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# The Viehofen Forced-Labor Camp (1944-5)



*Based on the stories and the diary of  
**Greta Balog and Olga Balog**  
(written by Miki Granski)*

*September 2007*

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## 1 Introduction

This report summarizes the events during 1944-5 when my mother's family (Balog), was taken from Subotica, Yugoslavia to a forced-labor camp in the village of Viehofen near the city of St. Polten, Austria. It is mainly based on the stories and the diary of my mother, Greta Balog, and my aunt, Olga Balog, as told to me over the years. In essence, this report also follows the life story of my grandfather, Dr. Ernst Balog.

Although I heard stories about the Viehofen camp over the years, in reality I knew very little about it; It was only in 2007 that I heard the name Viehofen (before that we just referred to it as the "Austrian camp" or "St. Polten", which is the name of the nearest city in Austria). In 2005, I came across an article in the Wiener Zeitung that mentioned my grandfather name (Reference 2). The article is about Roszi Wolf who was an inmate at the camp and lost her father who apparently died in one of the bombings toward the end of the war (See Section 8.1). Mrs. Wolf was looking for some evidence about her father's death, and the search ended when his death certificate, written by my grandfather, who was the camp's doctor, was found.

I showed the article to my family, who were very interested, but then dropped the subject again. In 2007, my wife and I decided to spend our summer vacation in Austria. Recalling the story about the camp, I was intrigued by the possibility of visiting it. [In 2005, I visited the Croatian island of Rab, where my father was kept in an Italian camp during the war]. When I started to search for information about the Viehofen camp, I was surprised to see that I cannot find any on the internet, nor even in the Yad Vashem website (Reference 3).

I started to interview my mother and my aunt (who were 16 and 12 years old at the camp) about it. They gave me a lot of stories and very interesting information, but in reality it was not much in terms of finding the place. Then, I was reminded about the previous article (Reference 2), and after some lengthy search I was able to make contact with Mr. Manfred Wieninger who wrote it. It turns out that Mr. Wieninger is a historian (and author of criminal novels in German) who lives in St. Polten. He wrote a whole chapter about the Viehofen camp (about 30 pages) within Dr. Lappin's recent book about the forced labor of Hungarian Jews in Austria during WWII (Reference 1).

Mr. Wieninger was very helpful and provided me with lots of additional material, including a document (see Figure 31) in the handwriting of my grandfather! I realized that Mr. Wieninger did an excellent research, but also that I have collected a lot of additional information he didn't have. At that time (May 2007), I decided to write the first version of this report, documenting the events of the Balog family through WWII.

When Mr. Wieninger invited us to visit St. Poelten and see the location of the camp, we gladly accepted. When we came in July 2007, he surprised us by organizing a reception with the mayor at the town-hall, where we also learned that the city plans to erect a memorial for the camp near its location. Our visit enabled us to access significant new information, pictures, and some questions. The result appears in this updated report.

Although we made a great effort to be very accurate in quoting names, dates and locations, this is by no means a full historical account. Instead, this is a rather personal story of this very dramatic and harsh period, told from the viewpoint of my grandfather, Dr. Ernst Balog, and his two daughters. In some cases, it mentions episodes and even thoughts that may be considered unimportant on a historical scale, but it is exactly these small stories that may give some insight to the true horrific nature of that period. It is also my belief that the most terrible events were not told yet.

### 1.1 Dr. Ernst Balog

My grandfather was born on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1899 as Ernst Braunberger. He was the second child of Salomon and Malvina Braunberger and had an elder sister, Elisabeth. As a boy he excelled in Athletics, Tennis and Fencing. As soon as he finished his high-school, shortly after World War I, he decided to become a doctor and applied to the University of Budapest to study Medicine. His grades were good enough to be admitted, however the university had a strict quota for Jewish students and that quota was already taken. My grandfather's application was declined.

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*Figure 1: Dr. Ernst Balog (early 1940's)*



Since he was determined to study Medicine, and the financial resources of the family didn't allow him to study elsewhere, he had a brilliant idea: The whole family changed their name to the more common Hungarian name "Balog". Hoping that he will no longer be easily recognized as a Jew, he reapplied again the following year; He was almost successful. However, when he went to the university office to bring some papers, one of the clerks recognized him as the former Jew "Ernst Braunberger". His application was declined again.

Being stubborn to fulfill his dream, my grandfather went to Vienna where he was finally admitted to the University. His sister Elisabeth took an extra job and sent him money which sustained him through the 4 years of his medical studies (circa 1919-1923). After completing his formal studies, he did his apprenticeship in Vienna, Milan (Italy), and mainly in a hospital in Graz, Austria, where he stayed for about a year (circa 1924-5). At that time, he was already married to my grandmother, Julia (Voda) Balog. By 1926-7 they returned to Subotica, where Dr. Balog joined the local hospital as a surgeon. In 1928 my mother Greta Balog was born, followed by my aunt, Olga Balog, in 1932.

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*Figure 2: The Balog Family in Sep 1936, Subotica, Jugoslavia. (Front from left: Greta, Olga, Julia)*



## 2 On the way to Viehofen

### 2.1 Spring 1944 in Subotica

Subotica was part of Austro-Hungaria and was transferred to Yugoslavia after World War I. When World War II started, it became under the Hungarian regime. Until 1943, the Jews of Subotica continued more or less with their lives, albeit with some harassment, but their situation deteriorated toward 1944. At the end of 1943, the Partisan's approached Dr. Balog and proposed that he comes with them to the mountains to serve as a doctor and surgeon for

Figure 3: Dr. Balog's identity card in 1943



their forces. After he explained that he has a family, they had agreed that he also takes my grandmother and my mother (who was 16) with him to serve as nurses. However, he would have to leave behind his youngest 12 years old daughter, his parents and other members of the family. He had no choice, but to decline the offer, which would eventually cost him another year of his freedom later (see Section 7).

In March/April 1944 the SS moved to the next stage in dealing with the Jews. They came to the house of my grandfather and confiscated all the valuable jewelry and other assets they could take. My family was expelled from their home to a small Jewish ghetto. Dr. Balog himself was taken away to participate in forced labor outside of Subotica. The rest of the family didn't have any contact with my grandfather and didn't know what had happened to him.

On June 16, 1944, all the Jewish population of Subotica was taken by trains to the camps. The conditions on the trains were horrible: the wagons were freight-carriages and not fit for human passengers; there were no seats, water or any other facility. The trip lasted 2-3 days; immediately at the beginning of the trip, one prisoner died in the car in which my mother, my aunt, my grandmother and her mother were held. They had to continue with the corpse for the whole duration of the trip.

There were about 50-70 prisoners in each wagon, my mother recalls that she and her family had to sit in the middle of the wagon, which was the worse location as they could not even lean on the walls (the impression of this disastrous trip was so strong on my mother, that she had prepared a drawing of the seating plan within the wagon in her diary). Each wagon received one jar of water and one jar to serve as lavatories for the whole trip (in the middle of the trip one of the passengers made a mistake between the jars...). My mother says that at that time people already heard about the gas chambers and mass murder at the camps. She recalls talking about it with one of her friends on the train.

The destination of the train was Auschwitz. However, it was very old and slow. There were many sections where the old locomotive could not drag all the wagons. In those cases it was

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*Figure 4: Greta and Olga Balog (early 1940's)*



necessary to split the train and the locomotive would go back and forth carrying each group of wagons separately. In one such case, they had to pass a bridge. After the first part of the train passed the bridge, it was bombed and ruined by the Allied forces; One car of the train was hit by the bombings and people died. The first part of the train continued forward to Auschwitz, while the second part with my mother's group had to return all the way to Austria. This was the first, but not last, miracle that happened to my mother.

After about 3 days they arrived at Strasshof, and they realized that many of their friends and some family members were taken in the first section of the train to Auschwitz. Among them, were Salomon and Malvina Balog, parents of Dr. Ernst Balog. No one had ever seen them alive again.

## **2.2 Meeting in Strasshof**

Strasshof, near Vienna, was a large rail-junction that also served as intermediate camp for the Jews being transported elsewhere. While it was not a permanent labor force camp by itself, it had poor conditions. All the incoming inmates were shaved from their hair (my mother was spared, because her name was Greta and she had long blonde plaits. The guards said they would not take the hair off "Gretchen", which made my aunt – who was not that fortunate – to be very jealous). Trains with forced labor workers and other transports were constantly passing through Strasshof.

My mother says that anyone who had survived the holocaust must have been lucky to have several miracles in order to stay alive until the end of the war. For my family, the second miracle occurred in Strasshof. One day, my aunt who was 12 years old, was stung by a bee. Seeing that she was crying, my mother who was 16 at the time took her to wash her wound. The water taps and main water supplies were located in the place where the train locomotives would stand. So going toward the water taps they had to walk along a train which stood there on transit.

Suddenly, my mother and my aunt heard a voice calling their names. Through one of the train car windows they could see a dirty and very tan man calling them. Only when they approached the window, they could recognize it was their father, Dr. Ernst Balog. With him, there were few other Jewish doctors from Subotica, on their way to some other location. When this group learned from my mother that many of their family members are now in Strasshof, they somehow succeeded to bribe one of the guards to let them out of the train.

Thus, my grandfather could reunite with his remaining family after being separated from them for several months. This reunion was the key to the further survival of my family.

## **2.3 Arrival to Viehofen/St. Polten**

About 3 weeks after they arrived to Strasshof, my family was put again in a transport, a group of about 150-180 Jews. On the evening of July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944 they arrived at the Viehofen railway station. They had to pass the night on the railroad near the train. My aunt and my mother recall this very vividly because it was my aunt's 12 years birthday. Instead of celebrating her "Bat-Mitzva" in the traditional way, they celebrated it around a few potatoes and a small can of tomato puree that Dr. Balog had found. The following morning they were taken to the Viehofen camp where they would stay until April 1945.



