Rotspanier. Debate with regard to the classification of the Spanish prisoners deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp

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Abstract

Spanish prisoners deported to the Mauthausen Nazi concentration camp were treated and classified in an anomalous and problematic fashion that did not correspond to the real reasons for their detention. Thus, despite being prosecuted as *Rotspaniers* –"red Spaniards"- a category initially employed to designate those Germans who had fought in the Spanish Civil War in support of the republican government, they were systematically forced to wear a blue badge that, according to the codes usually implemented in camps, classified them as "emigrants", an equally strange category that was applied to all those Jews or political exiles who had fled Germany following the rise of Nazism but had been arrested upon their return to the country. This reality, however, was not shared by the other Spaniards distributed across the other camps in the system or by the other *Rotspaniers* present in Mauthausen, who were given the red badge that indicated they were political prisoners. This is the anomaly addressed by this article, which, based on study of the administrative sources at Mauthausen and thorough analysis of "protective custody" as a legal instrument employed by the Nazi authorities to neutralise their enemies, enables us to revisit the debate and propose a new interpretative framework via which to re-evaluate the Spanish experience in the network of German camps.

Keywords: Concentration Camps, Mauthausen, Spanish prisoners, Classification, *Rotspanier*

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1. Introduction

On 6 August 1940, the first 392 Spanish prisoners arrived at Mauthausen. Integrated within the ranks of the Companies of Foreign Workers, the Military Regiments of Foreign Volunteers and the Foreign Legion, they had been captured barely two months earlier while working on farms in the French countryside or fighting as soldiers in the French Army. According to the official camp list[1], both those who arrived on the 6th and the 169 who were deported on) August were classified as "Spanien-emigranten", and forced to wear a blue triangle sewed onto their uniforms, which would be extended to all Spaniards deported to Mauthausen throughout the war, an anomalous sign that has previously been interpreted as evidence that they were regarded as "stateless persons" by the German authorities, as a result of the non-recognition of their nationality by the Francoist regime. However, the Spanish prisoners only wore the blue symbol in the Austrian hell, while the other Spanish deportees who experienced the horror of the Nazi concentration camp system were classified by means of a red triangle that categorised them as political prisoners, which has generated a clear interpretative conflict in historiography that has never truly been resolved[2].

This article proposes a re-analysis of the question in which, on the basis of the documentation generated by the Mauthausen camp itself and continuing the author´s previous research[3], to shed new light on the unambiguous symbols of Spanish suffering in the Nazi camps, in an attempt to establish the interpretative bases of an anomalous and problematic classification, and question some of the consolidated hypotheses regarding the administrative treatment received by Spaniards in the nightmare of the German concentration camps.

[1] ITS, OCC 15/198, folder 268, ff. 102-111.

[2] The most widely cited monograph in relation to the Spanish experience at Mauthausen in David Wingeate Pike, *Españoles en el Holocausto: Vida y Muerte de los Republicanos en Mauthausen* (Barcelona 2015). See also Michel Fabréguet, ″Les «espagnols rouges» a Mauthausen (1940-1945)″, *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, Nº. 162 (1991), 77-98.

[3] Diego Martínez López, "*Cifras sin vida*. Mauthausen y el infierno español ante una nueva perspectiva", *Historia Social*, No. 100 (2021), 137-160.

2. The rationalisation of the German concentration camp system (*KL*)

The KL was a dynamic universe in expansion since its birth, which required time and adjustments in order to acquire some of its most significant and recognizable traits. Savage violence, however, was inherent to the reign of terror exercised by the SS over the camps. The first evidence, indeed, came early in April 1933, barely two weeks after Himmler arranged for "the first concentration camp" to be under the direct control of his organisation. The chronology of events is devastating. On 13 March, an inspection commission decided that the former munitions factory in Dachau met all the requirements to be transformed into a protective custody camp. By 20 March, preparation of the provisional camp had been completed, and by 30 June, the definitive facility housed over 2,000 prisoners, making Dachau the main illegal detention centre in the entire region[4].

Although Himmler's intentions were clear, it was the state police that assumed responsibility for supervising the first few dozen prisoners transferred to the new facility, so, initially at least, the inmates were treated in humane fashion. Everything changed with the incorporation of the first SS guards who, gradually until the end of May, replaced the original police personnel. Previously, on 11 April, the transfer of powers had been completed, so that before the state police had withdrawn completely, the camp found itself in the hands of Hauptsturmführer Hilman Wäckerle, first commander of Dachau, who initiated the SS's reign over the KL with a bloodbath and introduction of a series special regulations tantamount to a declaration of martial law, establishing a regulatory framework that would justify any death in the name of absolute obedience[5]. The first killings[6], in fact, took place only a day after the entry into effect of the new regulations, evidencing not only the new authorities' desire to set an example, but their need to test their power and challenge the legal system, which retained exclusive capacity to issue death sentences.

The subsequent legal investigation would come up against the opposition of the SS at the new Dachau installation and public support of their actions on the part of their

[4] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos de concentración nazis* (Barcelona 2015), 67-68 and 168f. See also Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS: A Schooling in Violence* (Oxford, 2015).
[5] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos,* 68-69 and Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS,* 35-40.
[6] These were four individuals belonging to the Jewish collective. The details of the incident are unclear, but not all died on the spot. See Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS,* 40-42.

leader, Heinrich Himmler, who presented the victims as "communists" shot "while trying to escape", in an attempt to adapt events to the official narrative[7]. After this initial success, the crimes continued, with eight more cases, leading to open confrontation with the judicial authorities, which broke out early in June. The mysterious disappearance of files made it impossible to bring those responsible to account, but forced Himmler to dismiss Wäckerle, an event that proved to be extremely beneficial fort the *Reichsführer*. In less than twenty days, Wäckerle was replaced as commandant of Dachau by Theodor Eicke, a key figure whose actions at the camp served to erase a disastrous past and saw him promoted in just a year to the highest level of the recently created Concentration Camp Expectorate (IKL)[8].

From the beginning, Eicke showed himself to be far more adept than his predecessor. As well as a series of adjustments to the leadership of the SS under his command and the design of a tailor-made guard system, on 1 October he formalised a set of new regulations intended to demonstrate that both he and Himmler had learnt their lesson. It was essential to avoid any appearance of arbitrariness, and therefore, a new rulebook was necessary, one that would justify the actions of the SS. The new regulations turned out to be even more ruthless than the previous ones, to the point of prescribing capital punishment for any act of insubordination, upheaval, or sabotage, which resulted in a new series of killings that would lead to the arrest of Himmler himself. After his release, facilitated by the intervention of his mentor Ernst Röhm, and the creation of the IKL, Eicke's regulations were extended to the rest of the camps in a network that, with Himmler's consolidation at the head of the German police on 17 June 1936, would receive definitive endorsement.[9]

From then onwards, the KL embarked upon a new period of expansion in which there was a policy of absolute rationalisation of violence, systematised via a common catalogue of punishments and a strict protocol of action marked by hierarchical authorisation and bureaucratic justification. In practice, this system allowed for a certain

[7] According to Himmler's words, the purpose of Dachau was none other than to imprison all the leftist enemies who represented a threat to the state. See Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 67, 70-71.

