

Power and Survival in KL Mauthausen: The Spanish Case

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journals.sagepub.com/home/jch**Diego Martínez López** 

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Abstract

The experience of Spaniards deported to Nazi camps has traditionally occupied a secondary position in historiography. Available evidence, however, indicates that the Spanish case evinced a uniqueness that has not yet been fully studied. This article proposes a transversal analysis by means of which to study the significance of the Spanish group deported to the Austrian camp of Mauthausen, measuring the degree to which they were integrated within the concentration camp hierarchy, the number of privileged positions occupied within the camp and their evolution over time. Similarly, the article explores the exceptional case of the Ebensee satellite camp, where the group of Spanish prisoners suffered an unusually low death rate.

Keywords

concentration camps, Ebensee, Mauthausen, power, Spanish prisoners, survival

The Spanish Civil War was an unprecedented debacle that set in motion a series of processes that transcended in space and time the frameworks of the confrontation itself. The drama of the military violence and the simultaneous repression unleashed on the Peninsula¹ was accompanied by a parallel process of migration that peaked with the

1 J. Marco and G. Gómez Bravo, *The Fabric of Fear: Building Franco's New Society in Spain, 1936-1950* (Liverpool 2023); J. Aróstegui (coord.), *Franco, la represión como sistema* (Barcelona 2012).

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occupation of Catalonia.² In total, around half a million Spaniards crossed the Pyrenees border during the fateful days that followed the collapse of the Catalan front, fewer than 140,000 of whom would remain in France by the end of the year.³

Met by barbed wire fences and improvised concentration camps, work and incorporation into French military service were the only alternatives to the hardship of the beaches.⁴ Thus, as many as 55,000 were integrated into the so-called Companies of Foreign Workers, formed by 250 individuals who were employed in different corners of the country in all kinds of work, from farming to the soon-to-be indispensable defensive constructions; another thousand joined the Foreign Legion; and around 6000 Marching Regiments of Foreign Volunteers. For this very reason, the French defeat to Germany, rendered official on 22 June 1940, left some 10,000 Spanish prisoners who were initially classified as French prisoners of war. Along with several thousand deportees that the new Vichy collaborationist regime would supply to Nazi Germany until 1944, this was the nucleus of the 9000–10,000 Spaniards who were deported to the different German concentration camps.⁵

It is estimated that up to 80 per cent of the Spaniards that passed through the German camp network did so in the spring–summer of 1940, which meant that the majority spent time in a *Stalag*, intermediary detention centres in which only prisoners of war could be held.⁶ After that initial internment, the Spaniards were quickly identified and separated by the Gestapo to be subjected to a regime of ‘protective custody’, and from 6 August 1940 onwards were taken to the Austrian concentration camp of Mauthausen.⁷ However, it was not until 25 September 1940 that they would be categorized as *Rotspanier*, a term also applied to those who belonged to the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War.⁸

By then, the camp was in its second year of activity and the war had populated it with a sizeable contingent of Polish prisoners who, along with the Soviets, formed the two largest national groups. The third largest was that of the Spaniards, a singular group that despite its reduced number and status as political enemy to be exterminated from

2 D. G. Celaya, *La guerra continúa: Voluntarios españoles al servicio de la Francia libre (1940-1945)* (Madrid 2015), 70 et seq.

3 J. Rubio, ‘La población española en Francia de 1936 a 1946: flujos y permanencias’, in J. Cuesta y B. Bermejo (coord.), *Emigración y exilio: españoles en Francia 1936-1946* (Madrid 1996), 44.

4 A. Alted, *La voz de los vencidos: El exilio republicano de 1939* (Madrid 2005).

5 Celaya, *La guerra continúa*, 145–53 y 155–214; Alted, *La voz de los vencidos*, 86–89; L. Iordache Cârstea, ‘Españoles tras las alambradas. Republicanos en los campos franceses, nazis y soviéticos (1939-1956)’, *Hispania Nova*, 1 special (2019), 33–34; and B. Bermejo y S. Checa, *Libro memorial: españoles deportados a los campos nazis (1940-1945)* (Madrid 2006).

6 A complete list of the *Stalag* where Spaniards were detained in: D. W. Pike, ‘Españoles en los campos nazis, 1940-1945’, in M. Balibrea (coord.), *Líneas de fuga. Hacia otra historiografía cultural del exilio republicano español* (Madrid 2017), 559, cited in Iordache Cârstea, ‘Españoles tras las alambradas’, 33.

7 The history of the camp has been studied on various occasions. See in particular the classic Marsalek’s works *The History of Mauthausen Concentration Campo* (Vienna 1995) and M. Fabrèguet, *Mauthausen: Camp de concentration national-socialiste en Autriche rattachée* (Paris 1999). See also: C. Dürr and R. Lechener, ‘Das Konzentrationslager Mauthausen-Gusen 1938-1945’, in G. Botz, A. Prenninger, R. Fritz and H. Berger (Eds.), *Mauthausen und die nationalsozialistische Expansions- und Verfolgungspolitik* (Wien 2021).

8 M. Fabrèguet, ‘Les «espagnols rouges» a Mauthausen (1940-1945)’, *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 162 (April 1991), 78. D. Martínez López, ‘*Rotspanier*. Debate with regard to the classification of the Spanish prisoners deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp’, *European History Quarterly* (IN PRESS – ACCEPTED 04 APRIL 2023)

the outset, eventually would not only find itself enjoying special consideration among the rest of the prisoners, but came to occupy some of the most important positions in the camp administration. This reality means that analysis of how the Spaniards fitted into the hierarchical functioning of the deadly Nazi prisons contributes decisively to understanding both the keys that marked their experience and some of the logics of production that guided the evolution of the German camp network.⁹

The article seeks to examine in greater depth and reinterpret the concentration camp experience of the Spaniards deported to Mauthausen, employing to this end both the theoretical frameworks established by specialized international literature and unpublished documentation from the Austrian camp administration. It begins with an exploration of the origins of the compound, and of the logics of production and destruction to which the *Rotspaniers* were subjected. Subsequently, there is analysis of their degree of integration within the mechanisms of KL based on the incentive systems implemented by Nazi authorities, and the collective's capacity to penetrate and exploit to their advantage the mechanism of internal functioning of the camps. In this respect, particular emphasis will be placed on the exceptional example of the satellite Ebensee compound, where the Spaniards enjoyed an unusually high survival rate.¹⁰