Figure 5: The small Viehofen train station (July 2007)

## 2.4 My family members in Viehofen

Arriving to the Viehofen camp were the following members of my family:

| Name           | Relationship                             | Born                          | Comments  |
|----------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Dr Ernst Balog | [My Grandfather]                         | March 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 1899 |   |
| Julia Balog    | Wife of Ernst<br>[My Grandmother]        | January 12, 1905              |   |
| Greta Balog    | Daughter of Ernst &<br>Julia [My Mother] | May 26 <sup>th</sup> , 1928   | Nick-name: 'Greti' ( <b>Note 1</b> )<br>Today: Miriam Granski |
| Olga Balog     | Daughter of Ernst &<br>Julia [My Aunt]   | July 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1932   | Today: Olga Dothan  |
| Elvira Voida   | Mother of Julia Balog                    |                               |   |
| Elisabeth Kohn | Sister of Dr. Ernst Balog                |                               | Nick-name: 'Boszi'  |
| Adolf Kohn     | Husband of Elisabeth                     |                               |   |

**Note 1:** The full name of my mother was “Margareta Veronica Theresia Balog” (Veronica and Theresia were two unmarried aunts of my grandmother; It was customary to keep or add the names of previous generation family members). However, her ‘short’ formal name was Margareta Balog. After the war, the Yugoslavian authorities did not approve “Margareta” as a proper name, so when she applied to the University of Zagreb, she was registered as “Margita Balog” (See Figure 33). However, everyone just called her “Greta” or “Greti”.

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*Figure 6: Front left – Adolf & Elisabeth Kohn (Bled, 1960); Right – Elvira Volda (circa 1950)*



### 3 The Viehofen Camp and vicinity

The small village of Viehofen is located near the Austrian city of St. Polten. In the days of WWII it was already considered part of the municipality of St. Polten, as it is today. The whole area, including the forest around the village, where the camps were located, belonged for centuries to the rich Kuefstein family who also had a castle in the area. In addition to traditional agriculture, Viehofen also became the location of several industries. Today, one of the plants nearby supplies a large part of the rubber used for the production of tires in the European automotive industry. Similar chemical plants were functioning during the war and required many prisoners for forced labor.

One of the most important sources of information about the area is an aerial photo of the whole area taken by an American bomber in April 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945 and found in Reference 1 (a lower resolution version is given in Figure 9; The high resolution picture is available with the author). In that photo, the Viehofen village, the Traisen River and the industrial plants can all be seen very clearly. This photo proved invaluable in trying to figure out the location of various camps today.

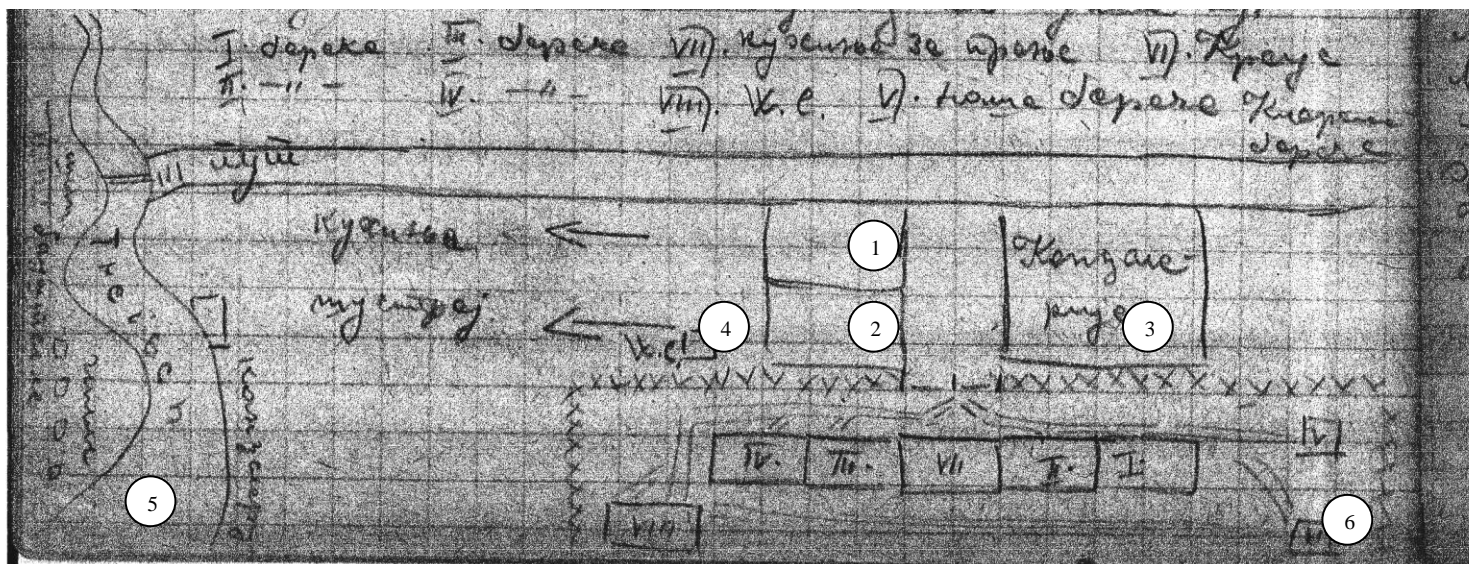
#### 3.1 The 'Jewish' Camp

When the group of Jews arrived at the camp they found it in a very bad condition. They were told that there was a group of Ukrainian prisoners before them, but the Ukrainians were not around anymore. The camp was located near the Traisen River (see Figure 7); at a short walking distance from the river where the main part of the forced labor took place.

The camp had a section surrounded by fences, where the prisoner barracks were located (although the fences were not such that could not be passed). Inside the fences were the following:

- Prisoner Barracks, Figure 7: I, II, III, IV and VII
- Small hut with 2 single beds for the 4 members of the Balog family, Figure 7: V

Figure 7: Drawing of the camp, made by Greta Balog in March 1945 (see Legend in Section 3.1)



- Small hut for Mrs. Kraus and her sons (see Section 8.1), Figure 7: VI or (6)
- W.C, Figure 7: VIII

Outside the fences were the following:

- Kitchen, Figure 7: (1)
- Shoemaker workshop (see Section 4.4), Figure 7: (2)
- Lagerfuhrer (the Camp's commander) hut, Figure 7: (3)
- WC, Figure 7: (4)
- The Traisen river, Figure 7: (5)

The official goal of the camp, and the forced labor which the prisoners were instructed to perform, was to build a dam and divert the river, see Figure 9. It had no military purpose, and only served to regulate the water flow in the river, which was necessary for the local industry due to heavy inundations and floods in the early forties. Their 'employer' was the Traisen-Wasserverband company. This was deemed important enough to keep the camp and even to (barely) sustain all the prisoners so that they can accomplish this task. This fact contributed to the survivals of many, since despite the terrible conditions, the captors had a basic interest in keeping the prisoners alive and capable to perform the forced labor.

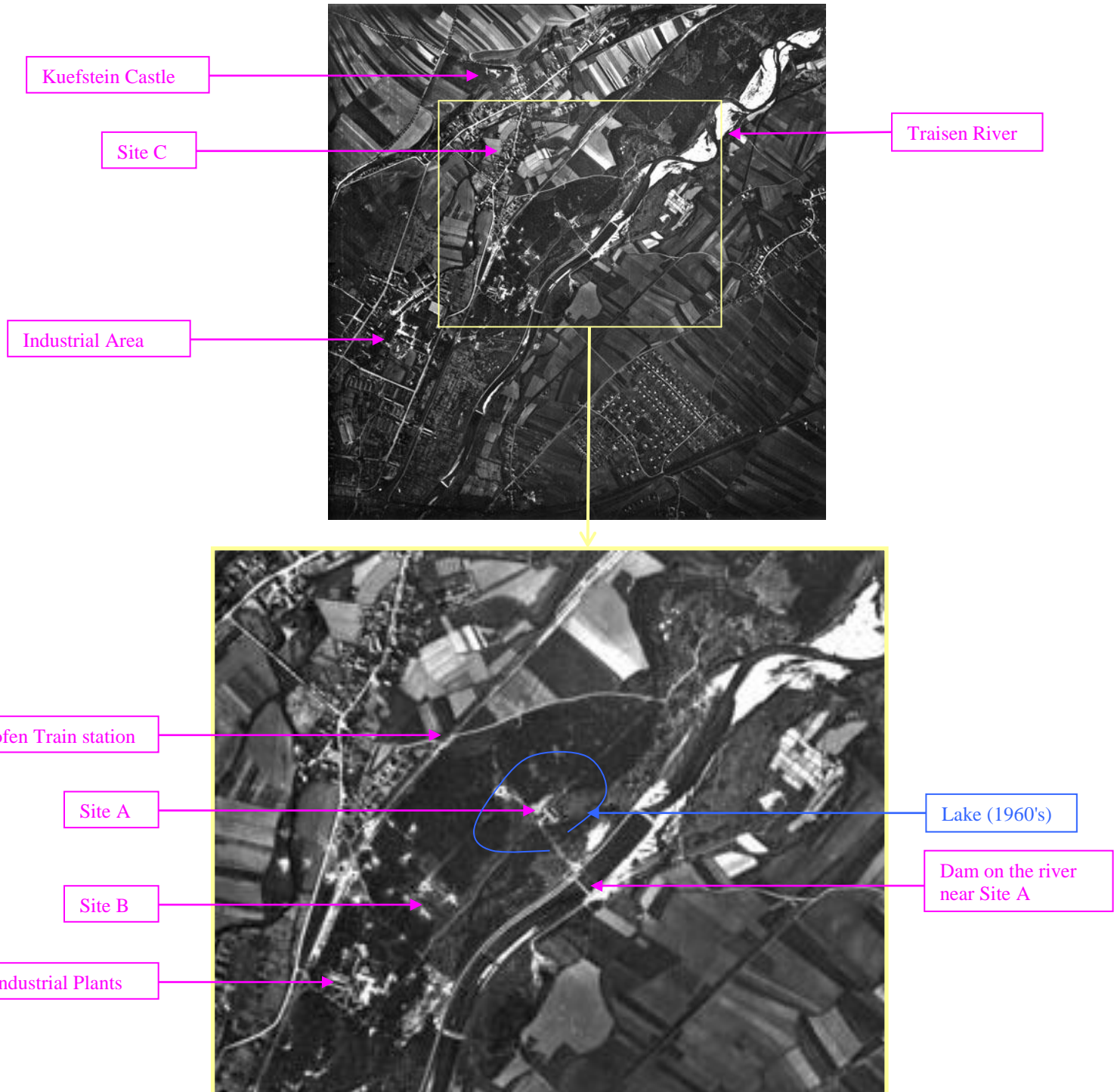
The camp fences were not built to stop anyone from passing or trying to escape. Indeed, people often went outside to the forest to look for food. The main point was that they didn't have anywhere around to go. If someone tried to escape, and was then spotted outside without the proper papers, they were shot. During the 9 months from July 1944 to April 1945, there were cases of people who escaped and never returned. Some were caught and shot, but it is unclear if anyone of them actually survived.

