the 87 subcamps were internment facilities for women.

A total of some 100,400 prisoners were detained from 1938 to 1945 at the Neuengamme concentration camp, some for shorter, others for longer periods of detention. In all probability, more than two-thirds of these inmates spent at least part of their detention in a subcamp. Of the 86,600 male prisoners, the largest group came from the

Soviet Union (21,000, not including the Baltic States), Poland (13,000), France (11,000), Germany (8800) and the Netherlands (6600). This prison population included an estimated 3000 to 4000 Jewish male detainees who were all incarcerated in the subcamps and not in the main camps.<sup>47</sup> The female prisoners at the Neuengamme concentration camp – with the exception of a small number of women who were forced to work as prostitutes in brothels – were only kept in the subcamps, and not in the main camp. Out of 13,700 women, 9700 were imprisoned because of their Jewish origins along with 3800 ‘political’ prisoners. The vast majority of women in both groups came from Eastern Europe.<sup>48</sup> Approximately half of the 100,400 prisoners in the Neuengamme concentration camp died by the end of the war. Approximately 42,900 prisoners in Neuengamme and its subcamps died in the camps and during the death marches. Other inmates died following transfers to other concentration camps.<sup>49</sup>

## II. A Comparison of Two Construction Subcamps

Based on a comparison of two subcamps, the following section will examine what factors were of vital importance to the prisoners’ chances of survival. A particularly important factor influencing the prisoners’ living conditions was the type of forced labour performed. For his study of the subcamps of the Mauthausen concentration camp, Austrian historian Florian Freund differentiated between two main types of forced labour: construction work and production work. He concluded that the mortality rate in the construction camps was roughly 30 per cent while it was only five percent in the production subcamps.<sup>50</sup> By comparing two construction camps, this section focuses on additional factors that played a key role in the survival of the inmates. The two camps under examination here are the subcamps at Bremen-Farge and Fallersleben-Laagberg (Wolfsburg). Although both facilities were construction camps, the mortality rate at Wolfsburg was significantly lower. According to the by no means complete death records compiled at the main camp in Neuengamme, five prisoners died at the Laagberg camp between June and December 1944, while 105 died in Farge during the same period.<sup>51</sup> Even taking into account the fact that the prison population in Farge was two and a half times as large (2000–2200 compared to 700–800 detainees), this remains an enormous difference. In the first quarter of 1945, with significantly reduced food rations at both camps, there were 23 deaths in Laagberg and 165 in Farge.<sup>52</sup> Hence, if we multiply the death toll in Laagberg by three, Farge had a mortality rate that was seven times as high in 1944, and still three times as high in the first quarter of 1945. This clearly shows that the type of work – in this case heavy construction work with no protection from the elements – was not the only factor that influenced the prisoners’ chances of survival. It also begs the question of how this difference can be explained.

The facility at Bremen-Farge was established as the fourth Neuengamme subcamp. From mid-1944, it was one of the largest camps of the network and was the largest construction subcamp under Neuengamme.<sup>53</sup> The prisoners were dispatched here to

work on the most important prestige project of the German navy. In Farge they set out to build a 426-metre long and 97-metre wide bombproof high-tech factory where, under massive walls of concrete, submarines were to be produced using assembly line techniques. The project went under the code name 'Valentin'. The main reason the navy intended to build bunker-like submarine production plants was that the Allies were increasingly gaining control over the country's airspace, which led to more accurate air strikes on the German shipbuilding industry. Since the colossal construction project required an enormous amount of labour, the navy applied to the Employment Office for forced labourers and requested concentration camp prisoners from the SS.

The Laagberg camp near Fallersleben – Laagberg is today a district of Wolfsburg – was built in May 1944. Its construction had been agreed shortly beforehand, presumably following negotiations between Volkswagen and the SS.<sup>54</sup> The concentration camp prisoners were given the task of building a large camp where forced labourers would live and produce the Fi 103 flying bomb for VW, more commonly known as the V1. However, shortly after the arrival of the prisoner detail, this work mission became pointless because VW, following talks with the Reich Air Ministry had decided to transfer the V1 production underground. Consequently, the production originally planned for Fallersleben was relocated to a cave near Thiergelet in Lorraine and to Schönebeck near Magdeburg. During the move, forced labourers from Fallersleben were also dispatched to other locations. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the construction of the new camp had become superfluous, the inmates had to continue to work on the project for nearly a year. There was a certain amount of external pressure to the extent that VW had to furnish labour progress reports. However, even when the work became extremely bogged down, no complaints were lodged because the transfer of production had in effect rendered the project meaningless.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast to the construction of the camp at Laagberg, building the enormous bunker for the 'Valentin' submarine pens remained a top priority project right up until the final days of the war. As late as February 1945, Armaments Minister Speer wrote to his subordinates: 'We must do everything in our power to speed up the nearly completed "Valentin" and "Hornisse" submarine plants'.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, Admiral of the Fleet Karl Dönitz personally reported to Hitler on the progress of the construction.<sup>57</sup> Due to the enormous pressure by high-ranking German officials, the construction of the submarine pens was proceeding according to plan, while construction work on the camp in Laagberg was significantly behind schedule. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the work pace demanded of the detainees in Farge must have been considerably higher than in Laagberg. This is most likely an initial and major reason for the high mortality rate in Farge. Nevertheless, it is necessary to investigate whether there were additional factors that played an important role here.

With regard to nationalities, the make-up of the prison populations were in many ways comparable, but more people were imprisoned in Farge. A transport with 800 prisoners from the Neuengamme concentration camp arrived in Laagberg in May

1944. The inmates in this transport constituted the prison population and there were no additional transfers of prisoners to Laagberg until the camp was closed. The French were the largest group among the detainees with 350 men. This was followed by roughly 150 Dutch inmates, 150 Russians and Poles, and approximately 100 Spaniards. However, the top positions in the prisoner hierarchy were given to 18 German inmates. The remaining kapo<sup>58</sup> positions were presumably assigned to French, Dutch and Polish prisoners.<sup>59</sup>