[8] Johannes Tuchel, *Konzentrationlager: Organisationsgeschichte und Funktion der "Inspektion der Konzentrationslager" 1934-1938* (Boppard 1991).

[9] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 73-74, 111; Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life* (Nueva York 2012); Geoffrey P. Megargee (Gen. Ed.), *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, vol. 1, (Blommington e Indianapolis 2009).

degree of centralised supervision and contributed towards slightly reducing excesses in the camps, but above all, it provided the necessary veil behind which to conceal the true functioning of the network. In this sense, the ambiguity of the regulations meant that inmates lived in a constant state of fear, seasoned on a daily basis by multiple acts of spontaneous violence committed by the guards. Ultimately, they were dealing with "the enemy", and in an emergency situation, the guards could do nothing other than act to quell the imminent rebellion that all the KL captives were supposedly preparing. The result was obvious: most of the reports filed were false, and any act of aggression against prisoners, as Eicke reiterated in a secret memo, had to be officially recorded as an act of self-defence[10].

3. Race and clasificación

Along with the implantation of a fictitious system of institutional functioning and regulation of punishment, from 1936 onwards, the network of terror gained additional momentum directed towards homogenising the appearance and categorisation of the concentration camp system. The period between 1937 and 1938 was particularly decisive: the shaving of inmates' heads; the infamous striped uniforms; serial identification of prisoners, now reduced in alienating fashion to a number stitched on both parts of their uniform; and, more decisively, the system of classification based on coloured triangles[11].

In principle, this system was introduced as a way of categorising prisoners according to the "crime" committed or the reason for their detention, assigning them a specific identity easily recognisable by the guards. For this very reason, the method proved to be a perfect discriminatory instrument for the SS that ultimately, largely decided the prisoners' fate. As a rule, there were eight different-coloured triangles, to which were added minor modifications in order to adapt the system, especially after the outbreak of the war, to the increasingly diverse population of the KL. Prisoners

[10] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 123-126; Geoffrey P. Megargee (Gen. Ed.), *The United States Holocaust*, 7.

[11] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 138-139; Geoffrey P. Megargee (Gen. Ed.), *The United States Holocaust*, 186; Jane Caplan, "Gender and the concentraction camps", in J. Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann, (eds.), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany: The New Histories* (London 2010), 86-94; Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (New Jersey 1997), chapter 10; Falk Pingel, *Häftlinge unter SS-Herrschaft. Widerstand, Selbstbehauptung und Vernichtung in Konzentrationslagern* (Hamburg 1978), chapter 5.

considered to be "criminals", were given the green triangle; "political" prisoners, red,; the "anti-social", black; "emigrants", blue; gypsies, brown; Jehovah's Witnesses, purple; homosexuals, pink; and finally, a yellow triangle for Jews, who had to wear a star of David formed by a yellow triangle and another of the aforementioned colours. Lastly, it is worth noting that for foreigners, the initial of their country of origin was added to their triangle, although the list of possibilities did not end here[12].

Needless to say, the system was far from static or perfect, and certain clarifications are necessary. The first is that these classifications were often arbitrary and did not always correspond to the prisoner's particular status. The second is that the categories employed to designate inmates were highly questionable. Until 1938, for instance, a large majority of KL internees were considered to be political prisoners, and the "professional" and "anti-social" prisoners who initially occupied the quarry-camps of Mauthausen and Flossenbürg were mostly vagrants, alcoholics or individuals guilty of, if anything, petty crimes[13].

With the outbreak of the war, the KL entered a new phase of explosive growth that, among other questions, resulted in the massive internationalisation of the network. This would have a major impact upon the system of classification, since, apart from diversification, this involved identification of an increased number of collectives that fell victim of the ideal of racial purity advocated by Nazism[14]. Thus, Slavs, gypsies, Jews, Czechs, Poles and Soviets were directly regarded as sub-human beings who, in general, were subjected to brutal persecution that, as in the obvious case of the Jews or the Soviet prisoners of war, sought their annihilation. At the opposite end of the scale were those collectives considered to be "Aryan", including northern European countries such as Norway. A clear order was established, even at a geographical level, in which, as one descended the map, prisoners were regarded as increasingly inferior in racial terms. Prisoners from Western Europe, such as the French, for example, would essentially be on

[12] See the masterful description by Eugene Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell: The German Concentration Camps and the System Behind Them* (London, 1950), 35-36. See also Christian Goeschel and Nikolaus Wachsmann (Eds.), *The Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933-1939: A Documentary History* (Lincoln 2012), 229-238.

[13] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 190-191; Hans Marsálek, *Storia del campo di concentramento di Mauthausen* (Viena 2008), 151.

[14] Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven 1989), 208-235; Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (UK 1991).

the same level as the Poles, followed by the Spanish prisoners and, finally, the Italians. Racial consideration, however, was by no means the only factor when it came to determining both the survival of collectives and their degree of insertion within the administrative system of the camps[15].

The emergence and multiplication of secondary installations throughout the network from 1943 onwards meant that, to a large extent, pragmatism took precedence over racial considerations, with more importance attached to the capacity for manual labour than to greater or lesser proximity to "German blood". Hence cases such as that of the Dora-Mittelbau complex, where the survival ratios of French and Belgian prisoners were significantly lower than those of gypsies, Poles and Soviets, which does not imply that the racial scale became irrelevant. In this respect, it should be noted that there was always an element of immobility in terms of the two extremes, occupied by German and Jewish prisoners, respectively. The latter, ever since the emergence of the first camps, remained the number one victims of Nazism[16].

Furthermore, not all the most ruthlessly persecuted groups suffered the same degree of harassment and aggression throughout the entire existence of the KL. Jehovah's Witnesses, those classified as "anti-social" or "criminal" and, in particular, homosexuals, were the favourite target of the SS, more so than political prisoners until at least 1942, suffering, in general, more fatalities, reflecting their consideration as "sub-human". From then onwards, these collectives ceased to represent the main human contribution to the KL, which, combined with the harsh punishment they received, had so decimated their numbers that hey now constituted a small part of the network. Meanwhile, the increasing number of political prisoners and the growing use of camps for production purposes would have placed the spotlight on the latter for three reasons: their numbers; their inexperience; and their considerable diversity. The surviving representatives of the other groups had through necessity become experienced veterans, thoroughly familiar with all the ins and outs of camp life, which meant that they had developed effective survival strategies, and even obtained positions of privilege. The new prisoners, by contrast, found themselves in a deadly, unknown universe without any connections or safety net that

[15] Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, 118-122.
[16] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 537-539; and Jens-Christian Wagner, *Produktion des Todes. Das KZ Mittelbau-Dora* (Göttingen 2001).

might lessen the shock, which would explain, partly at least, why their survival rate was inferior to that of their fellow inmates[17].