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*Figure 8: The Viehofen area as it looks today, with the village, the lake (which was created in 1960's), the Traisen river and the industrial park.*



Figure 9: An aerial photograph of the area taken by an American bomber from the 15th squadron on April 1st or 2nd, 1945 (top); and an enlarged area which includes the Viehofen village, the 3 camps and the Traisen river (bottom). The dams on the river can be seen, as well as white scars in the wood, as result of bombings. [A higher quality version of this photo is available and takes 15MB, See Reference 1]



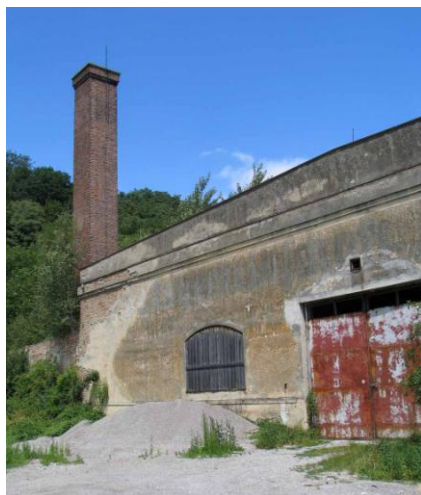


Figure 10: The old warehouse in Site C

### 3.2 Other Camps in the Vicinity

There were at least two other forced-labor camps in the Viehofen forest, in the vicinity of the 'Jewish' camp. These camps were identified in Site B and Site C of Figure 9. Site C is simply an old warehouse which was used as a camp for forced-labor prisoners during the war. It still exists today (July 2007), semi deserted; the city wanted to abolish the place long time ago, but after the war, few poor people moved to live in the back of the warehouse and an old lady still lives there today.

The camp at Site B (Figure 9) was in the vicinity of the industrial plants, where most of the prisoners were forced to work, and occupies a much larger area. It consisted of several wooden barracks built with concrete foundations. After the war, the economic situation was very bad, and the locals took just anything they could find, including the wooden beams from the barracks. When we visited the place in July 2007, we could still find the concrete foundations of the barracks (Figure 12). More astonishingly, the remainder of the large wooden main gate of the camp can still be found, wrapped in old barbed wires from the 1940's (Figure 13).



Figure 11: Searching for the camp in Site B (July 2007)

Apparently, there were prisoners from several different nationalities in the camp at Site B. Manfred Wieninger referred to it as the "Ukrainian Camp" since he collected eyewitness evidences and found some documents identifying Ukrainians prisoners (Reference 1). Perhaps some of them were the Ukrainians that were reported by my family to be living in the "Jewish camp" before the arrival of the Jewish group.

My family reported on other nationalities in camps nearby, mainly from Yugoslavia and Italy (!). These camps were most likely part of Site B. The conditions in these camps were much better than those in the Jewish camp – the prisoners received packages from their homes and from the Red Cross, something the Jewish prisoners could only dream of. They even had a radio...

The prisoners from the Yugoslavian camp were occasionally taken to work in the river, on the same system of dams where the Jewish prisoners were forced to work. Sometimes, when these Yugoslavian prisoners were walked to their labor, and their path passed near the Jewish

Figure 12: The concrete foundations of the barracks in Site B can still be seen in the woods (July 2007)

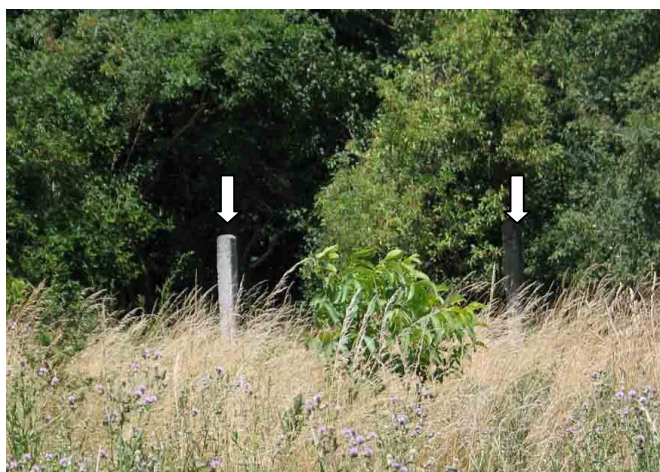




Figure 13: The remains of the main wooden gate of the camp in Site B can still be found, wrapped in barbed wires from the 1940's (Manfred Wieninger and Miki Granski, July 2007)

camp, they threw folded paper notes to the Jewish prisoners with the latest news from the front. The news about the advance of the Allied Forces was the only light of hope for the Jewish prisoners.

The Italian prisoners in particular, had more food and had less stringent restrictions on their movement. They could reach the other camps and even trade some food for services. In one of the bombings that took place in the area in 1945, the camp in Site B was badly hit and people died (White scars from the bombings can be easily seen in the wood, in the vicinity of Site B, Figure 9). Several wounded prisoners were urgently brought to the Jewish camp to be treated by Dr. Balog, which is how my family learned that they were Italian.

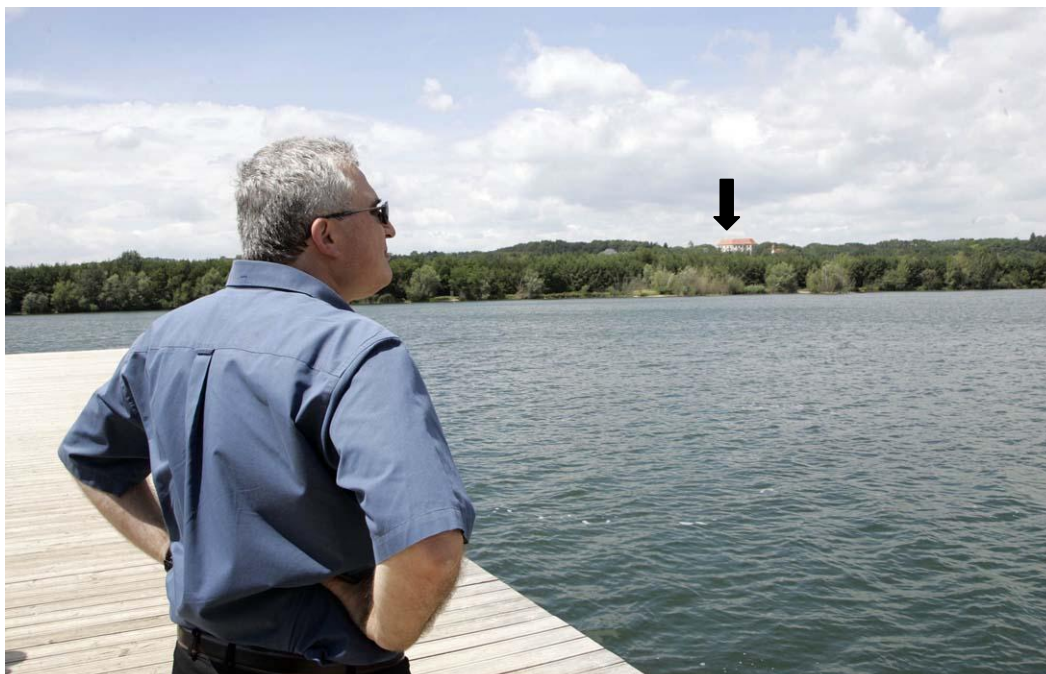
### 3.3 Location of the Viehofen Force-Labor Camp

Figure 14: Near the Viehofen Lake (July 2007)



The whole area was owned for centuries by the Kuefstein family (the owner of the Viehofen forest in 1945 was Johann Ferdinand von Kuefstein, born 1885 in Rome, died 1958 in Viehofen). After the war, the Kuefstein family decided to exploit and dig the land in the forest, which resulted in a small lake with its center roughly coinciding with the location of Site A (Figure 9) near the Traisen River. The Kuefstein family invested their fortune in South America, and eventually lost all of it, including their land and the castle. The lake is now owned by the city of St. Polten and is open for the public for recreation (see Figure 8).

While the other camps at Site B and C can be easily verified, the exact location of the Jewish camp is somewhat unclear. Manfred Wieninger has collected supportive evidence to indicate that this location is actually Site A in Figure 9.



*Figure 16: View from the Viehofen Lake toward North-West, the Kuefstein Castle can be seen in the background (July 2007)*



*Figure 15: View from the Viehofen Lake toward South-West, the modern industrial park can be seen in the background (July 2007)*

A close look at Site A in Figure 9, can show a large building, which may correspond to a long group of barracks (as indicated in the drawing of Figure 7), and a very large zoom can show two other constructs, which may roughly correspond to the Kitchen and the Lagerfuhrer's hut of Figure 7. However, this resemblance cannot be considered as strong evidence (Figure 19).

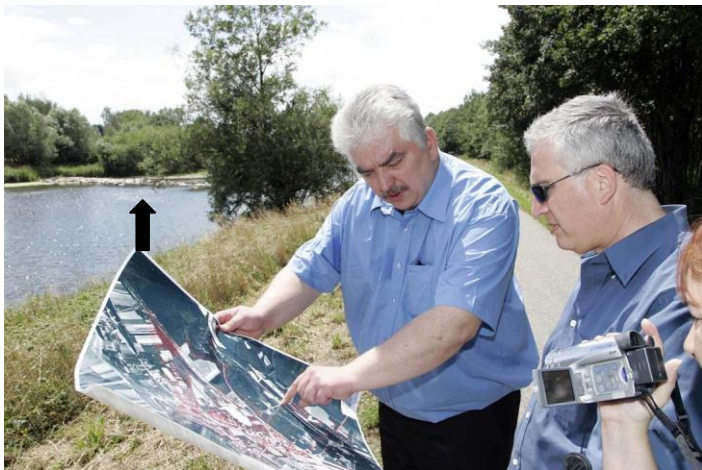


Figure 17: Near the Traisen river, behind the Viehofen Lake. The Dam pointed to in Figure 9 can be seen on the left (July 2007)

Much stronger evidence to the theory that Site A was the location of the Jewish camp was brought by Manfred Wieninger with a testimony of a local, which was a young boy during the war.