Inaugurated in 1938 by order of *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler, near a granite quarry less than three kilometres from the town after which it was named, KL Mauthausen responded to a new spirit that had begun to flourish in 1936 and was based on the certainty that the KL would not only endure over time, but that their capacity should be equivalent to the number of enemies of the Reich, in other words, potentially unlimited. That is why the locations of the so-called 'modern camps', which included Mauthausen, Flossenbürg, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück, were characterized by their size, which reflected both the anticipated need for renovation and future extension, and the installation of essential services to guarantee the autonomous functioning of the camps, an indispensable requirement in this network of places of punishment that would have to be built by the inmates themselves. However, the true uniqueness of Mauthausen lay in two elements. The first is that it was conceived from the outset as a productive space that should serve the Führer's plans for construction; the second is that it became the axis, along with Flossenbürg, of a new attempt to reorganize the inmates of these terrible places.¹¹

As far as its structure was concerned, Mauthausen, like many other camps, did not acquire its definitive form until 1942. By then, it had an imposing wall on its western and southern sides, eight rows of heavy electrified fences, an extensive network of

9 M. De Boïard, 'Mauthausen', *Revue d'Histoire de la Dèxieme Guerre Mondiale*, 15–16 (July–September 1954), 40 and D. W. Pike, D, *Spaniards in the Holocaust. Mauthausen, the horror on the Danube* (London 2000). The experience of the Spaniards in Mauthausen has recently been revised: G. Gómez Bravo and D. Martínez López, *Esclavos del Tercer Reich: Los españoles en el campo de Mauthausen* (Madrid 2022).

10 The case of Ebensee and the exceptionality of the Spaniards has been noted by F. Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee: KZ- System Mauthausen-Raketenrüstung-Lagergeschehen* (Vienna 2016) and F. Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee: Analyse un Dokumentation der im KZ Ebensee umgekommenen Häftlinge 1943-1945* (Vienna 2010), 351 and 410 et seq.

11 N. Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos de concentración nazis* (Barcelona 2015), 114–118; Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven and London 1989), 213. For a broader context in which to frame the wave of detentions that populated the compounds mentioned, see 208 et seq.

watchtowers and its deadly bunker (prison), as well as the barracks, showers, kitchen, water tanks and the sick bay (*Revier*), which were necessary to maintain camp logistics.¹² The most characteristic element, however, was the granite quarry (*Wiener Graben*), owned by the SS *Deutsche Erd-und Steinwerke* (DESt) company, and its 186-step stairway, a combination especially designed to ensure the ‘extermination through work’ of all those who, as slaves, were sent to the quarry during the early phases of the war.¹³

Such a degree of brutality was immediately reflected in the infamous death rates in the camps. In fact, the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War were especially terrible because of an intensified succession of police raids between 1937 and 1938 intended to ‘eradicate’ crime and the presence of the poor and marginalized on German streets, and the great Jewish pogrom in November 1938. The figures leave no room for doubt. Four hundred and fifty-three lost their lives in the German concentration camp network between the months of June and November, a disproportionate figure alongside, which pale the 90 deaths recorded in the previous five months. During its first six months of existence, Mauthausen alone formally recorded 27 deaths, to which should be added another four recorded as ‘unnatural’ and 113 during the ensuing six months.¹⁴ By the outbreak of the war, 146 prisoners had died, a macabre prelude to the many thousand who would follow in their tragic footsteps. Two hundred and ninety-nine would perish that year, establishing the first major peak in the official camp death rate and confirming Mauthausen as one of the most feared compounds in the entire network.¹⁵

As the war progressed, the population of the camps diversified in parallel with the German conquests. It was the growth of the network that rendered necessary a structural reformulation. Originally, the concentration camps were directly based upon the prison system and incorporated many of the latter’s characteristics, such as forced labour, disciplinary punishment or what was known as a ‘system of progressive states’. In accordance with this system, prisoners were classified into three different categories according to their characteristics, with an entire programme of sanctions and awards depending on how dangerous or combative the prisoner was.¹⁶ In January 1941, a similar system was applied to the concentration camps, which were divided into three categories with a view to defining the type of prisoner they were to house.¹⁷ Those considered ‘reformable’ were to be sent to camps within the first level, that is, those that were less harsh on prisoners

12 M. De Bœiard, ‘Mauthausen’, 42–43 and 49–51 and P. Jaskot, *The Architecture of Oppression: the SS, Forced Labor and the Nazi Monumental Building Economy* (Hoboken 2002), 133–38.

13 M. Fabrèguet, ‘Une entreprise concentrationnaire SS: La Société des Terres et Pierres allemandes (1938-1945)’, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire*, 54 (April–June 1997), 51–60; J.C. Wagner, ‘Work and extermination in the concentration camps’, in J. Caplan and N. Wachsmann, (eds), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories* (London and New York 2010), 130–31.

14 H. Marsálek, *Storia del campo di concentramento di Mauthausen* (Vienna 2008), 245.

15 The numbers have been calculated on the basis of the official figures for the camp from 1938 to 1940 and the Tontenbuch or record of deaths for the period 7/1/1939–31/12/1940. In this respect, see Arolsen Archives (AA), ITS, OCC 15/4, folders 50–51 IB/3, and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), RG: 238, vol. 1, USA-251.

16 N. Wachsmann, *Hitler’s Prisons. Legal Terror in Nazi Germany* (New Haven 2004), 26 et seq. and Wachsmann, *KL*, 76.

17 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) RG-11 001M.01, reel 17, 500-5-1, f. 98.

and in which forced labour was less demanding. The second level, which included quarry camps like Flossenbürg, was in theory designed for those undesirables who, in spite of their degree of corruption, were still recoverable. Finally, the third category was reserved for the incorrigibles, especially repeat offenders who were not expected to be reintegrated into society.¹⁸ Mauthausen was the only camp initially included in this third category.¹⁹

