

Concentration Camp
Stutthof

**and its Function
in
National Socialist
Jewish Policy**

Jürgen Graf and Carlo Mattogno



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Introduction

1. Stutthof Concentration Camp

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

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



Dark gray: German territory after WWI.

Light gray: German territory, annexed by Poland after WWI.

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

The village Stutthof (West Prussia) is located at the “Frisches Haff”, a fresh water lake separated from the Baltic Sea by a slender peninsula (“Frische Nehrung”). The entire German territory shown here was annexed by Poland after WWII, its almost entirely German population either killed or expelled.

2. Stutthof in Polish and Western European Historiography

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

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

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

“In the spring and summer of 1944, the character of Stutthof changed fundamentally; it was no longer simply a concentration camp, but simultaneously an extermination camp for tens of thousands of Jews, especially Jewish women. [...] The victorious offensive of the Soviet Army forced the Hitlerites to evacuate the concentration camp and prisons in the territory of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In connection with this, various concentration camps such as Riga-Kaiserwald, Kaunas-Prosidingiszki, and a few others, were dissolved in 1944. This led to a massive transfer of prisoners of Russian, White Russian, Latvian, and Lithuanian nationality, as well as many thousands of Latvian, and Lithuanian Jews, to Stutthof. Furthermore, the liquidation of Hungarian Jews that was occurring at Auschwitz at that time exceeded the capacity of Auschwitz camp. Thousands of Hungarian Jews were now sent to Stutthof and its subsidiary camps.”

According to the Polish historical literature, many—mostly Jewish—Stutthof inmates were murdered with poison gas beginning in June or July of 1944. This allegation is also contained in several works of western ‘Holocaust’ literature; namely, the anthology *Na-*

¹ Interpress, Warsaw.

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

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

*tionalsozialistische Massentötungen durch Giftgas*⁴ published by E. Kogon, H. Langbein, A. Rückerl among others, as well as the *Enzyklopadie des Holocaust*.⁵

And yet there are other historians—even those who maintain the reality of a systematic extermination of Jews in the Third Reich—who make no claim of any extermination of human beings at Stutthof concentration camp. Raul Hilberg’s 1,300-page standard work on the ‘Holocaust’⁶ mentions Stutthof briefly only four times, and makes no mention of any gas chamber for the extermination of human beings in that camp. Nor does Gerald Reitlinger, the author of another ‘Holocaust’ classic,⁷ make any claim of homicidal gassings at Stutthof.

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

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

Among the revisionists, until now, only the American historian Mark Weber has made any effort to study Stutthof. His paper on the subject, which appeared in the *Journal of Historical Review* in 1997,

⁴ Published in 1983 by Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main; Engl.: *Nazi Mass Murder*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1993.

⁵ Eberhard Jäckel, Peter Longerich, Julius H. Schoeps *et al.*, *Enzyklopädie des Holocaust. Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*. 3 volumes, Argon Verlag, Berlin 1993.

⁶ Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, 3 volumes, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1997; Engl.: *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols., Holmes and Meier, New York 1985. Hilberg distinguishes between three different types of National Socialist Concentration Camps: “*Death camps*” (Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Kulmhof and Lublin), “*Camps with killing operations*” (Poniatowa, Trawniki, Semlin), and “*camps with numbers of victims in the area of a few tens of thousands or less*”. The third category, in his view, included Stutthof in addition to Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, and Dachau (*ibid.*, p. 1,299). Hilberg thus expressly excludes Stutthof from the category of extermination camp—even a ‘makeshift’ one. See Jürgen Graf’s critique of Hilberg’s work: *The Giant With Feet of Clay*, Theses and Dissertations Press, Capshaw, AL, 2001.

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

is not, of course, based upon original documents, but rather, upon the sparse literature available in western languages only; it is nevertheless of high quality. Weber mentions the extensive deportation of Baltic, Polish, and Hungarian Jews to Stutthof in 1944, and remarks:⁸

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

3. The Objective of the Present Study

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

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

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

*April 28, 1999
Jürgen Graf
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⁸ Mark Weber, “An Important but little-known Wartime Camp: Stutthof” in: *Journal of Historical Review*, volume 16, no. 5, September/October 1997, p. 2.