This person recalls how he went with his father to the river near the Dam which is pointed to in Figure 9. He recalled the place exactly, because they hid there during one of the bombings in the area. From that place, there was a road inland which led directly to the Jewish camp. Such road can be seen in Figure 9 leading from the pointed Dam to Site A.

Near the Dam, as the same local above reported, a small draining canal was built by the prisoners to help in regulating the water level. That small canal can still be seen under the bridge near the Dam.

If the above theory is correct, then the Jewish camp was located under what became today the Viehofen Lake. The Dam described above, is then most likely the location of the forced labor performed by the Jewish prisoners. This is also the location where the city of St. Polten plans to erect a memorial for the labor camps.

On the other hand, there is also a witness by my aunt that points to another location in the vicinity:

In the early 1990's my aunt visited Viehofen with her (late) husband. She could still identify the Bakerei at the very same spot where it was during the war (see Section 5.1). Starting from the Viehofen train station, she started to search for the camp. Having walked many times to Baron Apfel's huts in the forest during the war (see Section 5.3), and being forced to memorize these pathways, she suddenly found herself in the forest walking from one hut to the other. She is not sure how she actually did it, but even after 45 years, she could find all 3 huts in the forest, still standing in the same place. From the huts it was only a short walk to the site of the camp itself.

About 15-20 minutes after she started her walk from the Viehofen train station, she is confident that she actually found the exact location of the camp, not under the lake, but rather under some large electricity poles, not far from the river!

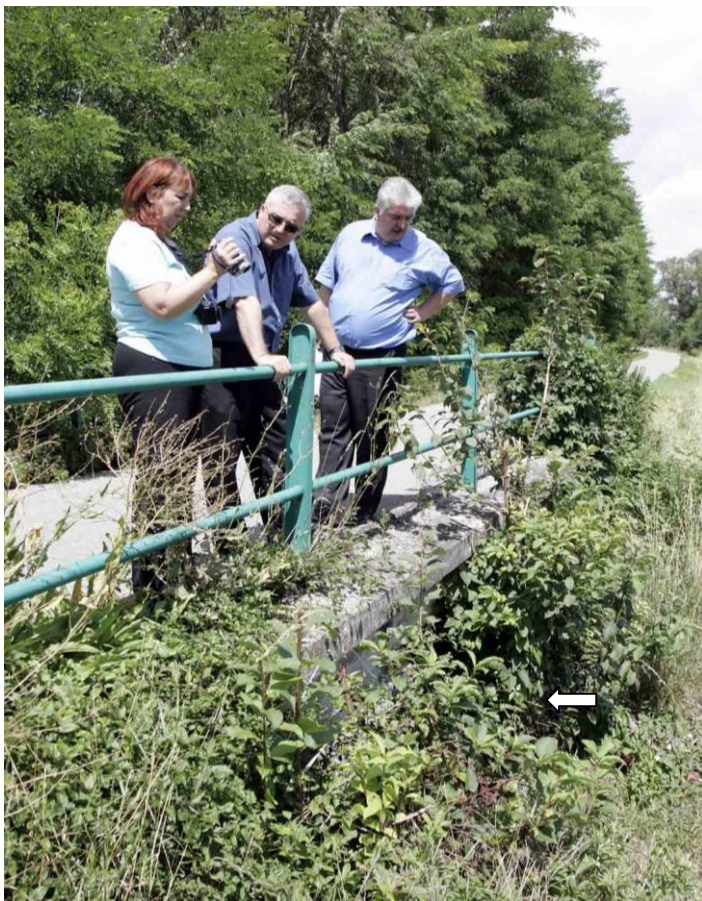
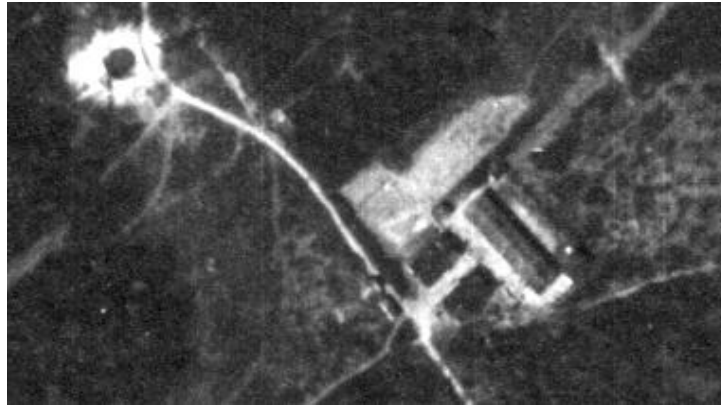


Figure 18: The walkway along the Traisen River, just in front the Dam pointed to in Figure 9. The small bridge passes above the draining canal built by the prisoners.

Since this testimony contradicts the previous theory of identifying the location of the Jewish camp as Site A (mainly because the lake under which Site A is now located was formed in the 1960's, 30 years before my aunt's visit), we are left with some doubts.

Mr. Wieninger suggested going for a repeat "expedition" to the Viehofen forest in November 2007, trying to follow the description of my aunt. He suggested making this walk together with Mr. Rudolf Reisinger, who went as a boy two times with his mother to the Jewish camp (where his mother gave some potatoes to a Jewish prisoner). They will take the exact route Mr. Reisinger and his mother took in 1944, starting at the house of his parents... to be continued.



*Figure 19: A large zoom on Site A (Figure 9).  
Can this be the camp drawn in Figure 7?*

## **4 Life in the Camp**

### **4.1 General Conditions**

The most difficult aspect of the life in the camp was lack of proper food and sanitary conditions. The amount and variety of food was not enough to sustain the people. Indeed, many died of hunger and/or various diseases worsened by the bad conditions. Occasionally, prisoners also died from shootings by the SS, during failed attempts to escape, and even bombings by the Allied Forces.

The Lagerfuhrer (Commander of the camp) was an old Austrian who was brought back from his pension to perform this task. He had a small staff of guards that watched on the camp. It was clear that they were doing the minimum required of them, and were not really motivated with their military orders. Although they didn't help the prisoners too much, and the general conditions were disastrous, the guards' general behavior could be described as none too cruel. Before Christmas, the Lagerfuhrer even brought them some apples, and he even had an affair with one of the inmates. This was in sharp contrast with the SS...

### **4.2 Dr. Balog's Role in the Camp**

Being the only doctor in the camp, my grandfather was 'appointed' as the unofficial leader of the prisoners. As such, the Lagerfuhrer (and others) turned to him when it was necessary to arrange some work or manage the daily life of the camp. Dr. Balog's responsibilities included the Kitchen, the general sanitary conditions of the camp, arranging the food supplies (Section 5.1), taking care of sick people and medical emergencies (Section 5.2), etc. His role also included allocation of people to the barracks, to forced labor, and other tasks. This was how the 4 members of the Balog family were given a small separate hut, but with only 2 single beds (each bed shared by 2). The other small hut was given to the pregnant Mrs. Kraus and her sons (see Figure 7 (6) and Section 8.1).

### **4.3 SS Visits**

Unlike the local guards, the SS were very cruel and they could come suddenly with no warning; when they did, they behaved terribly. At one time, they arrived after one of the prisoners died of Typhus and accused Dr. Balog for not keeping the sanitary conditions in order, and for being responsible for this loss of a working prisoner. One of the SS took my grandfather and whipped him shouting "Schweine Jude", while all the camp (and my family) watched. Luckily for Dr. Balog, it ended with only being whipped. The main atrocity was executed by the SS at the end of the war in the death march to Mauthausen (Section 6.3).

### **4.4 Forced labor in and around the Camp**

As stated above, the main purpose of the camp was to provide the forced labor required to divert the river. This required going down to the river, carrying large and heavy stones and metal bars, required in the construction of a dam and new reroute for the river (see the draining canal in Figure 18). All this work was conducted mainly by hand and required great physical efforts.

The terrain was also very difficult to pass; the prisoners were given wooden shoes that were often broken and needed fixing. This is why the shoemaker workshop in the camp (Figure 7: (2)) became so important. Almost all the adults in the camp were taken to participate in this forced labor, every day for many hours. Only few were spared from this effort.

There were about 15-20 kids in the ages of 2—15 in the camp. Dr. Balog had an arrangement with the Lagerfuhrer that the kids and the sick will be spared from the work in the river. However, the kids were given work within the camp. My aunt recalls that she was given the task of sawing very large logs in pairs, with another boy of her age, using a huge saw designed for the use of two adults.

#### **4.5 The Camp “School”**

With the kids employed in the camp, the Lagerfuhrer was still concerned that the SS may come and see young kids wander about without work. Dr. Balog came with a solution to open a "school" and kindergarten which would keep all the kids in one of the barracks whenever they did not have any specific task outside.

The role of the manager, teacher and kindergarten fell on my mother. Being 16 years old herself, she was only slightly older than some of the other kids, but it was still critical to maintain that framework for the safety of the kids. My mother tells me that everyday she had to invent games, lessons and other educational activities to keep all the kids of various ages. For example, my aunt who "graduated" from this school tells me that until this day she can name by heart all the rivers in Siberia by their order from west to east... The school lasted until the final days of the camp.

## 5 Additional Stories from the Viehofen Camp

### 5.1 The Bakerei of Viehofen

The Bakerei (Bakery) at the Viehofen village was run by a lady and supplied all the bread to the camp. Every day, 2 people had to go with a cart from the camp to the bakerei and get the whole amount of bread for the prisoners. This task of carrying the bread-cart often fell on my mother and my aunt who had to drag the cart even in bad weather as this was the main source of food for the inmates. My aunt recalls that the daily supply was exactly 14 breads, carefully counted for the whole 150-180 prisoners in the camp.