In Farge the prison population grew constantly. During the winter of 1943 the SS held 500 prisoners there, the majority of whom came from Poland or the Soviet Union. By August 1944, the number of detainees had risen to some 2000 and French prisoners now formed the largest group. From this point in time onwards, the French, Poles and Soviets were the main groups of prisoners. Thereafter, until the death marches, there were just small transports of prisoners, which only slightly altered the make-up of the prison population. At both locations, the French inmates were the most represented nationality and their accounts constitute the most important sources for analysing the conditions in the camps.<sup>60</sup> In Farge and in Laagberg, the status of the various national groups was closely linked to the assigning of functionary positions among the prisoners. In both camps, there were bitter rivalries between the French and the Polish inmates. While in Laagberg members of both groups were able to obtain important positions, the French in Farge were barred from acquiring such posts.<sup>61</sup> This created more opportunities to carry out acts of violence against French prisoners and significantly reduced the opportunities for Frenchmen to be dispatched on lighter work details or acquire extra food rations. This is partly due to the fact that the key positions had already been assigned to German and Polish and, to a lesser degree, Soviet prisoners by the time French inmates had arrived at the Farge subcamp. By contrast, all these groups arrived at roughly the same time in Laagberg. This is extremely important because in addition to being the largest group of prisoners in both camps, the French were also the group with the largest number of fatalities. One reason for the high fatality rate among the French detainees was that many of them belonged to the middle and upper classes and were not accustomed to the hard physical labour and the hunger, whereas most of the Polish and Soviet prisoners were farmers and industrial workers.<sup>62</sup>

Basic living conditions in both camps were poor. In both cases, by the summer of 1944, food rations were no longer sufficient for hardworking labourers.<sup>63</sup> In the spring of 1945, provisions dropped to a level that, over the long term, would not even support people doing light work. The clothing was also relatively poor. Detainees at both camps had to work outside in shirtsleeves and thin jackets during the winter of 1944/45. The last winter of the war was bitterly cold with temperatures in northern Germany that fell to minus 20 degrees Celsius.

There were, however, differences in housing. With regard to sleeping quarters, the prisoners at Laagberg were relatively fortunate, at least compared to the inmates in Farge. They were housed by the SS in four above-ground brick barracks that

had been recently built and were thus well protected against the elements. In every barrack, there was a stove that was seldom lit, but at least served to keep the sleeping quarters from chilling completely. What's more, each inmate had his own bed.<sup>64</sup> By contrast, in Farge the prisoners were initially all housed in a huge underground tank that was originally built by the navy to store oil. To make matters worse, the camp was often overfilled.<sup>65</sup>

There were, however, many similarities in the way the camps were guarded. Both camps had particularly violent SS officers in the beginning who commanded a small number of experienced SS men from the main camp in Neuengamme. In both cases, command headquarters withdrew the SS men in the summer of 1944 and replaced them with older Wehrmacht soldiers – and in both cases, the older Wehrmacht soldiers are described by the prisoners as less hostile than the previous SS guards. Since the troops were primarily there to guard the camp from the outside and keep an eye on the inmates while marching or working, this change in military personnel brought only minor advantages for the inmates, as witnessed by the fact that the mortality rates reached new heights in the winter of 1944/45. There are reports of a few isolated instances of bartering between soldiers and inmates in Farge.<sup>66</sup> While in Laagberg virtually all acts of violence were committed by camp leader SS-Hauptscharführer Johannes Pump and his deputy, SS-Unterscharführer Callesen,<sup>67</sup> testimonies by inmates in Farge reveal far more acts of brutality carried out by the camp elder (*Lagerältester*) of the political prisoners and the kapos.<sup>68</sup> This appears to be connected with the size of the camp. Due to the enormity and complexity of the camp and the construction site, the SS appears to have given more power to the prisoner functionaries in Farge than in Laagberg. In Laagberg, however, prisoner officials appear to have used their limited power only rarely for the benefit of their fellow prisoners. Although there was less violence by prisoner functionaries in Laagberg, the system served the ends of the SS to a great extent in both camps. Nevertheless, it is important not to make rash sweeping generalizations because prisoner functionaries in other Neuengamme subcamps made thoroughly positive efforts that brought advantages to large segments of the prisoner population.<sup>69</sup>

During the summer, labourers generally worked 12 hours a day, with an hour's break. In Laagberg the wintertime working hours were reduced to 10 hours a day, including a break, whereas there was no reduction in Farge. To make matters worse, labourers alternated between day and night shifts, exposing the inmates to the extra burden of shift rotations. In Farge and Laagberg, Sunday was generally a work-free day, which was primarily used to clean the camp. In both cases, however, there were often special demands that required a proportion of the inmates to work outside the camp even on a Sunday.

At both camps the construction companies on location were directly responsible for assigning prisoners to specific tasks. The firms appointed German foremen to supervise and instruct the prisoners, whereas the kapos were responsible for driving and beating the inmates. Accounts of the behaviour of the German foremen, master

craftsmen and workers are few and far between, but they paint a diverse picture that ranges from humane treatment and small favours to outright hatred and beatings.

There were significant differences in the work-related conditions at both sites. In Laagberg, most inmates were assigned to building a camp, where they worked separately from other groups and were only together with fellow prisoners and their guards. By contrast, in Farge the inmates worked on one of the largest construction sites in the Third Reich. Approximately 10,000 people toiled there every day, and aside from the prisoners, the workforce consisted primarily of forced labourers and prisoners of war who were often willing to help the inmates. Due to the sheer size of the construction site, the SS was not able to prevent the prisoners from coming into contact with forced labourers, although they repeatedly issued threats in an effort to keep the groups apart. Hence, the prisoners in Farge had an advantage over the inmates in the Laagberg camp. Using their contacts to the forced labourers, they could acquire additional food, clothing and even send and receive letters. On the whole, however, the contacts were so minimal that they only brought temporary improvements for a small number of prisoners.

To sum up, the following factors can be identified as responsible for the higher mortality rate in Farge. First, the greater pressure exerted by those in charge to complete the building project was in large part responsible for the murderous conditions at the site. While the working hours in Laagberg were reduced in winter, site managers in Farge were granted permission by the SS to maintain long shifts. Labour crews worked round the clock to complete the bunker right up until the very last minute. Second, it appears that the size of the camp played a major role. The author's previous research indicates that the mortality rate was proportional to the size of the camp, in other words, the larger the camp, the higher its mortality rate. Nonetheless, since there were also larger subcamps with comparatively lower mortality rates and medium-sized subcamps with higher death rates in the Mittelbau-Dora system, we should not make rash generalizations.<sup>70</sup> Third, it is important to note that the large group of French prisoners in Farge was unable to acquire functionary positions that would have given the group the possibility to acquire more food for weaker inmates.

In conclusion, the type of forced labour performed remains an important factor for assessing the survival chances of prisoners in subcamps, but it does not have the key role that it plays in the analyses of Florian Freund. The type of forced labour alone is only one important aspect. As shown here, the pace and urgency of the work and the size of the camp were also contributing factors. The following section will examine the role that SS ideology played in the survival chances of different groups of prisoners.

### III. A Primacy of Racism?

A key and controversial issue among historians concerns the extent to which the ideological notions of the SS were also decisive in the treatment and survival chances of prisoners in the last phase of the concentration camp system.