The model presented here, though valid, is not without its nuances. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance, were subjected to the most inhumane treatment until the SS realised that their obstinacy could be circumvented if, quite simply, they were assigned tasks that did not clash with their beliefs[18]. The case of Mauthausen is also singular, and does not correspond to the general model observed in other camps. In the Austrian hell, political enemies captured after the start of the war were subjected to brutal working conditions in the quarries at the complex, with over a third of the prisoners perishing in 1940 alone. The Spaniards also fell prey to this policy of annihilation, and approximately 60% of the over 7,000 who entered the camp from 1940 onwards died in the Gusen quarries between 1941 and 1942[19].

4. Protective custody

Within the general outline presented, the Spanish prisoners, especially those deported to Mauthausen, were not easily classified. In fact, one of their most striking singularities is that most wore a blue triangle with an S (*Spanier*) stitched in the centre, which, in principle, classified them as Spanish "emigrants" or "stateless persons", something that does not strictly correspond to the original meaning of the symbol, intended to designate all those Jews or political exiles who had fled Germany after the rise of Nazism and had been detained upon returning to the country. Given their definition, therefore, it is strange that all the Spanish prisoners were included within this category, to the extent that, following the outbreak of the war, it was to all intents and purposes monopolised by the

[17] Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. Historia de los campos*, 147-149; Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, 121; Falk Pingel, "Social life in an unsocial environment: The inmates´struggle for survival", in Jane Caplan and Nikolaus Wachsmann (Eds.), *Concentration Camps in Nazi Germany*, 64; and Robert Steegmann, *Le Camp de Natzweiler-Struthof* (París, 2009).

[18] Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, 121-122; Christopher Dillon, *Dachau and the SS*, 172-173; Detlef Garbe,'Erst verhasst, dann geschätzt: Zeugen Jehovas als Häftlinge im KZ Dachau', in Wolfgang Benz and Angelika Königseder (eds.), *Das Konzentrationslager Dachau: Geschichte und Wirkung nationalsozialistischer Repression* (Berlín 2008), 219-237; and D Garbe, *Zwischen Widerstand und Martyrium: Die Zeugen Jehovas im «Dritten Reich»* (Munich 1993).

[19] Diego Martínez López, "*Cifras sin vida*.

Spaniards, alongside a handful of foreign forced labourers[20]. This reality, combined with the fact that in all the other camps in the network to which Spaniards were sent, the latter were given the red triangle that marked them out as political prisoners, renders necessary a series of clarifications and caveats[21].

In the first place, it is worth noting that the most common explanation has revolved around the Francoist regime's refusal to recognise these prisoners as Spanish, and the existence of a series of negotiations between the regime and Berlin in order to decide upon the future of these captives. The fact that the documentation employed to date underlines the significance of the trip undertaken by Ramón Serrano Súñer, Franco's Foreign Minister, to the Nazi capital, and an order dated 25 September declaring the loss of recognition as prisoners of war of the "combatants of red Spain" (*Rotspanienkämpfer)* captured after the invasion of France, and their immediate subjection to the regime of protective custody[22], has traditionally generated an argument to the contrary; the first Spaniards were interned in Mauthausen on 6 August 1940, much earlier than the date indicated in the documentation. Furthermore, the Spanish dictatorship's proven knowledge of the fate of thousands of Spaniards who had sought refuge in France, particularly notable in the case of the convoy of civilians known as the *Convoy de la Angulema,* and its cruel inaction in response to repeated German requests, is in no way proof of its intervention in the decisions taken by the German authorities.[23].

Thus, to better understand the question, we should begin by saying that neither the transfer of the Spaniards captured to what were known as *Stalags* – camps for prisoners of war – was fortuitous, nor their deportation to Mauthausen coincidental. All the stages of the Spaniards' long journey converged with those of the German Reich's other

[20] A succinct definition in *Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations found in the Archive of the International Tracing Service (ITS)*. Available online: https://eguide.arolsen-archives.org/fileadmin/eguide-website/downloads/Glossary_ITS.pdf. (Last access 27/12/2021).

[21] The singularity of the blue triangle is frequently pointed out in the bibliography. See for example, David Wingeate Pike, *Españoles en el Holocausto,* 49-50; Hans Marsálek, *Storia del campo,* 42; or Mariano Constante and Manuel Razola, *Triángulo azul: los republicanos españoles en Mauthausen* (Huesca 2008), 7-8, 13.

[22] Order reproduced in Montse Armengou y Ricard Bellis, *El convoy de los 927* (Barcelona 2005), 269. The Archive of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs remains closed and inaccessible to researchers. For this reason, it has been necessary to resort to the documents published by Armengou and Bellis more than 15 years ago in the book cited above.

[23]Montse Armengou y Ricard Bellis, *El convoy de los 927*; David Wingeate Pike, *Españoles en el Holocausto,* 42-43; Rosa Ana Alija-Fernández, "Justice for No-Land´s Men? The United States Military Trials against Spanish Kapos in Mauthausen and Universal Jurisdiction", in Kevin Jon Heller and Gerry Simpson (Eds.), *The Hidden Histories of War Crime Trials* (UK 2013), 117-118.

prisoners of war. Three circumstances combined to channel the initial torrent of people towards the German concentration camp system: nationality, the political police and forced labour. Not surprisingly, the *KL* was its key element and the first institution to reveal its functioning and totalitarian structure[24] . For the German leaders, the war was an opportunity to implement ethnic reorganisation in accordance with the Nordic hierarchical model of the SS, represented by two agencies, the Central Security Office or RSHA, and the RKFdV, the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood. From October 1939 onwards, both controlled population movements and displacements, prisoners of war included[25].

Therefore, the loss of prisoner of war status and their transfer to a concentration camp could not have been the consequence of Francoist political pressure but should be included within the evolution and extension of the area of the III Reich and the role played by the camps in what was known as German security policy. Spain, particularly from June 1940 onwards, with the abandonment of its position of neutrality, was an ally of Nazi Germany. In this sense, it is worth highlighting its adhesion to the Anti-comintern Pact, renewed in 1941, which, along with agreements regarding labour and police cooperation that same year, made it possible to establish in both states parallel mechanisms against their "common enemies", especially in the handing over of political refugees[26]. However, the Nazi apparatus of repression preceded this and had its own very specific characteristics. One of which stands out above the rest: protective custody.