My mother and my aunt told me that one of their biggest difficulties was the realization that life outside the camp continued as normal, while they were being reduced to the role of human slaves: The bakerei was located near the village school (Figure 20). Often, when they came to take their bread, they could hear the school-kids singing. This was always a difficult moment as it emphasized the contrast between their situation to the normal world to which they once belonged. One day, my aunt heard the kids sing the famous “Lorelei”. She knew the song from her home, but being 12 years old, she could not resist asking the Frau in the bakerei: “Who wrote the words of this song?” (Knowing perfectly well that it was written by the ex-Jew Heinrich Heine), “Oh, it is just a popular folk song” was the answer...

When I returned from my July 2007 visit to Viehofen and showed a picture of the school (Figure 20) to my aunt, she immediately commented that this could not be the same school, as the one she saw during the war had only a single floor. However, the village has only a single school, and it is in the same building as it was in the 1940's. Indeed, a closer look at Figure 20 shows that the second floor was added to the original single-floor building, after the end of the war.

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*Figure 20: The Viehofen School (July 2007) The second floor, added after the war, having a clearly different design.*





*Figure 21: The building of Internal Department B, St. Polten Hospital (July 2007). This building housed the Department of Infectious Diseases during WWII.*

The lady owner of the Bakerei had a small son (about 10 years old in 1944) who always wore the Hitler Jugend uniform. When the birthday of my grandmother approached (January 12, 1945), my grandfather has asked the lady to prepare something extra for my grandmother. When the day arrived, it was again the turn of my mother and aunt to go drag the bread cart. When they took the daily quota of bread, the lady had prepared one extra sweet role to give to my grandmother. She wrapped it in a paper, gave it quickly to my mother and whispered to her to hide it, so that her son will not see it. The regime was such that she could not allow even her own son to see that she gave tiny extra bread to the Jews.

According to Manfred Wieninger the name of the bakerei, and probably the family who owned it, was "Goiser". During the 1990's my aunt visited Viehofen again. She was able to find the bakerei still at the very same spot. She asked some neighbors about the lady who ran the bakerei at the time of the war. They told her that the lady had passed away long time ago, but that the bakerei is now being run by her son... When I visited Viehofen on July 2007, there was no bakerei near the village school. Instead there was a Chinese restaurant, where the bakerei probably stood before.

## **5.2 The St. Polten Hospital**

At least once a month, Dr. Balog went to the St. Polten hospital to bring medicines for the camp. Whenever someone died, he also had to bring them to the hospital for burial. In addition, my grandfather managed to hospitalize one child in the hospital, saving his live as a result (see the tragic story of Georg Basch, Section 8.1).

My grandfather was very good in making relationship and he used his skills to get medicines and equipment to help the prisoners (e.g., Georg Veto, Section 8.1). On one of his trips to the hospital, he visited one of the surgeons in the hospital. Dr. Balog noticed that this surgeon had on the wall a picture of the professor teaching surgery in the University in Vienna, a picture he himself had in his office in Subotica. Apparently, both of them learnt and admired the

same professor. This doctor later helped my family when they escaped from the camp at the end of the war.

### 5.3 Baron Apfel

Baron Apfel owned a large estate which included the whole forest on which the camp was located. [As described in Section 3.3, it is now a well known fact that the land in the Viehofen vicinity was owned by the Kuefstein family. It is not clear who the person who presented himself to the prisoners as "Apfel" or "Baron Apfel" actually was. Manfred Wieninger thought that this may have been a nickname since "Apfel" is "Apple" in German. However, my aunt, who remembers Baron Apfel very well, could not believe any dignitary Austrian would present himself with a nickname to the Jewish prisoners]. My mother and aunt still remember him walking around in his green Tirol suite and feathered hat. They are not sure if he actually presented himself as a "Baron", but he behaved as if he owned the land in the area and had a noble status. In addition to being a dignitary, the Baron also had an important role in the Nazi regime, and as such he was entitled to get services from the prisoners.

The forest, in which the camp was located, was actually the Baron's hunting ground. For this purpose he kept deer's in the forest that could walk freely around. However, during the winter, the deer's had to be fed. The Baron has built a system of 3-4 raised wooden storage 'huts' where grass was kept to feed the deer's in the winter (each hut was like a small kid-playground house raised from the ground with a ladder, so the deer's could not reach the food by themselves). With many of his staff away due to the war, the Baron asked for someone from the camp to go every so often to all the wooden huts and take out a precise amount of food for the deer's.

This task was given to my 12-year old aunt who received the instructions directly from the Baron himself. Although she had to go around in the snow with only her sandals (it was spring when she left Subotica), these trips were golden opportunity for my aunt to wander around the forest unguarded. After feeding the deer's, she used the time to look around for food, sometimes stealing it wherever she could go, to the great horror of my grandfather.

The Baron had 3 sons who all served on the east front. During 1945, news of their death came one after the other. After his 3<sup>rd</sup> and last son was killed, the Baron collapsed. He came to my grandfather and literally cried saying that he now understood that his support of the regime was mistaken. Apparently, this didn't help the Baron. My aunt heard that after the war he was hanged as a war criminal for his participation in the Nazi regime. [At the time of this writing, we could not find additional confirmation for this fact or for the name of Baron Apfel].

### 5.4 Young Soldier in the Forest

Toward the end of the camp, in March 1945, my mother and aunt went one day to the forest to look for food. They found a tree with some fruits and started to collect them. Suddenly, someone shouted at them; it was a young soldier, only a teenager with a uniform and a rifle. He scolded them for collecting these fruits, since they were poisonous. He was very suspicious and demanded to know why they are walking around and what they are looking for. They explained that they were hungry and looking for food.

Initially, he didn't believe them, but after sometime the young soldier told them to return to that place the day after. When Dr. Balog heard about the incident, he instructed his daughters not to return to the place. However, being teenagers themselves (and also extremely hungry) they did return to the place, where they indeed found a small package with some food.

## **6 Final Days of the Camp**

### **6.1 Bombings**

As 1944 came close to its end and the war entered its 5<sup>th</sup> year, bombings in the area became more and more frequent. The prisoners did not have any shelter, except the wooden huts and barracks that could not really withstand the bombs. The only proper shelter was built under the Lagerfuhrer hut, where the Austrian guards hid during the bombings (this may be in contradiction with Reference 2 that may have mentioned shelters in the camp).

My aunt recalls that Dr. Balog was absolutely terrified during the bombings. However, this was her time to run out from the hut. Under the cover of the bombings, she used to walk near the fence, hide in the creeks within it, cross it to the Lagerfuhrer hut and steal a carrot or some other vegetables that the guards have grown in front of the hut. My grandfather was completely in horror by her adventures, but that didn't stop her from repeating it again.

Toward the end of March 1945, it became clear that the war is nearing its end. News about the Allied Forces progress spread, bombings became often and the Russian cannons could be heard from the distance. Dr Balog asked my mother to document everything she could about the camp including, list of prisoners, drawing of the camp (given above in Figure 7) and other details that she recorded in her diary.

### **6.2 Escape of the Guards**

One evening the Austrian Lagerfuhrer told my grandfather that he is leaving the camp with the other guards, he will not return, and he is leaving the gates unlocked. My mother doesn't recall the exact date, but it must have been about 7 days prior to the Russian army's entrance to St. Polten – probably around April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

All the inmates had to take a very risky decision – should they try to walk out or stay? Outside, there was still fighting going on and the lines of fire were completely chaotic. Leaving the camp could very well mean being caught in the line of fire, or even worse, being caught by the German army which could have meant immediate death. Staying in the camp was not safe either, since the SS may come to take the prisoners. [It is so significant that even when they were clearly losing the war, it was still deemed so important for the SS not to let the Jews go].

### **6.3 The Death March to Mauthausen**

When morning came, my family and few others had decided to leave the camp. Out of those who decided to leave the camp, many were shot when they tried to move away in the roads. The majority of the prisoners, however, decided to stay in the camp. Many of them were sick and weak of months of hunger. Sometime after my family left the camp, the SS came and marched everyone to Mauthausen. They shot all the old, sick and weak who could not march according to their desired pace. Very few Viehofen inmates have survived Mauthausen to the end of the war. It is from speaking with these survivors, after the war, that my mother had learned what happened to those who stayed in the camp.

Dr. Balog advised his sister and her husband (Elisabeth and Adolf Kohn) to escape separately, so they will not be a very large group together. Indeed, the Kohn couple escaped and managed to return to Subotica alive in May 1945. Alas, tragedy awaited them in Subotica: Their only son, Gyuri Kohn, participated in one of the Zionist Youth movements before the war. He wanted to immigrate to Israel (Palestine at the time), but

his parents did not approve. During the war, Gyuri who was in his twenties joined the Partisans. He even appeared in Subotica during the war, armed with a gun, and managed to collect some of the property of the Balog and Kohn families in their old house. Gyuri survived to the very end of the war, but on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945, just one day before the official end of the war, he was shot and killed.

#### 6.4 Hideout in the St. Polten Hospital

Meanwhile, the other 5 members of my family (the 4 Balog's: Ernst, Julia, Greta and Olga, and Elvira Voda, mother of Julia) walked very slowly toward the St. Polten hospital. The grandmother, Elvira, was sick and weak, so my mother recalls that it took them several hours to reach the hospital. The whole area was still controlled by the German/Austrian army, so they walked through the fields as much as possible to avoid being seen.

My grandfather appealed to the doctor he became to know (see Section 5.2) and asked him to hide them in the hospital. It was still extremely risky to hide Jews; being caught could be punished by death. After some hesitation, this doctor agreed, and my family was put in some storage room with rough wooden bins where the hospital staff threw all the clothes of people who died of infectious and dangerous diseases such as Typhus; the hospital did not have the means to burn or disinfect such clothes. There were large warning signs outside the room and they figured out that this may be the single room that even the SS will not be too keen to enter if they decided to search the hospital...

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*Figure 22: The building of Internal Department B, St. Polten Hospital, shown with its basement (July 2007). This building housed the Department of Infectious Diseases during WWII*





*Figure 23: The basement of Internal Department B building, St. Polten Hospital (July 2007).  
Could this be the place where the Balog family hid in April 1945?*

My mother and my aunt do not recall the name of that doctor, but they do recall that the hospital was run by nun nurses and my aunt remembers that the nun who worked with that doctor and who took care of them was called Sister Andrea (Schwester Andrea). They had to stay quiet in that storage room for about 7 days. My grandmother (Julia) was sick, and when she could not hold back her cough, they were terrified that someone may hear it and give them away.