In 1998, Michael Zimmermann advanced the theory that there was little change during the war in the differentiated treatment of various groups of inmates according to nationality and category of incarceration.<sup>71</sup> However, according to the author's own research into the Neuengamme subcamp, it appears necessary to make differentiations. In the Farge subcamp, the French and Greek prisoners found themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy while the Polish and Soviet inmates received preferential treatment. For instance, it was almost exclusively Greek and French detainees who were dispatched on Sunday work shifts. The mortality rate in the camp was by far the highest among the French prisoners.

What reasons can be identified for this departure from the racially motivated hierarchy of the SS with regard to different groups of prisoners? In Farge the composition of the first prisoner transport was extremely important. Despite subsequent changes in the nationality make-up of the prisoner population caused by additional transports, inmate accounts give virtually no indication of any changes of personnel in important functionary positions. The political prisoner Erich Meissner, for example, maintained his position as camp elder throughout the history of the Farge subcamp. When the French and the Greeks arrived in Farge, all the functionary positions had already been assigned. As far as we know, no French or Greek prisoners were subsequently able to acquire such a position. Another reason for the high mortality rate of the French was presumably the older average age and the social make-up of the group, which only had a small proportion of tradesmen and was generally characterized by white collar workers. There is little doubt that the higher mortality rate – even in comparison to the Soviet inmates – among the French prisoners was not due to the racist motivations of the SS.<sup>72</sup> Rather, the SS simply saw no reason to take what they perceived as a well functioning system and reorganize it based on racist criteria.

Initial findings for other Neuengamme subcamps show that the racist classification of concentration camp prisoners was not the main criterion for the inmates' chances of survival. For example, female prisoners in the Neuengamme subcamps, roughly two-thirds of whom were of Jewish origin, had significantly better chances of survival than male Dutch or Belgian detainees. This was the case despite the fact that Belgian and Dutch prisoners had a relatively high position in the classification system of the SS, while Jewish inmates occupied the lowest level in the system.<sup>73</sup>

This difference is reflected in the mortality rates of different subcamps, based primarily on the report of the SS camp physician for the first quarter of 1945 (see Table 1).<sup>74</sup> Following an analysis of these data, we will address the question of why the mortality rates so clearly diverge from the racist classification system of the SS.

[Table 1 near here]

Table 1 The mortality rates of prisoners in the Neuengamme concentration camp and its subcamps in the first quarter of 1945

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Mortality rate (%)</i>
Female prisoners in the subcamps	11,768	95	0.8
Male prisoners (total)	40,393	6129	15.2
Male prisoners in main camp	12,000 (approx.)	3089	26 (approx.)
Male prisoners in subcamps	28,000 (approx.)	3040	11 (approx.)
Subcamps in Hamburg (men)	5850	944	16.1
Subcamps in Bremen (men)	5601	515	9.2
Subcamps in Hanover (men)	3644	455	12.5

During the first three months of 1945, there were 95 fatalities among a female prisoner population of 11,768 in the Neuengamme subcamps, which at the time included at least 8000 prisoners of Jewish origin. If, for the sake of statistical comparison, we were to assume that all fatalities were Jewish, this results in a 1.2 per cent fatality rate among the female Jewish inmates in the subcamps. During the same three-month period, 6129 (15.2%) inmates died out of 40,393 male prisoners, with 3089 of these fatalities in the main camp. In addition to the catastrophic conditions in the main camp, this high mortality rate in Neuengamme can be attributed to the fact that, right up until the beginning of the death marches, the main camp remained the end of the line (*Sterbelager*) for most subcamp prisoners who did not have long to live and were transferred there after being worked to total exhaustion.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, the mortality rate calculated for the subcamps was in reality higher because many of the fatalities in the main camp resulted from the conditions in the subcamps. An examination of the mortality rate of male prisoners at the three largest urban locations for subcamps reveals the following fatalities. In Hamburg, 944 (16.1%) of 5850 prisoners, in Bremen, 515 (9.2%) of 5601 and in Hanover 455 (12.5%) of 3644 inmates.<sup>76</sup> Hence, the mortality rate among male prisoners in the first three months of 1945 was 8 to 14 times higher than among female Jewish inmates in the Neuengamme subcamps.

One possible explanation for this difference could be that there were a large number of Jewish prisoners among the deceased male inmates. However, this is only the case in Bremen. At least 600 and perhaps as many as 1000 Jewish prisoners were sent to subcamps in Bremen and the mortality rate was particularly high among this group.<sup>77</sup> By contrast, in Hamburg fewer than 500 and in Hanover no more than 630 male Jewish inmates were imprisoned in the subcamps. Particularly in Hamburg, only a relatively small proportion of the large numbers of fatalities were Jewish victims. Another possible explanation is that the camps dispatched women to less strenuous work details. This is true to a certain extent; there were in fact proportionally more female production work crews. Nevertheless, the women crews that were dispatched to work on construction sites had a significantly lower mortality rate than comparable crews of men.

In order to explain the difference in the mortality rates, it is thus expedient to compare subcamps with similar forms of forced labour. On 20 June 1944, 1500 Jewish women from the Auschwitz concentration camp arrived in the Hamburg-Veddel (Dessauer Ufer) subcamp. The SS assigned the women to do physically exhausting clearing work, for the most part outdoors, with no shelter from the elements. After just under three months, the labour dispatch was divided into three groups of 500 women and transferred to the subcamps of Hamburg-Poppenbüttel (later referred to here as Sasel), Hamburg-Neugraben (later renamed Hamburg-Tiefstack) and Wedel (later renamed Hamburg-Eidelstedt). In all three camps, the women continued to perform primarily heavy construction work out in the open.<sup>78</sup> Since the report of the SS camp physician specifies the camp population at the end of March 1945, and there were no exchanges of prisoners in these camps, the mortality rate can be determined with a high degree of accuracy. In Sasel, 497 women were still alive, in Tiefsack 492 and in Eidelstedt 469.<sup>79</sup> All in all, from mid-June 1944 to late March 1945, there were 42 fatalities among the 1500 Jewish female prisoners (mortality rate: 2.9%).

This situation can be compared with two Hamburg subcamps in which male prisoners were also forced to do construction work outdoors. The Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel subcamp existed from 25 October 1944 to 15 February 1945.<sup>80</sup> There, in October 1944, 14 prisoners died out of a population of 1500, and in November 1944, 50 inmates died. The following national groups suffered the most fatalities: 14 Belgians, 13 Poles, 9 Dutch, 7 Danes, 6 Russians and 6 French.<sup>81</sup> Sixty-four prisoners (4.3%) died in five weeks. There exist no death lists with names for the following months, but the database of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial documents 276 deaths (18.6%) from 25 October 1944 to 15 February 1945.<sup>82</sup>

The Hamburg-Spaldingstrasse camp existed from mid-November 1944 to mid-April 1945. Over 2000 male prisoners (and as many as 2500 towards the end of the war) were imprisoned here and compelled to do heavy construction work.<sup>83</sup> In November 154 prisoners died, in December there were 364 fatalities, including 132 Poles, 122 Dutch, 78 French, 68 Belgians, 42 Latvians, 38 Russians and 12 Danes. Thus, 518 prisoners died (25.9%) within six weeks.<sup>84</sup> If we take into account solely the Northern and Western Europeans, who enjoyed a relatively high position in the racist hierarchy of the SS, there were 280 fatalities among prisoners from this region in six weeks. This means that in six weeks alone there were roughly seven times as many fatalities among male prisoners from Northern and Western Europe in the Hamburg-Spaldingstrasse subcamp as among female Jewish prisoners in the above-mentioned subcamps in Hamburg during a period of 10 months. What makes this particularly astounding is that the women had to perform comparably heavy labour while exposed to the wind and the rain and were just as poorly fed and clothed.