This was a key element of National Socialist Criminal Law, enshrined with the Nazis rise to power and the hardening of preventive measures, such as the arrest and special treatment of so-called anti-social and professional offenders. The *Law against Habitual Criminals*, of November 1933, introduced these measures into the Criminal Code, initially endorsing so-called "security custody" for an indefinite period of time. Successively regulated, it was gradually extended and used against political opposition, Jews, and any collective regarded as an enemy of the Reich (the anti-social, idlers,

[24] Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel (Eds.): *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager, Bd. 9: Arbeitserziehungslager, Ghettos, Jungendschutzlager, Polizeihaftlager Sonderlager, Zigeunerlager, Zwangsarbeitslager* (München 2009), 273-291; and Michael Curtis, *Totalitarianism* (New Brunswick 1999).
[25] Christian Ingrao, "Culture de guerre, imaginaire nazi, violence génocide: Le cas des cadres du SD, *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, Vol. 47, No 2 (2000), 265-289.
[26] Mark Mazower, *Hitler`s empire. Nazi rule in occupied Europe* (London 2009), 323.

gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals or "failures") that could be transferred, once their sentences had been served, to permanent police control. This control was gradually increased until the creation of a draft law on "*strangers to the community*" which provided for the definitive handing over to the police of "incorrigible" individuals for whom extreme measures were envisaged such as sterilisation or, even, physical elimination[27]. One can conclude, therefore, that "protective custody" constituted a defining moment in totalitarian Nazi policy[28].

From this perspective, it is worth reviewing the category of *Rotspanier* ("red Spaniards") employed by the National Socialist regime to designate, among others, Spanish prisoners. In reductionist fashion, in academic literature there has been an interpretation of the concept that, with some justification, attributed this classification exclusively to Spaniards, establishing a correlation with the evident narrative trace of Francoism in the designation of Spanish prisoners, most of whom were republicans who had fought against the rebels during the Spanish Civil War. The reality, however, was far more complex, for both the category and the application of the regime of protective custody to those regarded as *Rotspanier* date back to 1937, when the term was basically applied to Germans who enlisted in the International Brigades to fight on the republican side in the Spanish war. Subsequently, it would be extended to include the other nationalities that had taken up arms against Germany during the evolution of the Spanish conflict.

That same year, moreover, there was regulation of arrests and special measures with regard to border crossings, related to the exodus of the population and the movements of refugees and the stateless who had lost their former nationality. In this way, the next victims of protective custody were the Czech soldiers fleeing the establishment of the German Protectorate in 1938, when the Wehrmacht handed over control to the state police command in Prague. Thus, the orders dated 26 June and 4 July 1939 facilitated transfer to concentration camps via the application of protective custody to all those Czech

[27] Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapell Hill 1995).

[28] Francisco Múñoz Conde, *Edmund Mezger y el Derecho Penal de su tiempo. Estudios sobre el Derecho Penal en el Nacionalsocialismo* (Valencia, 2003); Robin Lumsden, *A Collector's Guide To: The Allgemeine – SS* (UK 2002), 83-84; Wolfgang, Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (Berkley 2007); Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York 2006); R J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York 2010); Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire,* 204-211; Chris McNab, Las *SS: Datos* clave, *1923 1945* (Madrid 2010); Michael Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office* (Madison 2010); and Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich* (Londres 1981), 270.

workers who "*stole, looted, engaged in political activity, showed an attitude hostile to the National Socialist state, or refused to work*"[29].

The next unfortunates would be singled out barely a month later, in August 1939, when the German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, requested of his Soviet opposite number during the negotiations over the division of Poland the handing over of the German political refugees who were in the USSR, to whom protective custody would also be applied[30]. After the outbreak of World War II, the process became widespread, following that double criterion of classification according to nationality and political background. The occupation of Poland, in the last third of 1939, and the division of its army was the next objective. The treatment of these prisoners of war, their classification and their transfer to concentration camps were personally supervised by Himmler himself, who issued all orders between 1938 and 1939[31].

The subsequent protective custody decrees, on 31 January, 12 February and 7 May 1940, stated that the rest of the Polish army, around 50,000 men interned in camps in the unoccupied zone, "*should be taken to the Reich, to be treated as political prisoners in specific concentration camps*"[32]. The arrival of an increasingly large number of prisoners owing to the evolution of the war, made it necessary to extend the procedure of application of protective custody to all German territories and those that were gradually being occupied. To this end, there was a restructuring of the *Sicherheitspolizei* (SIPO) the state security police, formed via the fusion of the criminal police, the KRIPO, and the political police, the Gestapo. It was coordinated from the Reich Central Security Office (RSHA), created in September 1939, and placed under the leadership of Reinhard Heydrich[33].

At the end of April 1940, once protective custody was regulated in Poland, military jurisdiction entered into force for all the so-called "Eastern territories", particularly

[29] Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power,* 687.
[30] Ibid., 693-694.
[31] David G. Williamson, *The Third Reich* (London 2002) 34-35; Norman Rich , *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion* (Londres , 1992), 49; Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler: A Life*, 470; Christian Leitz (Ed.), *The Third Reich: The Essential Readings*, (Oxford 1999), 86; Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (New York 2001), 599; Karl D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism* (New York 1990), 428; Neil Gregor, *Nazism* (Nueva York, 2000) 193. For the Austrian case see, George Pichler and Heimo Halbrainer (eds,) *Camaradas. Osterreicherimen und Osterreicher im Spanischen Burgerkrieg 1936 1939* (Clio 2017)
[32] Archiv der Gedenkstätte Dachau 478/69.
[33] George C. Browder, *Hitler`s Enforces. The Gestapo and the SS Security Service in the Nazi Revolution* (Oxford 1996); Jacques Delarue, *Histoire de la Gestapo*, (Paris 1987), 473.

decisive following confirmation in June 1940 of the French defeat. As a result, the sizeable contingents of Polish and Spanish soldiers that had been mobilised by the French army and captured by the Germans, were treated as French prisoners of war "until further orders"[34]. On 26 June, four days after the signing of the armistice requiring Austrian and German political exiles to be handed over, the "*Preparatory order for the use and treatment of French army prisoners of war*" was issued. In practice, it was similar in every respect to previous orders concerning prisoners of war and again contemplated national and political classification, while it also established their use as skilled labour, so their classification was assigned to the SS and the entities that worked on major defensive structures for the army, such as the Todt Organisation[35].

The implementation of military jurisdiction in the other territories took place throughout September: in Holland, it came into force on the 6th, although the decrees of identification and preventive arrest that preceded protective custody were already operative. In France, martial law was declared on 10 September, the first of an array of special jurisdictions that concluded on 27 September with the anti-Semitic provisions[36]. Two days earlier, on the 25th, with the administrative occupation of France and the Netherlands consolidated, the decision was taken that prisoners classified as *rotspanier* should also enter protective custody. This was a broad and complex collective, since it comprised various kinds of refugees in France. Many were ex-combatants, both Spanish and of other nationalities, above all Germans who had enlisted in the International Brigades, to whom this law was applied from 1937 onwards, as has been noted.