Spaniards were subjected to the particularly harsh conditions at Mauthausen as soon as they arrived at the camp on 6 August 1940, assigned to work groups responsible for the hardest work in the construction of the camp itself and the quarry.²⁰ In fact, the hardest years and the highest death rate in the camp coincided with the internment of the first Spaniards and the beginning of what would culminate in the definitive version of Mauthausen. The explanation is to be found in the logic with which the Nazis understood and managed forced labour inside the concentration camps.²¹ Thus, until April 1942, a regime of generalized extenuation was applied, which consisted in making the work assigned to inmates as difficult as possible with the sole purpose of accelerating their death, something that, added to the non-existent medical attention and pitiful diet, decimated the camp population. The orders to include in the euthanasia programme – initiated in September 1939 – all those who were sick for more than three months, given by Himmler in March 1941 (Aktion 14f13), or the mandate, issued in December of the same year, to eliminate all prisoners accused of endangering the German occupation, no doubt contributed to inflating the horrific figures generated at the Nazi camps.²² In the particular case of the Spaniards, they died mainly during the years 1941–42 in the Gusen subsidiary camp, a compound essentially identical to Mauthausen in which torture and experiments attained a higher level of cruelty and, without a doubt, resulted in the mortality rate in Mauthausen always being among the highest.²³

18 The stratification of the camps would be officialized on 2 January 1941 in a secret circular signed by Heydrich himself. Specifically, the first category included the Dachau, Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz I camps; and in the second, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Neuengamme and Auschwitz II. With regard to Mauthausen, the order was reflected in 1955 by M. Bouard, 'Mauthausen', 45. A copy of the original letter was reproduced in International Military Tribunal (IMT), *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 14 November 1945-1 October 1946*, vol. 26 (Nuremberg 1945), Document 1063-PS.

19 The order of the camps varied over time, but Mauthausen never changed category. What did alter was its unique position within the system, so camps like Gross-Rosen were eventually included in the third level. Auschwitz, meanwhile, was relegated to category II in 1942, but its exceptional nature was never reflected; see Wachsmann, KL, notes 146–48 of chapter 4.

20 M. Fabrèguet, 'Les «espagnols rouges», 89–90.

21 B. Perz, 'Der Arbeitsantanz im KZ Mauthausen', in U. Herbert, K. Orth and C. Dieckmann (eds), *Die Nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Entwicklung und Struktur*, Göttingen (Wallstein 1998) 533–57.

22 H. Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill 1995); and M. Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: "Euthanasia" in Germany 1900-1945* (New York 1994).

23 About Gusen Concentration Camp, see R. A. Haunschmied, J.R. Mills and S. Witzany-Durda, *St. Georgen-Gusen-Mauthausen: Concentration Camp Mauthausen Reconsidered* (Nordestedt 2008). About the Spanish case and mortality in the Mauthausen Concentration Camp: M. Fabrèguet, 'Les «espagnols rouges', 80; D. Martínez López and G. Gómez Bravo, *Rotsparier: españoles en el complejo concentracionario Mauthausen-Gusen* (Madrid 2022); D. Martínez López, 'Cifras sin vida. Mauthausen y el infierno español ante una nueva perspectiva', *Historia Social*, 100 (2021), 137–60; A. Kranebitter, *Zahlen als Zeugen: Soziologische Analysen zur zur «Häftlingsgesellschaft» des KZ Mauthausen-Gusen*, Vienna, New Academic Press, 2015; and F. Freund and A. Kranebitter: 'On the Quantitative Dimension of Mass Murder at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp and its subcamps', in *Memorial Book for the Dead of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp*, vol.1 (Wien 2016) 56–67 and Table 2.

From September 1941 onwards, however, there was a shift in the way in which Nazi Germany managed camps, culminating on 30 April 1942 with the modification not only of the structure of the camps but also of everything related to the organization thereof geared towards the war effort. The 'centre of gravity' had to be moved towards economic yield, with emphasis upon the need to reduce the extremely high mortality rate recorded to and on increased productivity on the part of prisoners by means of the application of a system of incentives.²⁴

The activity of the German camp network was largely sustained thanks to the creation of a system of mixed management in which the inmates' collaboration was indispensable. These 'prisoners-officials', usually known as 'Kapos', not only ensured the cruel functioning of the compounds but also formed a kind of elite of prisoners who enjoyed a considerable number of privileges. Although its use was limited during the early days of the camps, largely due to the political character of most of the inmates, the system established itself and spread throughout the network. The reasons for the system's success seem to be clear. Occupation of a position of privilege guaranteed greater protection against the SS guards, as well as unrivalled opportunity to improve the quality of life of the prisoner in question and his immediate circle, which was why the years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War witnessed bitter disputes between prisoners classified as 'political' and 'professional criminals' (*Berufsverbrechern* or BV).²⁵ These two groups not only came to represent the core of concentration camps' population in the years prior to the war but were generally found more suitable by the SS to occupy these positions inside the camps owing to the racial tenets of Nazism and their mastery of the language, skills and knowledge of the system.²⁶

The internationalization of the population of the camps as a result of the outbreak of the conflict and Nazi Germany's successful occupation of various countries enabled the camp authorities to increase the competition for the few available positions and put an end to any hint of cohesion that might have existed among prisoners. It is worth noting that the number of inmates in positions of privilege rarely exceeded 10 per cent of the total, but the fact is that their power never stopped increasing.²⁷ This situation was due to both the evolution of the war and the decision to integrate the concentration camps within the German war economy as a result of the failure of what was known as Operation

24 J. Matthäus, 'Operation Barbarossa and the Onset of the Holocaust, June–December 1941', in C. Browning, (ed.), *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (London, 2004), 244–308; K. Orth, *Das System der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Eine politische Organisationsgeschichte* (Hamburg 1999).

25 Needless to say, these 'professional criminals' were, in general, far from being the 'monsters' portrayed by the Nazis. About the 'criminals' sent to Mauthausen, see: A. Kranebitter, *Die Konstruktion von Kriminellen: Die Inhaftierung von "Berufsverbrechern" im KZ Mauthausen* (Wien 2022).

26 On categories of prisoners, see C. Goeschel and N. Wachsmann (eds), *The Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933–1939: A Documentary History* (Lincoln 2012), 229 et seq.; M. Burleigh and W. Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge 1991). About the *Kapos* and the disputes between political and 'criminal' prisoners, see: Wachsmann, *KL*, 143–45 and 580–94.