There must be other reasons for this finding, which clearly belies the logical assumption that the SS gave Jewish prisoners the poorest treatment and, accordingly, these prisoners must have always had the highest mortality rate. One possible explanation would be that the Germans selected Jewish women in Auschwitz and,

as a rule, sent only women between the ages of 18 and 40 to work in subcamps.<sup>85</sup> By contrast, there were older age groups among the male inmates, who may have died more quickly from the malnourishment and the heavy labour. A glance at the death records partially confirms this theory: In Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel, 18 of the 64 deceased (28.1%) were born before 1900.<sup>86</sup> This would furnish one explanation for the higher mortality rate among the men, but even after we deduct the number of dead over the age of 40, the mortality rate among the men remains dramatically higher, and so there must be additional reasons.

A comparison of the testimonies given by former female and male prisoners in the Hamburg subcamps reveals further key reasons for the higher mortality rate among men. Such descriptions show without a doubt that the level of violence in the women's subcamps in Hamburg was considerably lower than in the subcamps for men. This was confirmed at British trials of former officials at the women's subcamps of Hamburg-Sasel and Hamburg-Neugraben/Tiefstack. Court transcripts from these proceedings during the spring and summer of 1946 reveal in graphic detail the violence perpetrated by male and female overseers against female inmates. In the majority of cases, prisoners were slapped in the face, with considerably fewer incidents of inmates being whipped or struck with a fist.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, male prisoners in the two Hamburg subcamps were continuously subjected to extreme levels of physical violence. Men were beaten to death, severely whipped, battered with wooden poles and slats, and had their teeth knocked out.<sup>88</sup> In addition, there was an important psychological aspect to the physical abuse in the camps. Slapping a prisoner in the face, for instance, may have seemed a relatively unspectacular form of punishment on the surface, yet many women saw it as a massive infringement of their personal rights. A slap in the face also served as a poignant reminder that the level of violence could be worse the next time around.<sup>89</sup> It is important to keep in mind that at this time in German history it was a not uncommon behaviour for men to slap women as a form of punishment.

For many male prisoners, however, camp violence threatened their very survival. Corporal punishment could significantly weaken their physical constitution and accelerate their demise, leading over the short or the long term to death. During the judicial proceedings concerning the women's subcamps, only one incident surfaced in which an inmate died in connection with corporal punishment. By contrast, the testimony of the male prisoners contained considerably more accounts of death directly resulting from corporal punishment.

This highly brutal treatment was meted out by both guards and prisoner functionaries. In the Hamburg subcamps for men as well as the subcamps for women that were studied, the majority of guards were not members of the SS, but rather Wehrmacht soldiers, police and customs officials. We can say that the actions of these guards were not guided by the SS hierarchy, which placed female Jewish inmates at the bottom of the scale, but rather by the older notion that it might perhaps be acceptable to slap a woman across the face, but not brutally beat her.<sup>90</sup> The nationality of the

male prisoners also appears to have played only a minor role in their treatment. The main objective here seems to have been to create an atmosphere of endless terror that would quash all resistance and break the prisoners.

It is also very apparent that the male prisoner functionaries were far more willing to resort to violence than their female counterparts in the women's subcamps. One possible explanation for this could have been that the female prisoners were more successful at condemning violence against fellow inmates and managed to build a sense of solidarity among themselves. In any case, acts of violence committed by female prisoner functionaries remained limited to isolated incidents, which explains why no former women prisoner functionaries from the Neuengamme subcamps have had to face criminal charges. This contrasts markedly with the British military trials of the Neuengamme men's subcamps, where 10 prisoner functionaries were tried and three were sentenced to death and executed.<sup>91</sup> All the convicted men were German former prisoners and every one of the severe sentences was handed down to so-called criminal prisoners who had to wear green triangles. The testimonies also reveal that Polish, Belgian and Soviet male prisoner functionaries were incomparably more brutal than the female prisoner officials. The SS hierarchy may have played an important role for the German prisoner functionaries in combination with their own prejudices. When it comes to prisoner officials from other nations, however, historical animosities apparently played a larger role in determining who they were prepared to subject to violent treatment. Conditions in a number of subcamps were determined primarily by hostilities between the Poles and the French, between the Poles and the Russians, and violence by Poles and Russians against Jewish inmates.<sup>92</sup>

In addition to the higher degree of violence, a second factor played an important role in the higher mortality rate in the subcamps for men. The male prison population was far more divided than female prison society. Most accounts from women survivors from the Neuengamme subcamps tell of various ways in which the women banded together to form small groups, usually called 'camp families'. These groups consisted of four to 10 people.<sup>93</sup> Their testimonies often contain family terms like 'mother' or 'sister' even when the people in question were not relatives. By contrast, male prisoners paint a far more varied picture. Many former inmates said that they were loners who struggled more or less on their own. Another large group had a friend who helped them deal with the ordeal of the concentration camp. Others were part of a larger support group that was organized according to national or political criteria. Most of these descriptions contain terms like 'friend' or '(fellow suffering) comrades' and seldom used family terminology. Hence, there is considerable evidence to support the notion that female inmates were more united and mutually supportive than most of their male counterparts, but this provisional conclusion should be subjected to further quantitative and qualitative research.<sup>94</sup>

In view of our present knowledge, it is possible to outline three main reasons why the Neuengamme subcamps for men had a significantly higher mortality rate than the subcamps for women: (1) The level of violence in the men's subcamps was

dramatically higher; (2) the female inmates had a more mutually supportive social network than the male prisoners; and (3) there were more older detainees above the age of 40 among the male prisoners.

In conclusion, it would seem – particularly in the subcamps – that other factors need to be given more weight than accorded by a number of previous research efforts, which were based on the assumption that there remained an unchanged primacy in the ideology of the SS and that prisoners were consistently treated according to their nationality and criteria for incarceration. In fact, the subcamps were in many cases created under chaotic circumstances that appear to have led to a partial ‘erosion of the ideological construct’ (Jens-Christian Wagner).<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the importance of Nazi ideology for the survival of the prisoners was superseded by a wide range of other factors, most notably, the type of forced labour performed and the gender of the prisoners in the Neuengamme subcamps.