Once a day, Schwester Andrea would come and bring them some bread and hot soup. After about a week they started to hear Russian outside, and finally Schwester Andrea came and told them that they can get out. Then something surreal has happened. This was the day after the fighting was made in and around St. Polten. Suddenly, there was a huge influx of wounded Russian soldiers, and other people that had to be urgently operated. Many had to be immediately amputated to save their lives. My grandfather was asked to immediately start operating as there was a shortage of experienced surgeons. So my grandfather did just that and my family helped him as much as they could. One day they were outlaws hiding in the storage room for their lives and the next day they became part of the hospital staff performing surgeries...

*Figure 24: A small plaque on the wall of Internal Department B building, St. Polten Hospital, still indicates its pre-war purpose (July 2007).*



The hospital of St. Polten still stand in the same place today and serves the population of the whole area. When we visited it in July 2007, it was in a midst of adding modern buildings and facilities. However, in its core there is still a group of older buildings which served as the old hospital during WWII and before. Among them is the building that now houses Internal Department B, but during the war it housed the Department for Infectious Diseases (see Figure 21 and Figure 22). In those days, the patients were put in complete isolation. Today, this department doesn't exist anymore, but a small plaque on the wall of the building still indicate its original purpose (Figure 24).



Figure 25: Schwester Andrea  
(Ursula Skafar)

Shortly before our July 2007 visit to Viehofen, Manfred Wieninger made an astonishing discovery: He found out that the nuns in the St. Polten hospital belonged to the order of "*Barmherzige Schwestern vom heiligen Vinzenz von Paul*" (Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Vinzenz of Paul). Communicating with the order in Graz, and consulting with their archive, he was able to identify Schwester Andrea as Ursula Skafar (or Skáfár). She was born in 1893 in Murabarat (Hungary) to farmer parents. In 1912 she joined the order in Graz and became a Roman Catholic nun. She worked her whole life as a nurse, serving in the hospital of St. Pölten from 1939 until 1946, and died in Vienna in 1976. Figure 25 shows her passport photo; she wears the black veil of her order, which is used by this religious community since 1964. In 1945 when she helped the Balog family in the St. Polten hospital, she was still with the big white wing cap on her head (which was the old dress of the order of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Vinzenz of Paul).

## 7 Return to Subotica

As soon as it was possible, my family started their journey back to Subotica. This trip was dramatic and dangerous by itself, since there was still some fighting around. In one of the times, they have mistakenly crossed the lines to an area where the German army was still in control. In another case, they were caught by the Russians and were accused to be escaping Nazi's. Luckily, Dr. Balog managed to convince one of the (Jewish) Russian officers that they were Jews escaping from the Nazi camps.

My family returned to Subotica on April 30, 1945. In the place where their house once stood, there was a big hole created by a large bomb, so they moved to the house of the late Salomon and Malvina Balog. The following day, my aunt rushed to school to meet her friends. To her surprise the school was closed and empty; she was told that this is a national holiday – this was the first time she heard about the May 1<sup>st</sup> event under a communist regime.

Out of all the stories I heard from my mother about this period, there is only one story that can be described as positive: On the next day, my mother went to school to meet her friends. She arrived at the middle of a lesson in French. Her classmates were sure that she had died and greeted her with excitement. The teacher had put the "Marseillaise" on the gramophone and everyone sang it in celebration of her survival.

Dr. Balog returned to his work at the Subotica's hospital. However, his troubles were not over yet. There was a great shortage of qualified doctors and surgeons in post-war Yugoslavia. It was not long before the communist authorities had discovered his past crime – in 1943 he declined the offer of the Partisan's to join them (see Section 2.1). In 1946, he was taken away again from his family and was sent to serve as a doctor in some remote rural location in Yugoslavia. It was only a year later in 1947 that he was finally allowed to return to his family in Subotica.

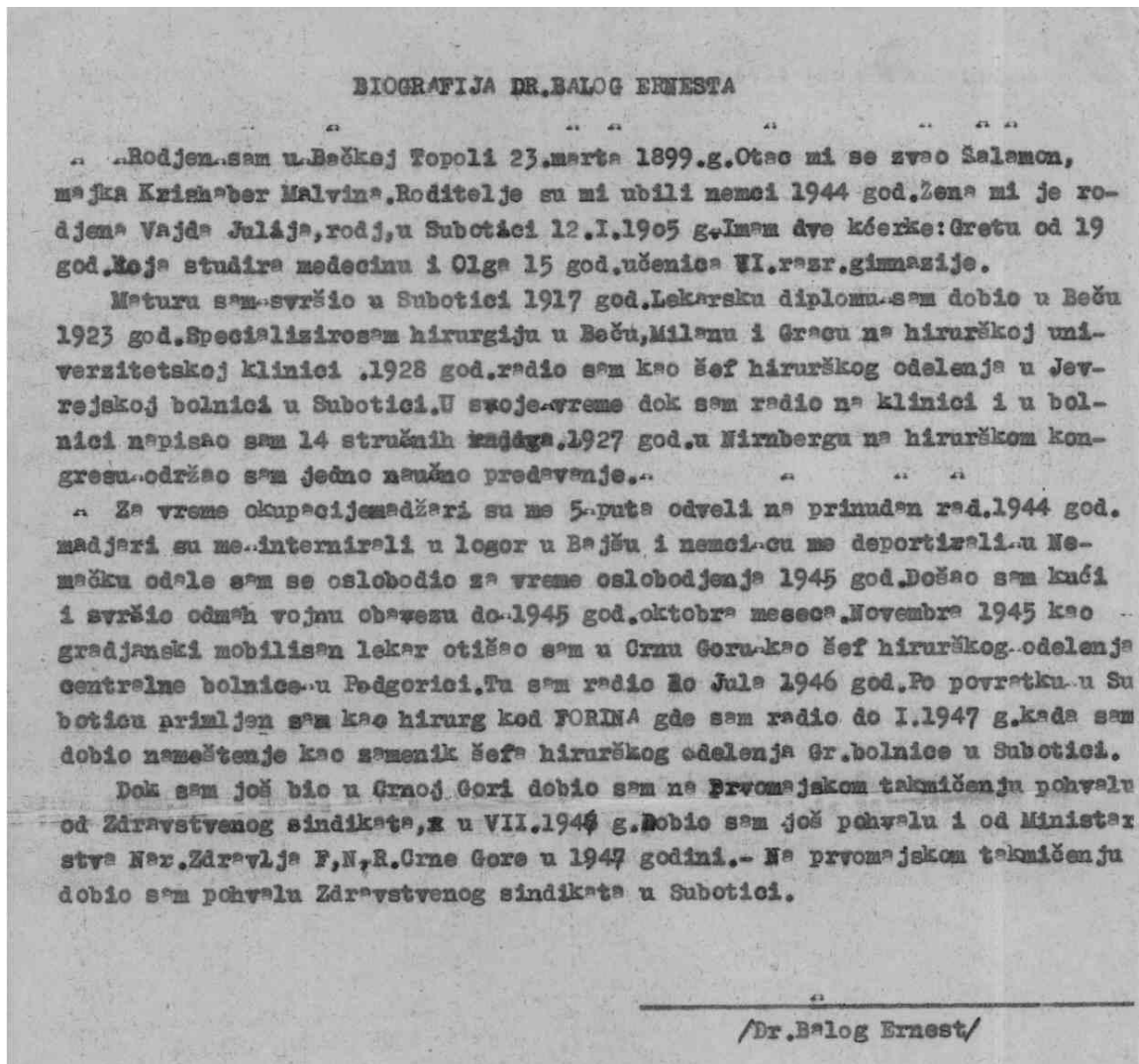


Figure 26: Dr. Balog's application asking to complete his special service in order to return to his family in Subotica (1947)

## 8 Prisoners of the Viehofen Camp

### 8.1 List of Known Prisoners

My mother's diary may include a longer list of names. In the meantime, the following list was compiled from the following sources:

- Several names which appear in Reference 1.
- A relatively long list was collected by Olga Balog and Vera Mahler. Since both of them were young girls during their time in the camp, naturally their recollections are mainly of the other kids in the camp and their close families.
- Recently several additional names and survivors were reported from Australia by Paul Kraus and Cathy Wills (daughter of Susan Partos).

Together with the 7 members of my family listed above (Section 2.4), this gives a total of 41 names, still a small number compared to circa 150-180 prisoners in the camp.

| Name                | Relationship                  | Age in 1944 | Comments  |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Basch Georg (Gyuri) |                               | 8           | (Note 1)  |
| Mr. Basch           | Father of Georg Bash          |             | (Note 2)  |
| Mrs. Basch          | Mother of Georg Bash          |             | (Note 1)  |
| Genad Jakob         |                               | 74          | Died March 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1945 (Reference 2) |
| Hegyi Fullop/Fillip | Grandfather of Georg Seidner  | 80          | Died Jan 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1945 (Reference 2)   |
| Mrs. Hegyi          | Grandmother of Georg Seidner  |             |   |
| Kohn Ivan           | Cousin of Anna & Vera Mahler  | 11          |   |
| Kohn Gyorgyi        | Cousin of Anna & Vera Mahler  | 12          |   |
| Kohn Maria          | Mother of Ivan & Gyorgyi Kohn |             |   |
| Dr. Körösi Ignaz    |                               | 82          | Died Feb 21 <sup>st</sup> , 1945 (Reference 2)  |

|                          |  |                  |  |
|--------------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Kraus Paul               |  | Born in the camp | (Note 3)<br>Immigrated to Australia  |
| Kraus Peter              |  | 2                | Immigrated to Australia  |
| Kraus Klara              | Mother of Paul & Peter Krauss                        | 30               | (Note 3)<br>Immigrated to Australia  |
| Mahler Anna              | Sister of Vera Mahler; Cousin of Ivan & Gyorgyi Kohn | 24               | (Note 4)<br>Lived in Budapest  |
| Mahler Vera              |  | 10               | Today: Vera Pfeipfer<br>(Note 4)   |
| Partos Elizabeth (Bozsi) | Mother of Susan Partos                               |                  |  |
| Partos Susan             |  |                  | Today: Susan Fisher<br>Immigrated to Israel 1948, and then to Australia 1951 |
| Partos Eugene (Yeno)     | Father of Susan Partos                               |                  | (Note 5)   |
| Pottasman Izso           |  |                  | Died in the camp (Reference 2)   |
| Reves Edmund             |  | 64               | Died March 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1945 (Reference 2)                              |
| Seidner Anna             |  | 10               |  |
| Seidner Georg (Gyuri)    |  | 13               |  |
| Seidner Magda            | Mother of Anna & Georg Seidner                       |                  |  |
| Szabolcs Lenke           | Mother of Olga Szabolcs                              |                  |  |
| Szabolcs Olga            |  | 12               |  |
| Vadasz Paul              |  | 70               | (Note 6)   |
| Veto Georg               | Father of Szilard Veto                               |                  | (Note 7)   |
| Veto Magda               | Mother of Szilard Veto                               |                  |  |

|                     |                                    |    |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| Veto Szilard (Sili) |                                    | 4  |                              |
| Weizenhoffer Edi    |                                    | 14 | In Israel: Edi Yaniv         |
| Weizenhoffer Edith  |                                    | 10 |                              |
| Mrs. Weizenhoffer   | Mother of Edi & Edith Weizenhoffer |    |                              |
| Wolf Armin          | Father of Rózsi Wolf               |    | (Note 8)                     |
| Wolf Rózsi          |                                    | 24 | Today: Roszi Halmos (Note 8) |