27 On the *Kapos*, see: W. Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (Princeton 1997), 130–31; F. Pingel, 'Social life in an unsocial environment: The inmates' struggle for survival', in J. Caplan and N. Wachsmann, *Concentration Camps*, 61 et seq; and N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 143–44, 577, 580–81 and 588–94

Barbarossa and the subsequent reverses on various fronts. This reconfiguration of the camps would lead, among other questions, to a change in the model of management of the latter, in the hands of the Main Economic and Administrative Office of the SS (WVHA) since early 1942, and the endless proliferation of secondary camps. By the end of 1943, there were around 260 satellite camps; by July 1944, this number had risen to 600; and by the end of the war, there were over 730, in spite of the significant reduction of Germany's territory.²⁸

It was in this context of ever more pressing need that a system of incentives was introduced into the camps that, for the first time, sought to motivate and reward the best workers throughout the network. It was not the first time that the SS had flirted with a similar idea. On 6 September 1940, for instance, the creation of a series of training workshops in masonry was announced in addition to rewards in the form of money, fruit or even freedom. None of these promises were kept beyond the distribution of some extra rations and cigarettes, and by early 1941, barely 600 privileged individuals across the network had benefitted.²⁹ In March 1942, circumstances had changed considerably, so *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler took the decision to design a new system in which money and sex would be the main rewards offered. Himmler came up with the idea following an official visit to Mauthausen on 31 May, after which he believed he had found the solution to the meagre productive capacity of inmates which, especially in manual labour, did not even amount to 50 per cent of that of a free worker.³⁰ So it was that, in October 1941, Himmler ordered construction to begin in Mauthausen of what he called the *Sonderbau* or 'special building', which was nothing more than a brothel. Following its inauguration in June 1942, similar buildings appeared in other camps across the network, including Auschwitz itself, with a two-fold purpose: increase inmates' productivity and combat the emergence of homosexuality in the compounds. Moreover, it is worthwhile mentioning that given the fact that access to the brothel was a privilege, its operation became an effective strategy to weaken any bonds of cohesion between prisoners and reinforce the prevailing hierarchy in the camps.³¹

The camps commandants', however, did not act swiftly and months passed before they decided to offer any kind of incentives to prisoners. Everything changed on 26 February 1943 after Himmler, inspired by the methods deployed in the Soviet Union and after visiting the Buchenwald arms factory, found his criterion reaffirmed. Thus, he soon contacted Oswald Pohl, leader of the aforementioned WVHA, instructing him to set up a system of performance-related incentives by means of which to reward the best workers in the network. On 15 May, less than three months later, Pohl finally signed the guidelines to be followed henceforth, and the longed-for system of incentives was

28 J.C. Wagner, 'Work and extermination, 132–36. Specific numbers on secondary camps in p. 135 en p. 135. Also: M. Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps* (Oxford 2012), 14 et seq.

29 N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 239.

30 A. Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London 2006), 535, table 16.

31 R. Sommer, *Das KZ-Bordell. Sexuelle Zwangsarbeit in nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslagern* (Paderborn 2009), 112–14; and J. Caplan, 'Gender and the concentration camps', in J. Caplan and N. Wachsmann, *Concentration Camps*, 93.

introduced, in line with Himmler's vision, with a view to turning camp prisoners into competitive workers.

In accordance with this premise, a system was prepared that included five scales of possible rewards:

1. improved conditions of imprisonment, including the possibility of increased correspondence
2. extra food rations
3. economic rewards ranging from 0.5 to 4 *Reichsmarks* per week, except in truly extraordinary cases, for which the figure could rise to 10
4. tobacco
5. access to the brothel a maximum of once a week.

Once again, the brothel was the best reward a prisoner could receive. With good reason, this was a very costly reward, since in addition to a special permit granted by the camp commandant, the price was 2 *Reichsmarks* (RM) to be paid in vouchers. In theory, 1.50 was destined for the SS coffers, 0.45 was paid to the exploited female prisoner and 0.05 to the SS guard. The system, needless to say, completely excluded women, and was based entirely on competition between prisoners and the discretion of the camp authorities. Regarding financial rewards, these depended on the fulfilment of specific production targets and the average time required to do so. This way, the more productively and the faster a prisoner worked, the greater the quantity received.³²

In practice, things were very different. The fact is that what prisoners needed was to recover the health lost after months of sustained mistreatment, and this could only have been achieved by dint of a real improvement in their diet and their lifestyle. The generalized weakness of inmates, therefore, prevented a large majority from ever obtaining any rewards and, consequently, the bulk of the so-called incentives went to the more privileged prisoners. In this sense, it is true that the new system was designed to reward the best workers, but it did not specify the source of these rewards. Thus, on many occasions, the SS reduced prisoners' standard rations to cover the extra rations promised, thereby minimizing the possibilities of survival of the weakest inmates. To all this was added the meanness and greed of some *kapos* and SS guards.³³

Furthermore, in Mauthausen, the system did not come into force immediately, but was postponed until 18 November, when Franz Ziereis, Mauthausen's camp commandant, issued a special order in which, as well as announcing the introduction of incentives, he adapted the global model to assign the rewards to different prisoners tasked with work and the internal management of the camp. This model of remuneration, although theoretically subject to productivity, responded to an evident hierarchical order and represented a clear declaration of intentions.³⁴ (Table 1).

32 N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 466, R Sommer, 'Camp Brothels: Forced Labour in Nazi Concentration Camps', in D. Herzog, *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century* (London and New York 2009), 169–70. The guidelines are well known and can be consulted in: Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArch B), NS 3/426.

33 N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 466–67.

34 Archiv der Gedenkstätte Mauthausen (AMM) F/08/02. Also cited in H. Marsálek, *Storia*, 88.

Table I. Guidelines proposed by the Mauthausen commandant to reward camp inmates.

Employment within the camp	Proposed reward (Reichsmarks)
<i>Lagerältester</i> / medical directors	4
<i>Blockältester</i> / doctors, pharmacists, <i>Kapos</i> of large work groups	3
<i>Stubenältester</i> cooks/ <i>Kapos</i> / nurses/ Pharmaceutical assistants (<i>Apothekergehilfen</i>)/ technical workers qualified according to their performance/	2
Qualified workers and workers according to their performance/ tailors/ cobblers/ barbers...	1
Remaining prisoners with notable productivity	0.5

Source: AMM, F/08/02.