## IV. Conclusion

It should first be emphasized that the differences between the subcamps elaborated here were of a relatively minor nature. Large numbers of prisoners in Laagberg were already fatally weakened when the SS closed down the camp and began the death marches and death transports, and many of these individuals would have immediately died had they suddenly switched to a fatty and protein-rich diet, as did so many former inmates shortly after the liberation by Allied troops. Some readers might ask why these differences are studied. One reason is that these small differences were accorded a great deal of importance in the testimonies of many prisoners and, in some cases, meant the difference between life and death. A second reason is that this differentiation reveals that certain wide-ranging theses are untenable. For instance, this article has pointed to the areas in the main theses of Michael Zimmermann and Florian Freund that require partial revision or further development. However, certain sweeping sociological theses require considerably more extensive revisions. In particular, it is clear that concentration camps and, to an even greater degree, subcamps were not places where terror was continuously self-propagated, as Wolfgang Sofsky suggests.<sup>96</sup> On the contrary, the violence was always connected with real places and actual practices that were influenced by a wide range of factors. The violence of the concentration camps was not a machine that, once set in motion, could not be stopped, but rather a development that was closely linked to phenomena in German society during the war.

Accordingly, one of the urgent tasks for future subcamp research is to draw generalizable conclusions about the specific importance of individual factors for the survival of the inmates. Many key issues have only received cursory attention or been resolved with regard to only a limited number of subcamps. For example, no comparison has been made between men’s and women’s subcamps, which would make it possible to draw comprehensive conclusions on the importance of gender-

specific attributes and behaviours for the prisoners' chances of survival. The study by Hans Ellger on the women's subcamps of the Neuengamme concentration camp and the author's own research (Section III) indicate that other forms of organization among the inmates and more limited use of violence by male guards played a role in the lower mortality rate among female prisoners.<sup>97</sup> Not much research has been done on the question of whether the Jewish prisoners transferred to subcamps in the Reich territory from March 1944 were, as a rule, treated worse than all other inmates – as could be assumed according to the racist hierarchy of the prisoner groups established by the SS – or if the chances of survival of the Jewish prisoners, as well as the other detainees, depended on their gender and the type of work that they were assigned to perform. For instance, Jewish prisoners of both genders were deliberately selected for the extremely difficult conditions in the subcamps of the Mühldorf/Kaufering complex, whereas the female Jewish prisoners of the subcamps of the Neuengamme concentration camp received relatively better work details. Initial results with regard to the male Jewish prisoners in the subcamps of the Neuengamme concentration camp indicate that they tended to receive worse treatment and were more often beaten and brutalized than other male prisoners.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the most murderous subcamps of the Neuengamme concentration camp were not those with the largest Jewish prisoner population. The fact remains that the camps with the most brutal work details were established at a time when no Jewish prisoners had been deported to Neuengamme.

By the same token, little progress has been made on research into the personnel assigned to work in the subcamps. In contrast to the main camp, we have no comparative study, not even at the level of camp commander. A study also needs to be conducted on the transfer practices between the various subcamps. In addition, practically no research has been done on the behaviour and origins of the camp guards from the SS and the Wehrmacht and other uniformed units. It should also be noted that the available sources of information for such studies are scant and this severely limits the prospects of achieving satisfactory results.

In order to conduct a broader, more general analysis of this period in history, in the future, top priority should be given to more closely integrating the history of the subcamps with the social fabric of Nazi terror in the final years of the war. It needs to be clarified, for example, to what extent the subcamps were linked to various local and regional institutions and anchored in social milieus. Furthermore, it is important to take a closer look at the interrelationships and connections among the different forced labour camp systems.<sup>99</sup>

## Notes

1. Report by an employee of Blohm & Voss on the visit of the Dräger-Werke from 29 August 1944. Staatsarchiv Hamburg (StA HH), 621–1 Blohm & Voss 23, Vol. 17. In the margin of the document, there are handwritten comments by shipyard owner Rudolf Blohm that indicate that he was present during the visit.

2. Blohm & Voss was one of the two most important German shipyards during the war.
3. The Dräger-Werke was one of two large German gas mask manufacturers.
4. K. Orth, *Das System der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Eine politische Organisationsgeschichte* (Zurich 2002), 180.
5. Ibid., 192.
6. Camp prison population report of the SS-WVHA from 15 August 1944, in *Staatsarchiv Nürnberg* (StaN), KV-Anklage, NO-399.
7. Camp prison population report of the SS-WVHA from 15 January 1945, in *Bundesarchiv Berlin* (BAB), NS 3/439.
8. In January 1945 the WVHA ran 15 concentration camps: Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg, Groß-Rosen, Mauthausen, Mittelbau, Monowitz, Natzweiler, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, Stutthof, Bergen-Belsen and Plaszow.
9. See Orth, op. cit., 239; M. Zimmermann, 'Arbeit in den Konzentrationslagern. Kommentierende Bemerkungen', in U. Herbert et al. (eds), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Entwicklung und Struktur* (Göttingen 1998), Vol. 2, 730–54, here 733.
10. See ITS [International Tracing Service] (ed.), *Vorläufiges Verzeichnis der Konzentrationslager und deren Außenkommandos sowie anderer Haftstätten unter dem Reichsführer-SS in Deutschland und deutsch-besetzten Gebieten* (Arolsen 1966); M. Weinmann (ed.), *Das nationalsozialistische Lagersystem* (Frankfurt am Main 1990).
11. At the time that this article was written (summer 2006), the first two volumes of the Berlin project had been printed. Only the second volume concretely deals with the 152 subcamps of the Dachau concentration camp: W. Benz and B. Distel (eds), *Der Ort des Terrors. Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, Vol. 2: *Frühe Lager – Dachau – Emslandlager* (Munich 2005), 283–529. The Washington project, 'Encyclopaedia of Camps and Ghettos', has announced that the first volume, which also contains the subcamps, will be published in 2009.
12. C. Naumann, 'Das arbeitsteilige Zusammenwirken von SS und deutschen Rüstungskonzernen 1942–1945, dargestellt am Beispiel der Außenkommandos des Konzentrationslagers Buchenwald' (Diss. HU Berlin 1972); H. Brenner, 'Zur Rolle der Außenkommandos des KZ Flossenbürg im System der staatsmonopolistischen Rüstungswirtschaft des faschistischen deutschen Imperialismus und im antifaschistischen Widerstandskampf 1942–1945, 2 Bände' (Diss. Pädagogische Hochschule Dresden 1982).
13. G. Wysocki, *Arbeit für den Krieg. Herrschaftsmechanismen in der Rüstungsindustrie des 'Dritten Reiches'. Arbeitseinsatz, Sozialpolitik und staatspolizeiliche Regression bei den Reichswerken 'Hermann Göring' im Salzgitter-Gebiet 1937/38 bis 1945* (Braunschweig 1992); Rainer Fröbe et al., *Konzentrationslager in Hannover. KZ-Arbeit und Rüstungsindustrie in der Spätphase des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, 2 Bände (Hildesheim 1985).
14. An overview of the publications on the Neuengamme subcamps is given by H. Kaienburg, *Das Konzentrationslager Neuengamme 1938–1945* (Bonn 1997), 345–6.
15. The following dissertations have been completed or are near completion: M. Buggeln ('Subcamps CC Neuengamme'), H. Ellger ('Women's Subcamps CC Neuengamme'), U. Fritz ('Subcamps CC Flossenbürg'), C. Glauning ('Subcamps of "Project Wüste" of CC Natzweiler'), S. Schalm ('Subcamps CC Dachau') and R. Schmolling ('Subcamps of the Siemens corporation').
16. F. Freund, *'Arbeitslager Zement'. Das Konzentrationslager Ebensee und die Raketenrüstung* (Vienna 1989); B. Perz, *Projekt Quarz. Steyr-Daimler-Puch und das Konzentrationslager Melk* (Vienna 1991).
17. H. Pohl et al., *Die Daimler-Benz AG in den Jahren 1933 bis 1945. Eine Dokumentation* (Stuttgart 1986).
18. R. Fröbe, "'Wie bei den alten Ägyptern'. Die Verlegung des Daimler-Benz-Flugmotorenwerks Genshagen nach Obrigheim am Neckar 1944/45', in *Das Daimler-Benz Buch. Ein*