Color Code:

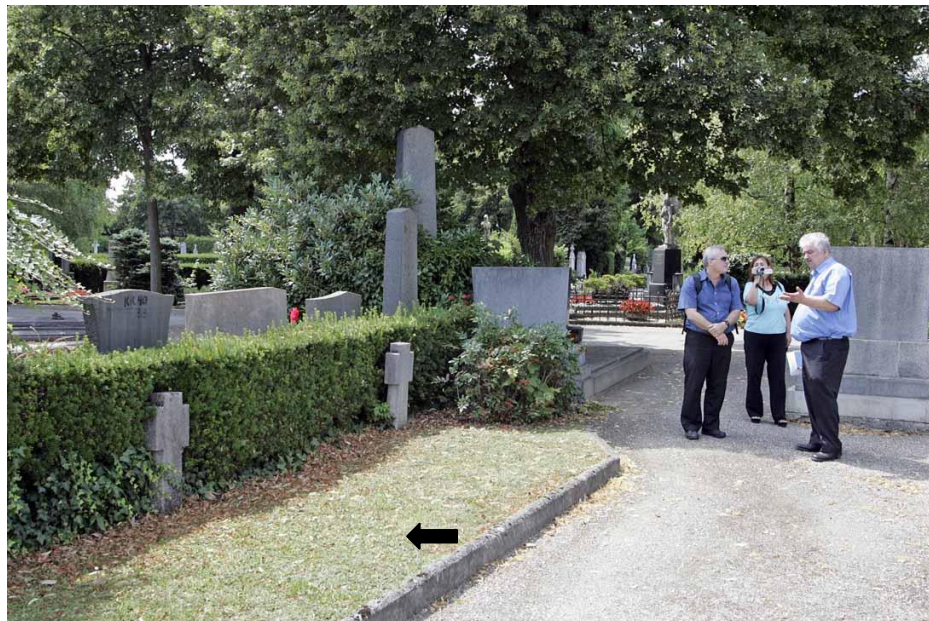
Living survivors (September 2007)

Perhaps alive?

**Note 1:** Georg Basch was the only child for his parents who waited a long time before they succeeded to bring him. He was only 8 years old in the camp when he fell ill to Typhus. Like many others he was first treated by Dr. Balog and when his situation worsened, Dr. Balog sent him to the St. Polten hospital. Many of the people who fell to this illness died. However, Georg Basch recovered and returned to the camp after a few weeks. Alas, in the meantime, a terrible tragedy occurred – his mother, not believing that her only son will survive, has committed suicide by hanging herself.

**Note 2:** One of the special tasks of Mr. Basch was to allocate the bread to the prisoners. Every evening when everyone returned to the camp, Mr. Basch took the (too small) daily supply of bread and would carefully and equally cut it and allocate an equally small amount to all the families and residents of the camp.

Figure 27: A section of the general cemetery of St. Polten where few of the unidentified Jewish prisoners are buried (July 2007)



**Note 3:** Mrs. Kraus was pregnant and had a 2 year old son when she arrived at the camp. She was given a small separate hut (see Figure 7). When the time came, on October 20, 1944, Dr. Balog helped her to successfully give birth to Paul Kraus who was the only child to be born in the camp.

Leaving Subotica with very few clothes, my aunt was wearing rags in the camp. After the successful birth of her new son, Klara Kraus was so grateful to Dr. Balog that she took one of her husband's clothes that she kept with her and fitted a shirt for my aunt. This shirt served my aunt until the end of the war.

Figure 28: Paul Kraus birth certificate (Reference 1), source: manfred Wieninger

Nr. 592 B

St. Pölten, den 27. Oktober 1944

Die angebliche Klara Sara Kraus, geborene Elfer, mosaisch, wohnhaft in St. Pölten-Viehofen, Arbeitslager-Viehofnerau, Ehefrau des angeblichen Buchhalters Emerich Israel Kraus, mosaisch, wohnhaft in Budapest VII, Hernádgasse 7.

hat am 20. Oktober 1944 um 00 Uhr 30 Minuten zu St. Pölten-Viehofen, im Arbeitslager-Viehofnerau ein en Knaben geboren. Das Kind hat die Vornamen erhalten: Paul Israel.

Eingetragen auf mündliche ~~schriftliche~~ Anzeige des Hilfspolizisten Franz Seif, wohnhaft in Waldletzberg 73.

Der Anzeigende hat sich mit seiner Bestellungsurkunde der Polizeidirektion ausgewiesen; er gibt an, von der Geburt aus eigener Wissenschaft unterrichtet zu sein. Eine Zwischenzeile geschrieben.

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben

*Frank Seif*

Der Standesbeamte

In Vertretung: *Seif*

Eheschließung der Eltern angebl. am 3. April 1935 in Budapest VII.

1. ~~bei unehelichen Kindern~~ (bei unehelichen Kindern) (Standesamt) Nr. .)

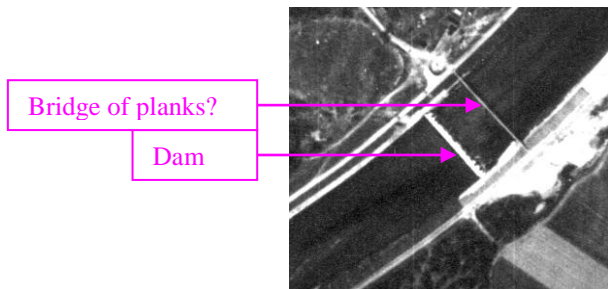
2. Eheschließung des Kindes am in (Standesamt) Nr. .)

3. Tod des Kindes am in (Standesamt) Nr. .)

Abb.3: Geburtsanzeige des im Lager geborenen Paul Krausz. Stadtarchiv St. Pölten.

Mrs. Kraus and her sons had miraculously survived the war and immigrated later to Australia. When Mr. Wieninger conducted his research (Reference 1), he was able to find the birth certificate of Paul Kraus in the archives of the St. Polten city (Figure 28).

**Note 4:** Anna and Vera Mahler stayed in the camp after the Austrian guards left it in April 1945. They were taken by the SS on the death march to Mauthausen and had miraculously survived. Anna Mahler lives in Budapest; Vera Mahler immigrated to Israel and lives today in Jerusalem.

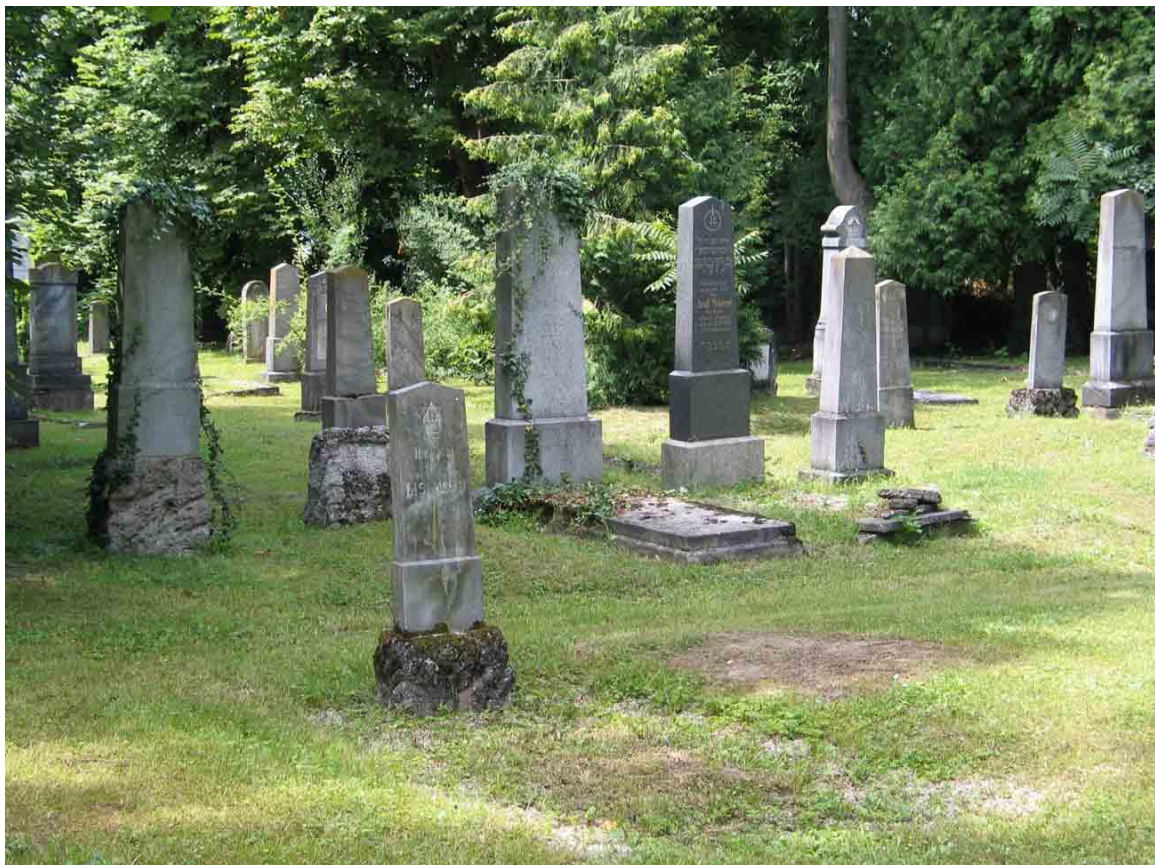


**Note 5:** Unfortunately, as the Partos family was leaving the camp in April 1945, Yeno Partos was wheeling a wheelbarrow with their belongings over the planks that served as a bridge across the river and fell in (Reference 5). A large zoom on the dam in Figure 9 can show the dam, with what looks like a narrow bridge upstream that could have been made of planks (Figure 29).