At this point, it should be pointed out that the prisoners' so-called 'system of self-administration', upon which the internal order of the camps was based, responded to a decidedly hierarchical model based on the supervised delegation of functions by the SS. Thus, the highest tier was occupied by one or several veteran prisoners given the title of *Lagerältester* or camp elder, responsible for the supervision of the camp and the other *kapos* and acting as intermediaries between prisoners and the camp administration, with the latter usually represented by the figure of the *Schutzhaftlagerführer*. Their appointment depended entirely upon the SS, which explains why German prisoners were those most likely to occupy these positions of maximum responsibility on the basis of practical and racial criteria (see below). On a second level, there were the so-called *Blockälteste* or barracks elders, each tasked with supervising one of the barracks inhabited by the prisoners. The latter were usually selected by the camp elder(s) and were the nearest thing to the equivalent to SS guards among the prisoners. Their function was supervision of everything that happened in the barracks under their control, and they reported directly to the SS barrack managers and the camp elder(s). Maintenance of order, hygiene, roll calls and food distribution were crucial tasks assigned to barrack managers, who in turn oversaw the *Stubendienst* or room managers and the auxiliary staff. The latter, in turn, were appointed by the barrack manager subject to authorization by his superiors and, as their name suggests, were responsible for ensuring completion of all the daily tasks and routines.

In third place were the *kapos* of the *kommandos* or work groups, who in turn reported to the SS responsible for the latter. In the larger *kommandos*, formed by several hundred prisoners, there were usually numerous *kapos* tasked with monitoring the different subdivisions, and an unspecified number of foremen. Their function, as is well known, was limited to supervising the prisoners' work, maintaining order, preventing escapes and, above all, ensuring that inmates were always working at the maximum possible rate. For this very reason, and as they had a licence to employ practically unlimited violence, they were highly feared figures, especially in quarry camps like Mauthausen.

Additionally, one can single out a select minority of *kapos* responsible for administrative functions, increasingly extensive and complex as the war went on. In this sense, it is

worthwhile underlining the importance of those involved in, firstly, the prisoners' camp office (*Schreibstube*), tasked with assigning barracks to new detainees, keeping the camp's historical records up to date, controlling the number and composition of the compound population and preparing reports and daily lists. Each barrack had a *Schreiber* or scribe, responsible for controlling changes in the block's population and for reporting any change to the central office. Secondly, there was the Political Department (*Politische Abteilung*), which, unlike the *Schreibstube*, was one of the main Departments (*Abteilungen*) of the SS and represented the presence of the Gestapo in the camps. This Department was in charge of recording arrivals, transport, deaths, releases, photographs ... under its control too was the camp prison so, ultimately, it was responsible for supervising camp security, carrying out interrogations and any kind of criminal investigation. Lastly, mention should be made of the *Arbeitseinsatz*, part of SS' Department III and in charge of internal service operations and labour deployment. It was tasked with assigning prisoners to the different *kommandos* and preparing production reports. It played a decisive role in the lives of inmates, since its independence enabled it partially to control the transfer of prisoners, and to reassign a certain prisoner to a work group or sub-camp where work and conditions were more favourable.

Finally, it is worthwhile noting that all those prisoners in the remaining areas of the camp, especially in the laundry room, the kitchens, the store rooms and the sick bay, provided an ideal opportunity to obtain protection, goods, food or assistance essential for survival. With regard to the type of prisoners who tended to occupy the different tiers, in general, once again, the main positions of influence fell into the hands of Germans classified as political prisoners (red triangle) or 'criminals' (green triangle), but absolutely nothing stood in the way of the pragmatism of the SS. This was particularly apparent in the administrative apparatuses of the camps, where the primacy of political prisoners was as indisputable as their internationalization. The reasons were simple. On the one hand, given the nature of each prisoner, a 'red triangle' was more likely to have the skills and knowledge needed to perform the required tasks; on the other, the need to maintain a neat and orderly record of the compound, especially after the outbreak of the war, meant it was crucial to incorporate assistants representing the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the camp population. As has been said, the progress of the war, the chronic shortage of personnel to guard the camps and the multiplication of secondary compounds made this model of administrative system absolutely indispensable, increasing the dependence upon the participation of prisoners and allowing for promotion and consolidation of political prisoners on the hierarchical scale in the camps.³⁵

Brief analysis of one of the lists of prisoners at the main Mauthausen camp recommended by the SS to receive recompense confirms the nature of this model, and of the general functioning of the new system of incentives.³⁶ Previously, it must be said that, unfortunately, the list in question is not dated, although it does refer to the guidelines of

35 For the last paragraphs, see: W. Sofsky *The Order*, 130–44; E. Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them* (London 1950), chapters 5 and 20.; F. Pingel, 'Social life in and unsocial', 64–67; Wachsmann, *KL*, 581–84, 590–94.

36 AA, OCC 15/206, folder 285, pp. 10–17.

15 May 1943, and can therefore be situated within the framework established by the latter. To be more precise, one can say that the document could not have been drafted later than 10 January 1944, as by then, prisoners such as Emil Rentrop (BV) had already been transferred to other compounds, as is confirmed by existing records.³⁷ In the same way, given the chronological difficulties implicit in the document, the month of January 1944 is taken as a reference, as this was probably the most representative period in terms of the demographic level of the main camp, and the month closest to the elaboration of the list known to include the exact number of Spaniards in the entire Mauthausen network of compounds.³⁸

That said, analysis of the aforementioned list of prisoners recommended as recipients of rewards makes it possible to state that, of the 9000 or more prisoners housed in the camp in January 1944, barely 208 had been included in the list, giving a total of just over 2 per cent. Of these, prisoners responsible for order and control, mostly Germans and 'professional criminals' (Green triangles), were the best rewarded, a fact that appears to confirm for the Austrian hell the general trend already noted as recorded in the other camps in the network. Thus, the best paid were none other than the *Lagerältester* and the *Lagerschreiber*, both Germans, the former detained as a political prisoner and the latter as a criminal, who received four RM vouchers for their services, as had been recorded in the internal order issued by the general command in the month of November. On a second tier were the barrack elders and five notable exceptions: two employees in the firefighting kommando, the German *kapos* in the crematorium and the kommando responsible for cleaning the SS command, and two *Lagerschreibstube* clerical workers, one of them the Spaniard Juan de Diego. They received payment of up to three RM, which differentiated them from the rest of the personnel employed in the barracks, the offices and most of the *kapos*, who had to settle for one *Reichsmark* less. Finally, almost half (90) were recommended to receive just one *Reichsmark*, leaving 25 prisoners distributed throughout *kommandos* as the worst paid with recompense of barely 0.5 RM. Put another way, of the very small quantity of lucky prisoners chosen by the SS to be rewarded, 55 per cent could barely hope for more than one RM, and that is what they received, with the highest rewards limited to a very reduced number of privileged individuals who not only received three or four times the assignation of those less fortunate than them but also saw their advantageous position in at the top of the concentration camp hierarchy reinforced.³⁹

In this scenario, it is impossible to think that the situation of the Spaniards was radically different to that of their fellow prisoners, but their presence on the list is worthy of

37 Personal files (male), Max Proske, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/1702459/ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

38 For the global camp figures, see H. Marsalek, *Storia*, 153–54. About the Spaniards, see: AA, ITS, Mauthausen 19, folder 441, p. 72.