- Rüstungskonzern im Tausendjährigen Reich* (Nördlingen 1987) 392–470; P. Koppenhöfer, ‘‘In Buchenwald war die Verpflegung besser’’. KZ-Häftlinge bei Daimler-Benz Mannheim’, in *ibid.*, 514–42. Over the years that followed, both authors played a key role in the ongoing debates on subcamps: see R. Fröbe, ‘KZ-Häftlinge als Reserve qualifizierter Arbeitskraft. Eine späte Entdeckung der deutschen Industrie und ihre Folgen’, in Herbert et al. (ed.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, op.cit., Band 2, 636–81; P. Koppenhöfer, ‘Ein KZ als Verhaltensmodell?’, in *Dachauer Hefte*, 12 (1996), 10–33.
19. B. Hopmann et al., *Zwangarbeit bei Daimler-Benz* (Stuttgart 1994).
  20. M. Spoerer, ‘Profitierten Unternehmen von KZ-Arbeit? Eine kritische Analyse der Literatur’, in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 268 (1999), 61–95.
  21. C. Rauh-Kühne, ‘Hitlers Hehler? Unternehmerprofite und Zwangsarbeiterlöhne’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 275 (2002), 3–55. It was another story with certain SS firms, which – in the early days of prisoner forced labour – had to pay lower wages to the Reich and thus were able to reap large profits, see, e.g. M.T. Allen, ‘Flexible Production at Concentration Camp Ravensbrück’, in *Past and Present*, 165 (1999), 182–217.
  22. See M. Spoerer, op. cit., 90.
  23. See N. Wachsmann, ‘‘Annihilation through Labor’’: The Killing of State Prisoners in the Third Reich’, in *Journal of Modern History*, 71 (1999), 624–59.
  24. An excellent summary of the debate is provided by I. Kershaw, *Der NS-Staat. Geschichtsinterpretationen und Kontroversen im Überblick* (Hamburg 1994, 3rd edition), 82–113.
  25. K.H. Roth, ‘IG Auschwitz. Normalität oder Anomalie eines kapitalistischen Entwicklungssprungs’, in 1999. *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 4 (1989), 11–28.
  26. U. Herbert, ‘Arbeit und Vernichtung. Ökonomisches Interesse und Primat der ‘Weltanschauung’ im Nationalsozialismus’, in U. Herbert (ed.), *Europa und der ‘Reichseinsatz’: Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und KZ-Häftlinge in Deutschland 1938–1945* (Essen 1991), 384–425; H. Kaienburg, ‘Vernichtung durch Arbeit’ – Der Fall Neuengamme. Die Wirtschaftsbestrebungen der SS und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Existenzbedingungen der Gefangenen (Bonn 1990).
  27. W. Sofsky, *Die Ordnung des Terrors: Das Konzentrationslager* (Frankfurt am Main 1993).
  28. J.-C. Wagner, ‘Noch einmal: Arbeit und Vernichtung. Häftlingseinsatz im KL Mittelbau-Dora 1943–1945’, in N. Frei et al. (eds), *Ausbeutung, Vernichtung, Öffentlichkeit. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Lagerpolitik* (München 2000), 11–41; J.-C. Wagner, *Produktion des Todes. Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora* (Göttingen 2001).
  29. See A. Lüdtke, ‘Der Bann der Wörter: “Todesfabriken”’, in *WerkstattGeschichte*, 5 (1996) 13, 5–18.
  30. See *ibid.*, 5–18.
  31. See G. Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death. Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* (New York 1990); S. Steinbacher, *Dachau – Die Stadt und das Konzentrationslager in der NS-Zeit. Die Untersuchung einer Nachbarschaft* (Frankfurt am Main 1994); J. Schley, *Nachbar Buchenwald. Die Stadt Weimar und ihr Konzentrationslager 1937–1945*. (Köln 1999).
  32. In addition, there was also increased contact between prisoners and German workers during working hours.
  33. G. Thomas, *Geschichte der deutschen Wehr- und Rüstungswirtschaft (1919–1945/45)*, ed. Wolfgang Birkenfeld (Boppard am Rhein 1966), 479. See also D. Eichholz, *Geschichte der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft*, Band 2: 1941–1945 (Berlin (Ost) 1985), 41ff.
  34. Accordingly, it is precisely these three elements that gained influence on the distribution of labour that Walter Nassner pinpoints as new centres of power in the second half of the war; see W. Naasner, *Neue Machtzentren in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft 1942–1945. Die Wirtschaftsorganisation der SS, das Amt des Generalbevollmächtigten für den Arbeitseinsatz*