The order, therefore, only stipulated observance of the previously established protocol according to which IV C-2, the RSHA section responsible for protective custody, should instruct military commanders to arrest the individuals identified as belonging to these groups, on the basis of their own political files and French records. Once detained, they

[34] BA-MA RH 20-1/218, *Order on preparations for the use or treatment of prisoner-of-war members of the French army*, 26 June 1940, cited in "German rules in the occupied territories: pretensions and realities" in Bernhard Kroener, Rolf-Dieter Muller, Hans Umbreit, Ewald Osers, John Brownjohn, Patricia Crampton and Louise Willmott, (eds), *Germany and the Second World War*. Volume 5: *Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power. Part I: Wartime Administration, Economy, and Manpower Resources, 1939-1941* (Oxford 2000), 327.

[35] Michael Thad Allen, *Business of genocide: the SS, slave labor, and the concentration camps* (Chapel Hill and London 2002).

[36] Raphael Lemkin, *Axis rule in occupied Europe: laws of occupation, analysis of government, proposals for redress* (Carnegie, 1944) 394-5 and 508 ff.

were first to enter protective custody and then be examined, classified and transferred to the Reich's camps. The next memo, on 25 September 1940, was the executive order issued to the Wehrmacht commands to arrest and identify "combatants of red Spain", an order regulated by the previous regulation, recast by Himmler's own office in May of that year.

The Spanish authorities were aware of the existence of this order, at least after the deportation of the Angulema Convoy, in August 1940, as it was sent to the Foreign Ministry in Madrid months later to report information. However, knowledge regarding the memo has always been partial and outside this context of extension of protective custody throughout occupied Europe. The closure of the Foreign Ministry file and the ensuing documentary void have permitted speculation with regard the possible direct influence of Serrano Suñer or Franco himself in the deportation of Spaniards to German concentration camps, but to understand their responsibility, one needs to understand the entire German military and police apparatus, which literally swallowed up all the prisoners and detainees, in collaboration too with the French and Vichy authorities. There, in fact, pressure was indeed exercised by their Francoist counterparts to force handing over and repatriation on the French border, but not to interfere in deportation to German camps.

The central paragraph of the order to apply protective custody to the *Rotspaniers*, impossible for the government or Spanish diplomats to alter once issued, leaves no room for doubt:

"*Foreign red Spanish ex-combatants (and also those of Spanish nationality) detained in enemy states (especially in enemy France) or have taken a stance against Germany and are in prison, will be, by order of the Führer, removed from war prisons and transferred to the state secret police. Pursuant to section IV C2 of the Reich's main security office. These detainees will be sent to the concentration camp indicated by this office*"[37].

[37] *Order issued by the chief of security police and of the security services*, Berlin, 25 September 1940. Reproduced in Montse Armengou and Ricard Bellis, *El Convoy de los 927*, 269.

The order was sent to all the *stalags* or prisoner of war camps across which the Spaniards were scattered prior to their individual classification, a ritual repeated upon arrival at the concentration camps that was of enormous significance, since it established the inclusion of each inmate within a certain group of prisoners and, thereby, condition their fate and survival. In the specific case of Spaniards, this initial classification served to equate their status with that of all the national groups of *Rotspanier*, whether German or of other nationalities, while it certified the end of their treatment as prisoners of war.

Equally importantly, it was that triple legal dimension of the *Rotspanier* as combatants, foreigners and political prisoners which required that, in addition to protective custody, they were subject to section IV-A of the RSHA (Gestapo), directed against political enemies of Nazism, counter-sabotage and protective service.[38] It was originally a department that, since the end of the First World War, addressed the entire evolution of so-called *anti-extremism*, a series of services initially aimed at preventing communists from joining the army and that, following the Nazis' rise to power in 1933, were used in the transformation of the internal security apparatus until the latter became a fully-fledged state political police, independent of all bureaucratic or ministerial supervision. This model, adopted by the Gestapo, had a significant influence upon the Spanish Falangist circles that strove to create a similar secret police apparatus that might challenge the army's monopoly of instruments of repression[39].

Therefore, it was this aforementioned triple condition that marked the transfer of the *Rotspanier* to the German camps, mainly the terrible Mauthausen facility, a camp that a few months later was classified by the RSHA authorities themselves as category III, thus confirming it as the most dreadful of the entire network[40]. On 23 April 1941, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained to the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin, Eugenio Espinosa de los Monteros, why the *Rotspanier* had been sent there:

[38] Michael Wildt, *An uncompromising Generation*, 12-17, here at 15.
[39] Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, *Geografía humana de la represión franquista: Del golpe a la guerra de ocupación (1936-1941)*, (Madrid, 2017); Carlos Píriz, "En campo enemigo: la Quinta Columna en la Guerra Civil española (c. 1936-1941)". Doctoral dissertation (Salamanca 2019).
[40] 2 January 1941. USHMM, RG-11 001M.01, reel 17, 500-5-1, f. 98.

"*The men, who had participated actively in the struggle against the Spanish national government and were ready for internment, were taken to the Mauthausen concentration camp. It has been necessary to intern them because in current war conditions, due to their political past, they represent a danger to public security. Their political activity and orientation is still under examination.*"[41]

On 13 August 1941, the specific order was signed that provided for the transfer of all Spanish detainees to Mauthausen, although by that point they had been gradually entering the camp for over a year. In many respects, the particular treatment they received pointed towards the definitive route that would be taken with the *Night and Fog* Decree[42], which, issued in 1941, recast all the directives "*for the prosecution of offenses against the Reich or occupation forces in the occupied territories*". A considerable number of Spaniards were arrested and deported in this climate that marked the second wave of arrivals at the concentration camp, as a result of the extension of these procedures "against any form of opposition, sabotage or protest". The treatment dispensed to these kinds of prisoners in the concentration camps was set out in a new decree, communicated to the different concentration camp commandants on 7 June 1943. In the meantime, in December 1942, at least one more provision had been issued against the *Rotspanier*, referring to the treatment of "*red Spaniards and anti-fascist Italians in occupied France*", reiterating the previous orders and classifications[43].