39 The trends indicated here applied throughout the network. Similarly, it should be noted that in camps like Monowitz, rewards were applied to approximately 15 per cent of the camp population. The absence of further documentation in this respect for the case of Mauthausen precludes more thorough evaluation, but it is very probable that there is a similar trend. See N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 467.

note. In this respect, it should be borne in mind that by the end of January 1944, there were 2155 Spaniards throughout the Mauthausen archipelago, representing just over 8 per cent of the total number of inmates.⁴⁰ The exact number in the main camp is difficult to specify, but given that on 31 January 1944 there were 440 in Gusen alone,⁴¹ it seems clear that the total must have been significantly lower than 1700, that is, less than 18 per cent of the compound's population. Considering these figures, it comes as a surprise that the Spanish representation on the list of those recommended to receive some kind of recompense is a little over 15 per cent, indicating that the Spanish group was over-represented, especially if one takes as a reference their reduced presence in the camp network as a whole.⁴² This reality, furthermore, points to the beginning of a dynamic that would be consolidated during the final years of the war, as the framework of efficiency and higher production led to a change in the hierarchical structure of the camps that resulted in the promotion of other groups of prisoners that included technically more qualified individuals among their numbers.⁴³ Equally striking is the fact that 17 of the 32 Spaniards present (53 per cent) received at least 1 RM by way of recompense, which, paradoxically, did not prevent them from becoming one of the worst-paid groups, with 15 representatives among the 25 who had received barely 0.5 RM. In this sense, the tailoring *kommando* (*kommando Müller*) certainly stands out, as it was not only the one with most Spaniards (10), but the one on the lowest pay.⁴⁴

The analysis presented and the knowledge available confirm that the group of Spanish prisoners in Mauthausen enjoyed a clear degree of promotion in the camp's internal hierarchy, with a relatively high percentage of them occupying privileged positions in the compound. This promotion appears to respond to the emphasis on production that altered the foundations of the German concentration camp network, a decisive change exemplified in particular by the Ebensee satellite camp, where, moreover, the experience of the Spanish prisoners was exceptional.

Ebensee was officially inaugurated on 15 November 1943, barely three months after allied bombing threatened the experimentation centre in Peenemünde, where Germany was performing the necessary tests for the development of the famous V-2 rocket.⁴⁵ The belief that the development of 'super weapons' could tip the war in Germany's favour persuaded the Germans to move the project underground, which in turn prompted

40 AA, ITS, Mauthausen 19, folder 441, p. 72. The percentage has been calculated taking as a reference the figure of 25,623, the number of prisoners present throughout the complex on 1 January 1944. The figure is around 1 per cent based on the 28,195 registered on 17 January, the highest figure known for that month. See also H. Marsálek, *Storia*, 154.

41 AA, ITS, Mauthausen 19, folder 441, p. 77. The statistics indicate 444 *Rotsparniers*, but the breakdown includes in this category two Italian prisoners, one French and one in the category of 'others'.

42 A. Kranebitter, *Zahlen als Zeugen*, mainly 151f.

43 F. Pingel, 'Social life in and unsocial, 61–63.

44 The *kommando* took its name from its *kapo*, Willi Müller, a German prisoner categorized as BV ('professional prisoner') and tailor by trade.

45 M.J. Neufeld, *The Rocket and the Reich: Peenemünde and the Coming of Ballistic Missile Era* (Cambridge 1996), chapter 7.

the emergence of new concentration camps such as Mittelbau-Dora or the Ebensee sub-camp.⁴⁶

In the case of the latter, the first prisoners to arrive there were forced to begin the necessary construction work that would culminate in the completion of the compound, and to sleep in the ruins of an abandoned factory until they could be transferred to a make-shift compound early in 1944. This situation of transitoriness, of course, did not save them from simultaneously having to work on the construction of the gigantic tunnels to which, originally, the Reich intended to transfer the bulk of the equipment housed at the Peenemünde plant to build a large experimentation laboratory. To this end, on 18 November, 418 prisoners were mobilized, sent to the new camp from Mauthausen, although by now things had changed. Given the nature of these new construction projects, the correct classification of individual professional skills had acquired a significance that would have been unthinkable at the start of the war. It was no longer sufficient simply to register and count the prisoners in custody; they now had to be classified according to their professions, differentiating between those with useful skills (qualified labour/*Facharbeiter*) and those who, quite simply, were regarded as an 'auxiliary' force. Thus, of the first unfortunate individuals to arrive at Ebensee, only 18 had a specific professional profile.⁴⁷

Two days later, a further 63 prisoners from Redl-Zipf joined the ranks of the aforementioned inmates.⁴⁸ The significance of this second contingent, however, would turn out to be greater than one might have thought. For example, it included Czech resistance fighter Drahomír Bárta, appointed camp *Schreiber* shortly after his arrival, and who provided one of the most detailed accounts of the terrible hardship of everyday life at the compounds.⁴⁹

As has been said, the complexity of the tasks and the need to professionalize much of the work undertaken by the different *kommandos* had a clear consequence, which was the need to incorporate a wider diversity of prisoners into the self-administered system under which the camps had traditionally operated, allowing new groups to rise to positions of privilege from which they could influence the everyday lives of their peers. This was the exact case of the Spaniards, for whom, as for the rest of the prisoners, connections with their superiors and the exploitation of a favourable context in which to display their personal skills would have proved essential in order to consolidate their position within the concentration camp hierarchy and face up to the horrors of life in the KL.⁵⁰

46 The best monograph on the Ebensee camp available to date is F. Freund, *Konzentrationslager Ebensee; aforementioned work*. About Mittelbau-Dora see: J.C. Wagner, *Produktion des Todes. Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora* (Göttingen 2001).