- und das Reichsministerium für Bewaffnung und Munition/ Reichsministerium für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion im nationalsozialistischen Herrschafsstystem* (Boppard am Rhein 1994). See also M.T. Allen, *The Business of Genocide. The SS, Slave Labor, and Concentration Camps* (Chapel Hill 2002); J.-E. Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung: Das Wirtschafts imperium der SS. Oswald Pohl und das SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt 1933–1945* (Paderborn 2001); H. Kaienburg, *Die Wirtschaft der SS* (Berlin 2003).
35. F. Schmaltz, 'Die IG Farbenindustrie und der Ausbau des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz 1941–1942', in *Sozial.Geschichte*, 20 (2006) 1, 33–67.
  36. See Schulte, op. cit., 208–16.
  37. See ibid.; Allen, *The Business of Genocide*, 190–201; Perz, op. cit.
  38. The commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp, Rudolf Höss, stressed after the war that on numerous occasions Himmler approved work details which had been rejected by his camp commanders for security reasons. See M. Broszat, 'Nationalsozialistische Konzentrationslager', in *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, Vol. 2, 11–232, here 115. In general, it can be said that there was a basic tendency within the Reich Security Main Office and the camp commandants to regard the subcamps rather sceptically due to the improved chances of escape for prisoners, whereas the WVHA and to a certain degree Himmler were more interested in expanding the subcamps because it strengthened their own position.
  39. The Geilenberg programme was an attempt to make German coal liquification plants operational again following Allied air strikes. See Franka Bindernagel and Tobias Bülow, 'Ingenieure als Täter. Die "Geilenberg-Lager" und die Delegation der Macht', in Ralph Gabriel et al. (eds), *Lagersystem und Repräsentation. Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Geschichte der Konzentrationslager* (Tübingen 2004), 46–70.
  40. See Erlass des Reichsministers für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion betr. 'Anforderung und Einsatz von KZ-Häftlingen' from 9 Oct. 1944, in StaN, KV-Anlage, NI-638.
  41. Similar arguments are presented by Sofsky, *Die Ordnung des Terrors*; Naasner, *Neue Machtzentren in der deutschen Kriegswirtschaft*.
  42. For the DESt, see Kaienburg, *Die Wirtschaft der SS*, 603–770.
  43. See J. Tuchel, *Konzentrationslager. Organisationsgeschichte und Funktion der 'Inspektion der Konzentrationslager 1934–1938* (Boppard am Rhein 1991), 317–322.
  44. See K.H. Roth, 'Ökonomie und politische Macht. Die "Firma Hamburg" 1930–1945', in A. Ebbinghaus and K. Linne (eds), *Kein abgeschlossenes Kapitel: Hamburg im 'Dritten Reich'* (Hamburg 1997), 15–176, 95.
  45. See Kaienburg, *Vernichtung durch Arbeit*, 149–54.
  46. See minutes of a meeting in the office of Karl-Otto Saur on 16 March 1942, in StaN, KV-Anklage, NO-659; note for Schieber from 17 March 1942, in ibid., NO-2548.
  47. See KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme (ed.), *Zeitspuren. Die Ausstellungen* (Bremen 2005), S. 26.
  48. See H. Ellger, 'Weibliche Häftlinge in Neuengamme. Die Geschichte der Frauenaußenlager des Konzentrationslagers Neuengamme unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der jüdischen Häftlingsgruppe', dissertation (Universität Hamburg, 2004), 354.
  49. See KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme (ed.), *Zeitspuren*, 95.
  50. See F. Freund, 'Mauthausen: Zur Struktur von Haupt- und Außenlagern', in *Dachauer Hefte* (1999) 15, 254–72.
  51. See the death registries of the Neuengamme concentration camp. For Farge: H. Kania, 'Neue Erkenntnisse zu Opferzahlen und Lagern im Zusammenhang mit dem Bau des Bunkers Valentin', in *Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialgeschichte* (2002) 10, 7–31, here 25.
  52. H. Mommsen and M. Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf 1996), 790; Kania, 'Neue Erkenntnisse zu Opferzahlen und Lagern', 25.
  53. See M. Buggeln, 'KZ-Häftlinge als letzte Arbeitskraftreserve der Bremer Rüstungswirtschaft', in

- Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialgeschichte* (2003) 12, 19–36.
54. For more on the subcamp Fallersberg-Laagberg, see Mommsen and Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter*, 766–99 and 983–94; C. Jansen, ‘Zwangsarbeit für das Volkswagenwerk: Häftlingsalltag auf dem Laagberg bei Wolfsburg’, in N. Frei et al. (eds), *Ausbeutung, Vernichtung, Öffentlichkeit*, 75–107; Klaus-Jörg Siegfried, *Das Leben der Zwangsarbeiter im Volkswagenwerk 1939–1945* (Frankfurt am Main 1988).
  55. See the accounts of a former Dutch forced labourer: Henk t' Hoen, *Zwei Jahre Volkswagenwerk. Als niederländischer Student im 'Arbeitseinsatz' im Volkswagenwerk von Mai 1943 bis zum Mai 1945* (Wolfsburg 2005), esp. 73–98.
  56. Memo from Speer to Ministerialdirektor Franz Xaver Dorsch from 10 Feb. 1945, in BAB, R3/1576, 144.
  57. See G. Wagner (ed.), *Lageberichte des Oberbefehlshabers der Kriegsmarine vor Hitler* (München 1972) 630ff., 655, 673, 677 and 689.
  58. Kapos were concentration camp inmates appointed by the SS to supervise and police the prisoners.
  59. Mommsen and Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter*, 770.
  60. Since the French took a positive attitude towards the collective memory of their former prisoners, the vast majority of the personal accounts from both camps that survive today come from French sources.
  61. Among the key sources for the Laagberg camp are questionnaires filled out by former French prisoners, in *Stadtarchiv Wolfsburg*, 20/12, Vol. 1. For Farge, especially important, see R. Portefaix, ‘‘Vernichtung durch Arbeit’ – Das Außenkommando Bremen-Farge’ in idem., *Hortensien für Farge: Überleben im Bunker* (Bremen 1995), 21–114.
  62. See details of interviews with French, Polish and Soviet prisoners in AGN, Ng.2.8. Wagner, op. cit., 29–32, came to similar conclusions in his research into the subcamps of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp.
  63. See the assessments of the nutritional state of prisoners in the Farge region made by the University Clinic Hamburg-Eppendorf from 4 March 1944, in *Archiv der VVN Bremen*. For subcamp Fallersleben see Mommsen and Grieger, *Das Volkswagenwerk und seine Arbeiter*, 790ff.
  64. See Jansen, ‘Zwangsarbeit für das Volkswagenwerk’, 78–81.
  65. See the testimony of former French prisoner Lucien Hirth in AGN, Ng.2.8.1243.
  66. See Portefaix, ‘Vernichtung durch Arbeit’, 46.
  67. See the trial of Pump conducted by the *Spruchkammer* where he was sentenced on 9 Dec. 1948 to four years in prison, in BAK, Z 42 II/2555.
  68. See Portefaix, ‘Vernichtung durch Arbeit’, 29, 45, 49, 55 and 71.
  69. See G. Hoch, *Hauptort der Verbannung. Das KZ-Aussenkommando Kaltenkirchen* (Bad Segeberg 1983).
  70. See Wagner, *Produktion des Todes*, 244–88.
  71. See Zimmermann, ‘Arbeit in den Konzentrationslagern’, 747.
  72. Up until now, we have the names of 483 concentration camp prisoners documented to have died by the time the camp was closed. Roughly two-thirds of these prisoners were French inmates.
  73. For information on the classification system: Sofsky, *Die Ordnung des Terrors*, 137–51.
  74. See the quarterly health report on the prisoners in the Neuengamme concentration camp from 29 March 1945, in *Staatsarchiv Nürnberg*, 2169-PS.
  75. This was by no means the case in all subcamps. In the Natzweiler complex, it was primarily the Vaihingen-Enz subcamp that became a ‘dying camp’ (*Sterbelager*).
  76. Since the bases (*Stützpunkte*) were larger than the urban areas listed here, in order to calculate the prisoner population, the author has included the subcamps located in the area surrounding each city. This is difficult because the exact boundaries of the bases (*Stützpunkte*) still remain unknown.
  77. See in particular the high mortality rates of Jewish prisoners in the Bremen-Schützenhof camp, in