[41] *Note verbale* reproduced in Montse Armengou and Ricard Bellis, *El Convoy de los 927*, annex.
[42] The *Nach und Nebel* Decree was signed in December 1941. *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (NCA)*, 85-86; and Nikolaus Wachsmann, *Hitler´s Prisons: Legal Terror in Nazi Germany* (New Haven and London 2004), 271-274.
[43] BArchB 19/1807

5. *Rotspaniers*

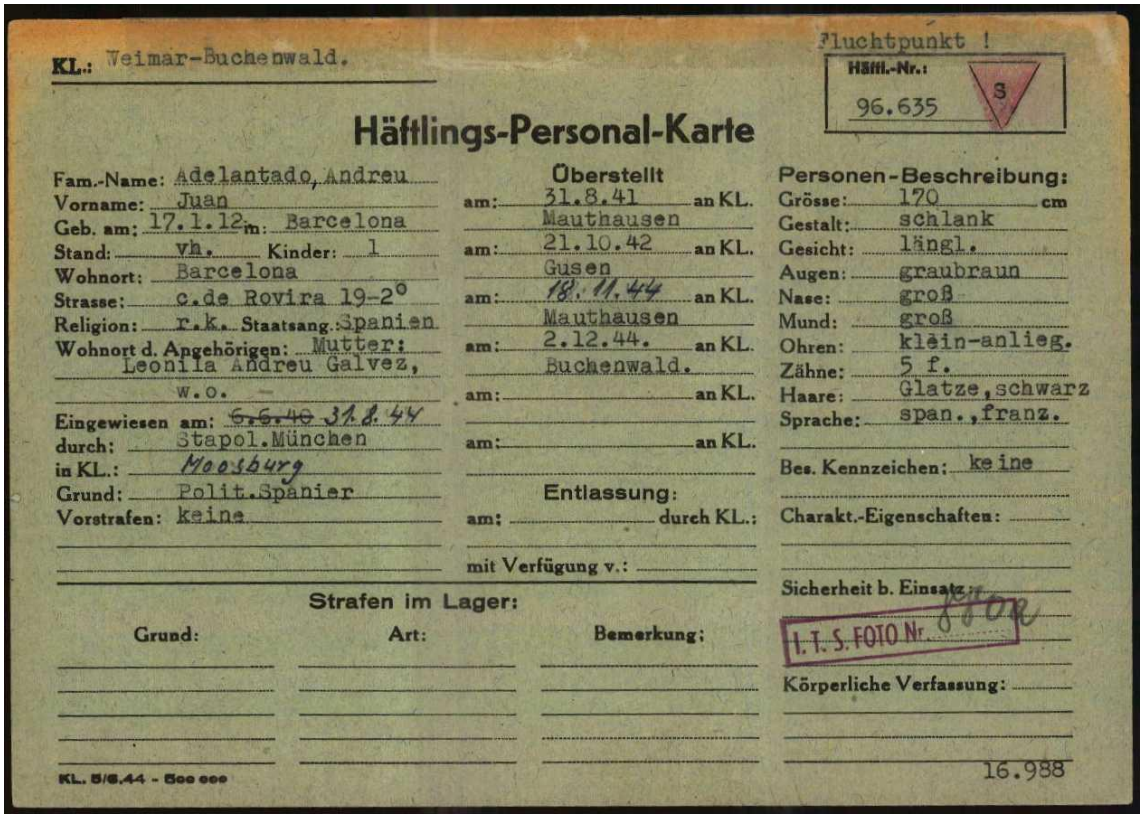
The German set of regulations, as these pages have sought to demonstrate, was absolutely categorical and left no room for doubt. Statistical analysis of the sources available, however, reveals that in the case of Mauthausen, the appropriateness of the category of *Rotspanier* to designate the Spanish prisoners was almost absolute, which does not mean that all the nuances indicated are not essential in order to understand and correctly interpret the perverse classificatory universe into which the Spanish were incorporated[44].

In this light, it seems evident that the *Rotspanier* were clearly political enemies of the German regime and, ultimately, at least as of 25 September 1940, prisoners to whom protective custody was indiscriminately applied. If one also bears in mind that the Mauthausen authorities systematically classified political prisoners as "prisoners in protective custody" (*Schutzhäflinge*)[45], it is easy to understand why Spaniards usually wore the red triangle in the KL, but not why those deported to the Austrian hell – i.e. a large majority – were assigned a category so far removed from their status as that designated by the aforementioned blue triangle, particularly given that International Brigade members did receive the red badge[46]. Unfortunately, the conundrum of this particular fate suffered by the Spaniards in Mauthausen cannot be resolved in definitive fashion, but it is possible to provide a series of qualifications and hypotheses that help to clarify the issue.

Firstly, the deduction that they were simply considered to be stateless does not appear to hold water. Had this been the case, all the Spanish prisoners in the KL, with perhaps the very occasional exception, would have received the same classification throughout the network. Similarly, they would hardly have been re-classified in such crucial fashion over time and during their transfer to other facilities. The best example in this respect is possibly that of Barcelonan Juan Andreu Adelantado, imprisoned in Mauthausen and Gusen since 31 August 1941 and transferred on 2 December 1944 to

[44] See the statistical analysis performed by Andreas Kranebitter, *Zahlen als Zeugen. Quantitative Analysen zur "Häftlingsgesellschaft" des KZ Mauthausen-Gusen*. Doctoral dissertation (Wien 2012), here at 134-135.
[45] Ibid., 129 and 537n.
[46] See the testimony of. A Hungarian volunteer in the International Brigades in Mariano Constante and Manuel Razola, *Triángulo azul*, 49 and 73.. In his file in Mauthausen, he was indeed registered as a "Rotspanier", see: Personal files (male) Istvan Balog, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/ 1342507/ ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives. See also David Wingeate Pike, *Españoles en el Holocausto*,234-235 and 278.

Buchenwald. According to his file at the Weimar camp, this was a veteran Spanish political prisoner who had even participated in an attempted escape. As a result, Juan Andreu was given an unambiguous red triangle with an 'S' in the centre, and his particularly dangerous status was noted in all his records. This, then, is a paradigmatic case: first of all, there is clear indication of his consideration and internal classification as a political prisoner; and, secondly, on the basis of the personal information reflected in his registration form, one can see that his national origin (*Staatsang. / Staatsangehörigkeit*: nationality) is fully recognised:



KL.: Weimar-Buchenwald.

Fluchtpunkt !

Häftl.-Nr.: 96.635 S

Häftlings-Personal-Karte

Fam.-Name: Adelantado, Andreu
Vorname: Juan
Geb. am: 17.1.12 in: Barcelona
Stand: vh. Kinder: 1
Wohnort: Barcelona
Strasse: c.de Rovira 19-2°
Religion: r.k. Staatsang.: Spanien
Wohnort d. Apgehörigen: Mutter: Leonila Andreu Galvez, w.o.
Eingewiesen am: 6.6.40 31.8.44
durch: Stapol.München
in KL.: Mooshurg
Grund: Polit.Spanier
Vorstrafen: keine

Überstellt
am: 31.8.41 an KL. Mauthausen
am: 21.10.42 an KL. Gusen
am: 18.11.44 an KL. Mauthausen
am: 2.12.44. an KL. Buchenwald.
am: an KL.
am: an KL.