47 A tailor, for instance, formed part of this first group of qualified workers. AA, ITS, OCC 15/162, Folder 192 IB/7, pp. 40–60. For the last datum, see p. 52. Also F. Freund, *Concentration Camp Ebensee: Subcamp of Mauthausen* (Vienna 1998), 13–14 y 17.

48 AA, ITS, OCC 15/162, Folder 192 IB/7, pp. 70–71 and AA, ITS, OCC 15/155, Folder 137 III A/15, p. 2.

49 F. Freund and V. Pawlowsky (eds), *Drahomír Bárta-Tagebuch aus dem KZ Ebensee* (Vienna 2005). See also his statement in NARA, RG, 549, Box, 334, Folder 5, Exhibit 31.

50 F. Pingel, 'The Destruction of Human Identity in Concentration Camps', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 6, 2 (1991), 169 and 176; and F. Pingel, 'Social life in an unsocial environment', 62–66.

It should be stressed that the rapid expansion of the network and the multiplication of satellite camps from 1943 onwards meant that, to a large extent, pragmatism took precedence even over racial considerations, with more importance being attached to the capacity to perform manual labour than to greater or lesser proximity to 'German blood'. Thus, it is possible to see cases such as the Dora-Mittelbau compound, in which the survival rates of French and Belgian prisoners were considerably higher than those of Sinti and Roma, Poles and Soviets, which does not mean that the racial scale became completely irrelevant. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that there was always a certain unmovable order at both extremes that situated German prisoners at the top and, at the other end, the Jews, who continued to be the Nazis' favourite victims.⁵¹

Similarly, the expansion of the network from 1942 onwards resulted in a greater influx of political prisoners into the camps, which made them prime victims for three fundamental reasons: their numbers, their inexperience and their diversity. The surviving representatives of the other groups had inevitably become experienced veterans familiar with all the ins and outs of life in the camps, which meant that they had developed effective survival strategies and even attained positions of privilege. By contrast, new prisoners entered a deadly new universe without any connections or support network that might soften the impact, which would explain, in part at least, why their survival rate was significantly lower than that of their fellow inmates.⁵²

This situation was exploited by the SS to organize satellite compounds like Ebensee, a circumstance that, in turn, resulted in the most trusted prisoners not only arriving at the new camps first but also monopolizing the most privileged positions. In this particular case, camp administration was essentially dominated by political prisoners but, given the inhuman living and working conditions that very soon prevailed in the camp, it is hard to imagine that their work, although they controlled the assignment of prisoners to the *kommandos* and the roll calls, had much of an impact in the camp. In this sense, it is true that until 1945, Ebensee had a relatively small population, which facilitated personal contact between inmates, but also exposed them to closer surveillance on the part of the camp authorities. Likewise, the fact that there were numerous work groups in permanent contact with the outside world favoured the entry into the compound of goods and information, the use of which, however, was always complicated by close surveillance and the actions of privileged prisoners who, fearful of losing that status, chose to act in line with the order imposed by the SS.⁵³

However, none of the above factors served to slow down the mortality rate at the camp. It is obvious that active participation in the circles of power in the compound and occupation of positions removed from the hardest outdoor tasks exponentially increased the probability of survival, but the heterogeneity of the groups and the need to satisfy the demands of the SS limited the development of solid bonds between

51 N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 537–39 and J.C. Wagner, *Produktion des Todes*

52 N. Wachsmann, *KL*, 588–90; W. Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, 121; F. Pingel, 'Social life in and un-social, 64; F. Pingel, 'The Destruction of Human Identity 169–70; R. Steegman, *Struthof. Le KL. Natzeweiler et ses Kommandos* (Strasbourg 2005).

53 F. Freund, *Concentration Camp...*, pp. 32 y 44–45.

prisoners. Exhaustive analysis of the thousands of deaths at the camp leaves no room for doubt. The inclusion of members of different nationalities in the internal kommandos of the camp and, consequently, their access to privileged positions, was not reflected in the initial classification, which was of little import. In fact, given the construction and technical nature of the operations developed at Ebensee, the largest group of prisoners (39.34 per cent) were 'political', followed by Jews (30.20 per cent) and civilian workers, mostly Soviets (18.38 per cent), so interference by usual formed by 'criminals' cannot have been particularly significant, since they neither occupied most of the key positions nor escaped the massacre. In view of this devastating conclusion, it is important to point out that the Spaniards were the only exception to this terrible reality, although to understand this fact, one needs to analyse more closely the particular situation of this collective.⁵⁴

The first 25 Spaniards arrived at Ebensee almost immediately after its inauguration, in the same convoy as the aforementioned Drahomír Bárta.⁵⁵ Nineteen of them were considered to be 'qualified workers' according to the criteria employed by the German authorities, which, bearing in mind the purpose of the new camp and the composition of the large group that had been sent from Mauthausen barely two days earlier, indicates that this was the main reason for their selection. Most of them were bricklayers and carpenters, so it would come as no surprise if, at first at least, most of them were included in the *kommandos* tasked with building the compound. In any case, what is certain is that the Spaniards constituted a useful working contingent for the Germans and, secondly, that they knew how to make the most of their connections and skills.

By 17 April, the camp's population had grown to 4689 prisoners.⁵⁶ Accordingly, the number of qualified workers had increased exponentially, but continued to represent a small part of the total (20 per cent). In the records corresponding to 16 April, the compound authorities counted 939 specialized prisoners, including 31 Spaniards, 3.3 per cent of the total.⁵⁷ The increase might not appear significant, but it should be borne in mind that the number of Spaniards sent to the camp throughout its existence did not exceed 220,⁵⁸ which means that, even taking that maximum figure, Spaniards represented no more than 4.7 per cent of the camp total, which would situate their level of representation in the group of qualified workers at very high levels.

The differential factor, however, was not strictly speaking the degree of qualification of the perspective, but their pre-eminence and inclusion within the group of internal *kommandos*, especially within those more closely linked to everyday prison life. At this point, it should be noted that, unlike in Mauthausen, Spaniards never occupied any of the highest administrative positions at Ebensee, a situation compensated for by other more productive posts. On 30 June 1944, the internal workforce of the camp comprised only

54 Both the conclusion and the exceptional nature of the Spanish case are indicated in F. Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, 410. Numbers pointed out in this paragraph in 351.