- Häftlingstotennachweis Außenlager*, in AGN, Ng.4.5.1.
78. In addition to the accounts of former prisoners, the most important sources for the history of this Hamburg women's subcamp are the British judicial inquiry and court case documents. See National Archives (PRO), WO 235/108–9, 120–4 and 179–80, and *ibid.*, WO 309/407, 441, 442, 552–4, 754, 755 and 835. See also Ellger, *Weibliche Häftlinge in Neuengamme*.
  79. See the quarterly report of the SS camp physician, op. cit. Of the 31 casualties in the Hamburg-Eidelstedt camp, more than 20 died when the damaged wall of a building collapsed.
  80. See M. Buggeln, 'Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel', in W. Benz and B. Distel (eds), *Der Ort des Terrors*, Bd. V (Munich 2007), 403–6.
  81. See *Häftlingstotennachweis Außenlager*, in AGN, Ng.4.5.1.
  82. See the database of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial (updated version from February 2006).
  83. See M. Buggeln, 'Hamburg-Hammerbrook (Spaldingstraße 156/158)', in W. Benz and B. Distel (eds), *Der Ort des Terrors*, Bd. V (Munich 2007), 406–10.
  84. Cf. *Häftlingstotennachweis Außenlager*, in AGN, Ng.4.5.1.
  85. See D. Ofer and L. Weitzman, 'Introduction: The Role of Gender in the Holocaust', in D. Ofer and L. Weitzman (eds), *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven 1998), 1–18. A random sampling of the age of the female Jewish prisoners in the Neuengamme subcamps indicates that there were few women over the age of 40 in the subcamps, but relatively large numbers of women under 18 and even girls of the age of 12 and 13 among the prisoners.
  86. See *Häftlingstotennachweis Außenlager*, in AGN, Ng.4.5.1.
  87. National Archives (PRO), WO 235/108–9, 120–24 and 179–180, and *ibid.*, WO 309/407, 441, 442, 552–4, 754, 755 and 835.
  88. For more on the level of violence in the Hamburg-Spaldingstrasse subcamp, see the testimony in the judicial inquiry of Arnold Strippel, 16 March 1966, in *Akten der Staatsanwaltschaft des Landgerichts Hamburg* 147 Js 45/67. In addition, the testimony of a former prisoner Manfred Zichmanis, in *Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte Hamburg*, Hans-Schwarz-Nachlass 13-7-5-2.
  89. For more information on the meaning of a slap in the face, see Lindenberger and Lüdtke, 'Einleitung: Physische Gewalt – eine Kontinuität der Moderne', in T. Lindenberger and A. Lüdtke (eds), *Physische Gewalt. Studien zur Geschichte der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main 1995), 7–38, here 22–7.
  90. Leonie Güldenpfennig was able to show that guards who seldom resorted to violence in women's subcamps, were in some cases described by male prisoners as being particularly violent. See L. Güldenpfennig, 'Gewöhnliche Bewacher. Sozialstruktur und Alltag der Konzentrationslager-SS Neuengamme', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung in Norddeutschland* (2002) 7, 66–78.
  91. See A. Bessmann and M. Buggeln, 'Befehlsgieber und Direktäter vor dem Militärgericht. Die britische Strafverfolgung der Verbrechen im KZ Neuengamme und seinen Außenlagern', in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 53 (2005) 6, 522–42.
  92. For a poignant example of these conflicts see Portefaix, 'Vernichtung durch Arbeit'; Heinz Rosenberg, *Jahre des Schreckens ... und ich blieb übrig, dass ich Dir's ansage* (Göttingen 1992).
  93. For general information on women in concentration camps see S. Milton, 'Women and the Holocaust. The Case of German and German-Jewish Women', in R. Bridenthal, A. Grossmann and M. Kaplan (eds), *When Biology becomes Destiny. Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (New York 1984), 297–333. For critical remarks on gender differences citing Auschwitz concentration camp as an example see L. Langer, 'Gendered Suffering? Women in Holocaust Testimonies', in Ofer and Weitzman (eds), *Women in the Holocaust*, 327–39.
  94. Here it would be important to take into account to a greater degree the individual and biographical accounts and perspectives of the prisoners, which are addressed in the author's dissertation, but

- have been largely left out of this article.
95. Wagner, *Produktion des Todes*, 579.
  96. See Sofsky, *Die Ordnung des Terrors*, 319.
  97. See Ellger, *Weibliche Häftlinge in Neuengamme*, 360–63.
  98. J. Anschütz and I. Heike, 'Wir wollten Gefühle sichtbar werden lassen'. Bürger gestalten ein *Mahnmal für das KZ Ahlem* (Bremen 2004).
  99. Initial major results on these issues have been presented primarily by Karola Fings: K. Fings, *Krieg, Gesellschaft und KZ: Himmlers SS-Baubrigaden* (Paderborn 2005); K. Fings, 'Sklaven für die "Heimatfront". Kriegsgesellschaft und Konzentrationslager', in: J. Echternkamp (ed.), *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Bd. 9/1: Die Deutsche Kriegsgesellschaft 1939 bis 1945: Politisierung, Vernichtung, Überleben* (München 2004), 195–272.
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MARC BUGGELN is Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter at the History Department of the Humboldt University Berlin. He has recently completed his PhD, 'The Satellite Camp System of the Concentration Camp Neuengamme' at the History Department of the University of Bremen. Among his publications are *Arbeit und Gewalt. Das Außenlagersystem des KZ Neuengamme* (Göttingen 2009) and 'Were Concentration Camp Prisoners Slaves?', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 53 (2008), 101–29.