Entlassung:
am: durch KL.:
mit Verfügung v.:

Strafen im Lager:

Grund:	Art:	Bemerkung:

Personen-Beschreibung:
Grösse: 170 cm
Gestalt: schlank
Gesicht: längl.
Augen: graubraun
Nase: groß
Mund: groß
Ohren: klein-anlieg.
Zähne: 5 f.
Haare: Glatze, schwarz
Sprache: span., franz.
Bes. Kennzeichen: keine
Charakt.-Eigenschaften:
Sicherheit b. Einsatz:
I. T. S. FOTO Nr. 8100
Körperliche Verfassung:

KL. 5/6.44 - 5oo ooo

16.988

1 Personal files (male) Juan Andreu Adelantado, Buchenwald, 1.1.5.3/ 5411689/ ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives

This is also a case that opens the door to the not all were assigned the blue triangle, as has previously been maintained. The first question is crystal clear and demonstrable, and also exposes another of the cruxes of the problem. As has been noted, the first Spanish prisoners arrived at Mauthausen on 6 August 1940 after a brief period of internment in the *Stalags*. Their placement was complicated from the very beginning, since they were arrested as combatants in the French army, so it was necessary for the new German authorities to undertake a subsequent process of re-identification, In their capacity as

occupying force, they soon assumed control of the main resources of the French state, among them, the capital's police units and records, which would also be employed to locate all those suspects integrated within the French economy, such as survivor Prisciliano García Gaitero[47].

Three years earlier, between late January and February 1939, Franco's Catalan offensive had forced over five hundred people to cross the French border in desperation, provoking a dramatic humanitarian problem that obliged the French government to implement a hasty process of classification, repatriation and integration in response to the challenge generated by the republican collapse in the Civil War. One of the first measures adopted was precisely that of dividing the mass of Spaniards who had crossed the border into civilians and combatants, mainly on the basis of age, sex and prior status. In parallel, the French government opened negotiations with the Francoist authorities, leading on 27 February 1939 to full recognition of Franco's regime, which meant that Spaniards who had crossed the border were now regarded as "emigrant workers"[48]. It was this early classification that was almost certainly assumed by the German authorities, which, as is evidenced if one consults the original lists, between 6 and 9 August 1940, sent 651 "Spanish emigrants" (*Spanien-Emigranten*) to Mauthausen, an initial contingent that was followed on the 13th by another 91 individuals with the same status[49].This initial consideration was short-lived, but must have been at the root of the Spanish anomaly in terms of their classification. After the signing of the famous directive of 25 September, between the 27th and the 4th of October, the Austrian camp received the first 30 Spaniards openly identified as "Spaniards in protective custody" (*Spanier-Schutzhäflinge*), a denomination that in the wake of the major convoy of 13 December (846 Spaniards) would be simplified to "*Spanier*", and which must have resulted in their acquiring the red triangle.[50]

At an internal level, the minor administrative conflict caused by the Spanish detainees was resolved by the Mauthausen authorities via a simple reclassification of the prisoners that was recorded in their files stored in the camp offices. Thus, prisoners such as Pedro Barrul Cuenca or Antonio Cebrián Campos, who arrived at the camp in the convoys of 6 and 9 August respectively and, therefore, initially classified as "emigrants",

[47] See his own testimony in CDMH INCORPORADOS, EXP 1440/14
[48] Gregory Tuban, *Camps d'étrangers: le contrôle des réfugiés venus d'Espagne (1939-1944)* (Paris 2018)
[49] ITS OCC 15/198 Ordner 268, ff. 102-113.
[50] Ibid. ff. 123, 126-129

were subsequently openly considered as prisoners in protective custody (*Span-Sch. /Spanier Schutzhäftlinge*), as is also apparent in the camp registration records.[51]

However, not all prisoners were registered in the same way. In fact, the use of the word *Spanier* on its own was more widespread in the records, but this did not alter one iota the real situation of the inmates. Antonio Cozas Arjonilla, for example, arrived at Mauthausen on 13 December 1940 in a convoy of what were simply termed *Spanier*, which did not prevent him from being directly registered in a later file, in 1944, as a political prisoner (*pol. Spn/ Politische Spanier*)[52]. The same thing happened with Manuel Cangas Barros[53], who arrived in the same convoy and at the camp was as a prisoner in protective custody; or, as case in point, Prisciliano himself, registered as *Spanier* in Gusen and classified as prisoner in protective custody in Dachau[54].

However, it does not appear that the use of the blue triangle to mark the Spaniards' uniforms was substantially modified or declined over time; rather to the contrary, as this practiced was maintained throughout Mauthausen far beyond the initial months. The clearest proof available is to be found in the barracks records conserved at the St. Lambrecht sub-camp, a small, secondary facility of Dachau inaugurated in May 1942, which was annexed to Mauthausen on 20 November of the same year. Although it was always small and appears never to have housed more than 101 prisoners at the same time, around mid-1943, over 80% of these were Spanish. Thus, the conservation of some of the prisoners' personal records reveals that the Spaniards were still marked with the blue triangle; even those who, like José Sanchez Goytia, were belatedly registered on 18 September 1943[55]. All the documentary evidence suggests that until the end, blue was the colour of the Spaniards deported to Mauthausen, the possible existence of occasional exceptions notwithstanding. The functioning of the German concentration camp system and the aforementioned arbitrary nature of classification invites one to relativize this fact.

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[51] Personal files (male) Pedro Barrull Cuenca, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/ 1346209/ ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives; and Personal files (male) Antonio Cebrián Campos, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/ 1388792 / ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

[52] Personal files (male) Antonio Cozas Arjonilla, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/ 1400761/ ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

[53] Personal files (male) Manuel Cangas Barro, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/1385970/ ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

[54]Personal files (male) Prisciliano García Gaitero, Mauthausen, 1.1.26.3/ 1452316 / ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives; and Personal files (male) Prisciliano García Gaitero, Dachau, 1.1.6.2/ 10062359/ ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

[55] The registry is conserved in AMM E/05/06. With regard to St. Lambrecht, the bibliography is very limited. See Geoffrey P. Megargee (Gen. Ed.), *The United States Holocaust*, 948-950.

Hans Marsalek himself, the Austrian socialist famous for his involvement in the preservation of the history of the camp, and survivor of the latter, narrates how he himself added a 'T' (this was the symbol worn by Czechs) to his triangle to avoid being considered "German", and the same occurred with *Lagerälteste*, Magnus Keller, who, according to Marsalek, changed the green triangle for a red one, merely having to note the change in writing, a fact that would demonstrate that the authorities never took the colour classification system very seriously[56].

In any case, what is beyond doubt is the internal consideration of the Spanish collective in Mauthausen. The entry lists of Spaniards in 1941 systematically repeat the classification of "prisoners in protective custody" (the list corresponding to 27 January contains no less than 1,506 names) and the internal camp registers, though incomplete, reveal that as of late October 1942, not only was there no prisoner in the camp categorised as "emigrant", but that both deaths and arrivals of new Spaniards were recorded within the category of political prisoners[57]:

[56] Andreas Kranebitter, *Zahlen als Zeugen*, 129.
[57] For the 1941 lists, see ITS, OCC 15/208, folder 287. There are also some lists of Spaniards corresponding to November and December 1940. For the registers mentioned between 21 October 1942 and 28 February 1943, see ITS, OCC 15/4 H, Carpeta 47, IB/2.