55 AA, ITS, OCC 15/162, Folder 192 IB/7, pp. 70–71 and AA, ITS, OCC 15/155, Folder 137 III A/15, p. 2.

56 AA, ITS, OCC 15/155, Folder 137 III A/15, p. 4.

57 AA, ITS, OCC 15/215, Folder 294, pp. 21–38.

58 F. Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, 351.

521 prisoners of the 5911 housed in the compound, that is a minority barely equivalent to 9 per cent (8.81 per cent). Of those 500 plus elite positions, 56 (10.4 per cent) were occupied by Spaniards, which is quite extraordinary, since they represented only 3.72 per cent of the total population. Similarly, if we again take as a reference the maximum known number of Spaniards in the camp, the conclusion is that 25.45 per cent of the Spanish contingent occupied a privileged position at that time.⁵⁹

More detailed examination reveals, moreover, a series of fundamental aspects. To begin with, of the 26 work groups, 12 included Spaniards in varying proportions. For instance, in the crucial *revier*, the second-biggest *kommando* after the kitchen, there were five Spaniards, among them, one of the two barrack elders, representing 8 per cent of the total. However, smaller *kommandos* like the one in charge of cleaning the SS offices were clearly dominated by the Spanish collective, occupying half of the six available posts. This may seem a minor detail, but constituting a relatively large proportion in relation to the size of the group in these kinds of tasks ensured not only a better chance of recovery in the event of illness, especially considering that much of the internal control of the sick bay was in the hands of a Spaniard, but also permanent contact with the authorities and a number of opportunities to ingratiate oneself with one's tormentors, in the hope of obtaining a favour or, at least, more benevolent treatment.

However, the key to the exceptional situation of the Spaniards lay in their ability to take advantage of their predominate situation in the barracks. At that time, Ebensee still had only 23 barracks controlled by 22 barrack elders, probably because the last one was still under construction. Five of these were Spaniards, meaning that 22.7 per cent were directly controlled by this collective. This was not insignificant. The heads of each *block* were subordinate to the SS and the *Lagerältester*, to whom they had to report. Otherwise, they ruled the barracks, as they were tasked with effective control of order, discipline and cleaning, as well as the distribution of food among the prisoners housed there. Their opportunities to manipulate distribution and exploit the opportunities afforded by their position were, therefore, almost unlimited.⁶⁰ A glance at the rest of the personnel employed in the barracks shows that, of the 59 prisoners tasked with controlling the rooms into which the barracks were divided, 10, or 17 per cent, were Spaniards, and 11 of the 21 barbers, or 52.3 per cent, also belonged to the collective.

The Spaniards took full advantage of the opportunity to place those close to them in positions that were physically undemanding, but also controlled crucial areas such as the dispensary and vital food channels with which to supplement the meagre rations received by inmates. This equation was reinforced by the presence of Spaniards, albeit scant, in the prisoners' and the SS kitchens, mainly the latter; control of the canteen and the postal service, work in the storage areas, the workshops, the disinfection team, those who painted the *lager* and, finally, a major presence in the washrooms. In short, the conclusion is that, in mid-1944, a significant number of Spaniards formed part of the main nuclei of control and distribution in the camp, which undoubtedly contributed to their individual

59 AA, ITS, OCC 15/215, Folder 294, pp. 53–61. It should be noted that, although 523 prisoners appear, there are two painters whose names are repeated, among them Spaniard Mario San José.

60 W. Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, 131 et seq., here in 131–33.

survival. It was therefore cohesion and solidarity combined with access to the best positions that allowed for the collective's consolidation at high levels of the concentration camp hierarchy, as well as means of obtaining food and material that, in the long term, ensured the exceptional and continued existence of practically the entire collective (Table 2).

In the list of rewards proposed by the SS for the week of 26 March to 1 April 1945,⁶¹ barely a month before the camp was liberated, it is apparent that the Spanish representation had remained unchanged. Of the 9422 prisoners in the camp on 28 March, only 391 prisoners were due to receive recompense, 45 of whom, 11.5 per cent, were Spaniards. If one considers the Spanish collective in isolation, one finds that 20.45 per cent had firmly consolidated their position at the top.⁶² This is the data that enables one to understand the keys to the incomparable Spanish survival rate in the Ebensee, sub-camp, where they were the only national group that hardly lost any of its members (2).⁶³

The evidence provided demonstrates that the experience of the Spaniards at Mauthausen fell within the general dynamics and evolution recorded for the concentration camp network and already systematized by historiography. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this was a singular collective subjected to particular mistreatment during their first two years in the KL, as is reflected by their high mortality rate. In spite of this, they

Table 2. Spaniards employed in the internal 'kommandos' of Ebensee on 30/06/1944.

Position	Prisoners employed	No. of Spaniards	Percentage of Spanish employees
<i>Blockälteste</i>	22	5	22.7
<i>Revier</i>	62	5	8.06
Barracks personnel	59	10	16.95
Barber shop	21	11	52.3
SS cleaning	6	3	50
SS kitchen	15	1	6.6
Kitchen	145	2	1.38
Canteen and postal service	6	3	50
Storage areas	6	1	16
Workshops	47	7	14.89
Disinfection	9	2	22.2
Washrooms	13	5	38.5
Painters	3	1	33
TOTAL * ⁶⁵	408	56	13.76

Source: ITS, OCC 15/215, Folder 294, pp.186–192.

61 AA, ITS, OCC 15/215, Folder 294, pp. 186–92.

62 One of them was the anarchist prisoner Lope Massaguer: L. Massaguer, *Mauthausen, fin de trayecto. Un anarquista en los campos de la muerte* (Madrid 1997).

63 F. Freund, *Die Toten von Ebensee*, 351.

benefitted from the shift towards production from 1942 and, especially, 1943 onwards, to the extent that their usefulness, as perceived by the SS authorities in the camps, enabled them to introduce themselves within the mechanisms of recompense and self-management in the compounds in significant numbers, especially in relation to the total Spanish population in Mauthausen. This promotion, and the Spaniards' ability to survive, was particularly notable in the case of Ebensee, where a highly unusual degree of cohesion made it possible for the collective to survive virtually intact from the inauguration of the camp until its liberation.⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ The degree of cohesion and solidarity attained by the Spaniards was praised by other prisoners, D.W. Pike, *Espanoles en el Holocausto* (Revised Edn, Barcelona 2015), 231–36. See also H. Marsálek, *Storia*, 357–358 and M. De Boüard, 'Mauthausen' 68.