Population (*Bestand*)	
Political prisoners	4091
BV (Career criminals)	678
AZR (Asocials)	350
Poles	864
Bifo (Jehova´s Witnesses)	24
§ 175 (homosexuals)	35
Jews	65
WA (Members of the German armed forces)	20
Wehrmacht prisoners (Soldiers of the German armed forces turned over for punishment)	4
Russian POWs	85
Total	6216

1. Registered population in K.L. Mauthausen. 24 October 1942. Source: by the Author, based on ITS, OCC 15/4 H, folder 47, IB/2, f. 6.

This pattern was repeated systematically until January 1944[58], when the internal records of both Mauthausen and Gusen, began to include *Rotspanier* as a differentiated category of prisoner, an inclusion that was retained until the end. The explanation for this change is unclear, but it is possible that it was related to the incessant international pressure exercised by the Red Cross to allow prisoners of *Spanish nationality* to communicate with the exterior and the belated accession to this request on the part of the police authorities and the RSHA itself[59]. In this regard, it is worth pointing out that, although the authorisation was communicated on 14 December 1942, the RSHA had to insist on its adoption on 13 April 1943 and make arrangements in July 1944 to defray inmates' postal expenditure. The fact that the Spanish were in some way singled out by

[58] With the exception of the month of March 1943 in Gusen, in which the *Spanier* were registered on an individual basis. See ITS, Mauthausen 19, folder, 441, f. 14

[59] Note the emphasis on the prisoners' Spanish nationality. This clarification appears in the original documentation with reference to "combatants of red Spain of Spanish nationality" (*Rotspanienkämpfer spanischer Nationalität*). See, for example, the communication of 14 December 1942: Rotspanienkämpfer spanischer Nationalität im KL Mauthausen und Dachau, im besetzten und unbesetzten Frankreich und Nord-Afrika, sowie Schriftverkehrs-Bestimmungen und Regelung der Benachrichtigung von Angehörigen verstorbener Rotspanienkämpfer im KL Mauthausen, 1941-1944, Mauthausen, 1.1.0.2/ 82339808/ ITS, Arolsen Archives

the highest Reich authorities may have triggered this new way of proceeding in the administration of the camp, although this idea is merely hypothesis. In any case, the fact is that the records of both Gusen and Mauthausen were modified so as to include a breakdown by nationality of prisoners classified as *Rotspanier*, expressed as follows:

ROTSPANIER							
Germans (austrian included)	French	Italian	Russian	Yugoslavs	Spanish	Other	Total
-	4	6	1	3	2187	6	2207
-	4	6	1	3	2187	6	2207
-	4	6	1	3	2187	6	220[7]

2Rotspanier in Mauthausen on 31 August and 1-2 September 1944. Source: by the Author, based on ITS, Mauthausen 26, folder 517, f. 9

Date	*SCHUTZHÄFTLINGE ("Protective custody" prisoners)*																		
	DR[60]	Belg.	Eng.	Fr	Greek	Ita.	Yugo.	Dutch	Croatian	Alsatian	Luxemb.	Norwegian	Poles	Rus.	Span.	Slovak	Czechs	Stateless	Other	Total
31	864	116	3	4641	610	2953	2529	65	32	3	33	11	10411	101	-	4	778	43	671	23865
1-9	863	116	3	4638	609	2948	2531	65	32	3	33	11	10434	101	-	4	780	43	667	23881
2	863	116	3	4633	608	2946	2529	65	32	3	33	11	10467	101	-	4	779	43	666	23902
3	863	116	3	4629	608	2945	2525	64	32	3	33	11	13219	101	-	4	779	43	666	26644

3Protective custody prisoners by nationality in Mauthausen on 31 August and 1-2 September 1944. Source: by the Author, based on ITS, Mauthausen 26, folder 517, f. 9

Date	*SCHUTZHÄFTLINGE ("Protective custody" prisoners)*												
	DR	Belg.	Fr	Greek	Ita.	Yugo.	Croatian	Luxemb.	Poles	Rus.	Czechs	Other	Total
31/01/1944	114	55	210	7	4	383	1	1	3215	91	107	4	4192

4Protective custody prisoners by nationality in Gusen on 31 January 1944. Source: by the Author, based on ITS, Mauthausen 19, folder 441, f. 77

[60] *Deutsches Reich*: Germans, including Austrians after 1938.

Date	*ROTSPANIER*				
	Italian	French	Spanish	Other	Total
31/01/1944	2	1	440	1	444

5 Rotspanier in Gusen on 31 January 1944. Source: by the Author, based on ITS, Mauthausen 19, folder 441, f. 77

As can be seen in the tables attached, Spaniards were now essentially included within the category of *Rotspanier*, of which they practically were the only members, without this involving the disappearance of the category of prisoners under protective custody, which was reserved, in the case of the Spanish, for inmates such as José Cereceda, marked down for extermination in accordance with the *Night and Fog* decree[61]. Similarly, and decisively, it is apparent that the nationality of the Spaniards was fully recognised, respected and used as grounds for differentiating them within the two main categories of prisoners in which they were included, thereby invalidating the possibility of their being treated as a stateless collective, and the latter being the ultimate reason for the blue triangle they wore. Had this been the case, they would have been consigned to a box headed by the word *Staatenlos*, a term that does not appear for the placing of the *Rotspanier*, but was employed, for instance, for that of the prisoners in protective custody.

Conclusion

In the light of the evidence presented, it can be concluded that Spanish prisoners were subjected to an anomalous classification process in the KL, particularly in Mauthausen, where from the beginning they wore a badge that did not correspond to the nature and real reasons for their detention, but which did not modify at an administrative level their

[61] David Wingeate Pike, *Españoles en el Holocausto*, p. 320.

treatment as political prisoners and in protective custody, a category conferred upon them on 25 September 1940 at the latest and that was shared by all Spanish prisoners throughout the German concentration camp system. The explanation for the Spanish singularity in the Austrian hell does not seem very clear beyond their origin, although, it very probably responded to pragmatic questions related to the need to equate a specific group of prisoners that, as of January 1944, would constitute the essence of a new differentiated category: that of the *Rotspanier*, comprised of all those individuals who had dared to join the fight against fascism in Spain. On the other hand, the bureaucratic evolution of the camp confirms not only the extremes noted, but that the nationality of the Spanish prisoners was always recognised and employed as a basis for the differentiation and administration of the camp's population, a fact that refutes the traditional hypothesis that it was the Francoist regime's refusal to recognise the nationality of these individuals that determined the treatment delivered by Nazi Germany to the Spaniards interned in their network of terror.