*Figure 29: A large zoom of the Dam in Figure 9 shows the possible location of the bridge of planks.*

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*Figure 30: The Jewish cemetery of St. Polten, where few of the identified Jewish prisoners are buried.*



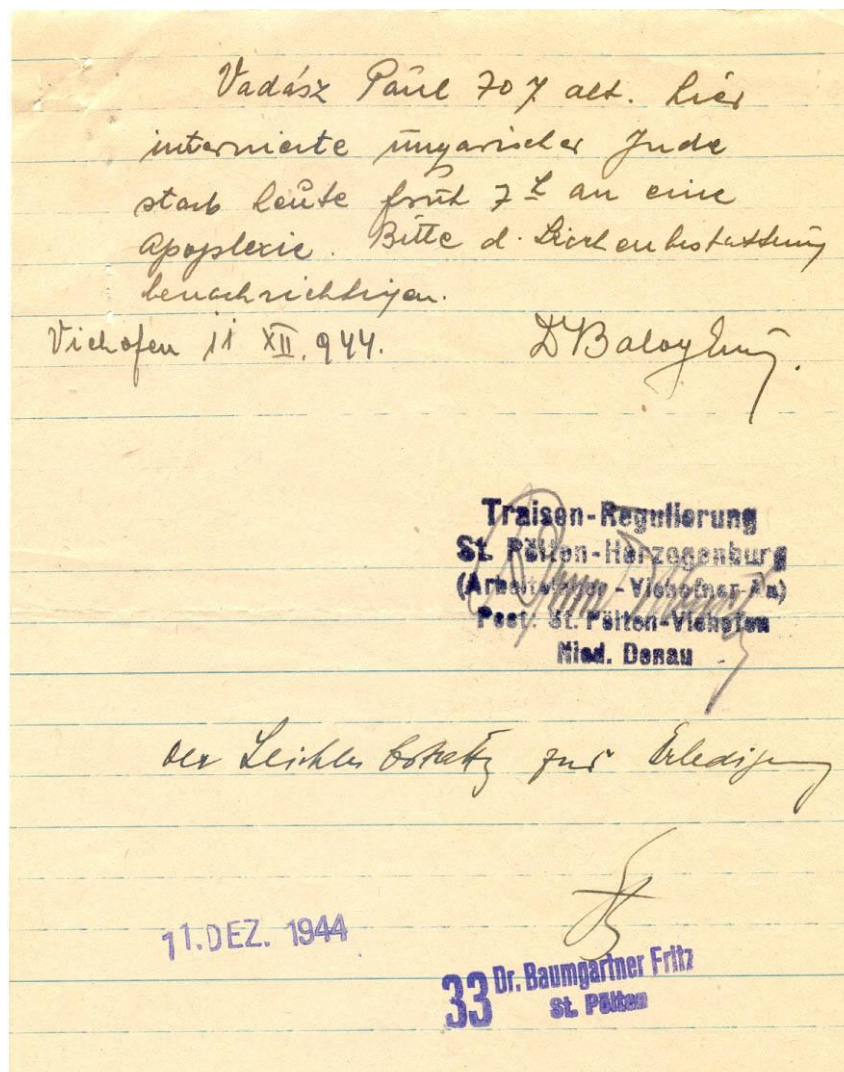


Figure 31: Paul Vadasz' death certificate, in the handwriting of Dr. Ernst Balog (See Reference 1)

**Note 6:** Paul Vadasz died at the camp on Dec 11, 1944 (See Reference 2). His death certificate in the handwriting of Dr. Balog is given in Figure 31.

**Note 7:** Georg Veto suffered from a diabetic disease. He had a very small supply of insulin with him, which he kept like a treasure. He didn't use the insulin, keeping it only for the worst of situations. In the meantime, he often suffered from abnormal shortage of glucose. Dr. Balog somehow got a small can of sugar which he kept especially to treat Georg Veto's emergencies. He would use a shoehorn which he found to carefully measure a small amount of sugar to give him as a primitive medication. My aunt, suffering from hunger most of the time, still remembers this small can of sugar which she could not get...

**Note 8:** Armin Wolf died of bombings in the vicinity of the camp on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945. This is the same day on which the air-photo in Figure was taken. Perhaps it is even the same American bomber which dropped the deadly bombs... (See Reference 2). White scars from the bombings can be easily seen in the woods in Figure 9. The search of his daughter, Roszi Wolf, for his grave, led to the article of Reference 2. Roszi Wolf's ID is given in Figure 32.

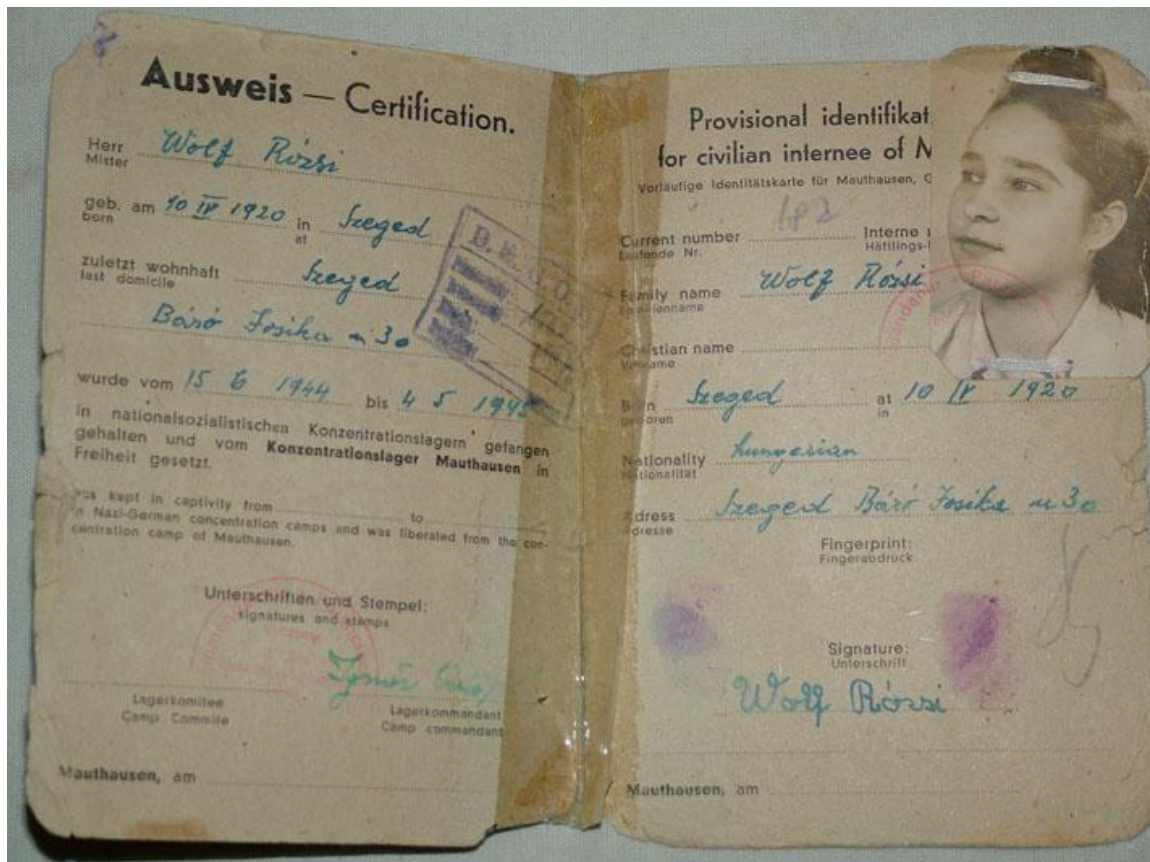


Figure 32: Roszi Wolf ID card in 1944 (Source: Manfred Wieninger)

## 8.2 Living Survivors

As of September 2007, we are aware of at least 3 survivors of the Viehofen camp who live in Israel:

- Greta Balog
- Olga Balog
- Vera Mahler

and another 4 survivors in Australia:

- Susan Fisher
- Klara Kraus
- Paul Kraus
- Peter Kraus



Figure 33: Greta Balog's student card (as "Balog Margita"), University of Zagreb

## 9 Epilog

Figure 34: Olga & Greta Balog (circa 1948)

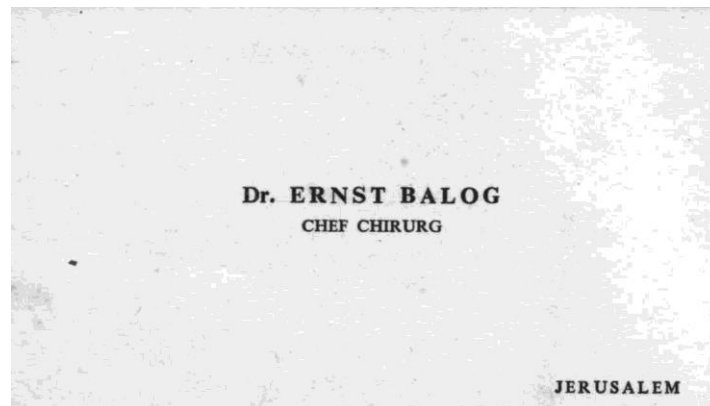


After the war, my mother started her medical studies in the University of Zagreb. She only finished 3 years until 1949, when it became possible for the first time for Jews to immigrate to Israel. However, Dr. Balog's job as a surgeon was still considered critical, and he was not allowed to leave Yugoslavia. In the family consultation, my grandmother argued to allow the young daughters Greta and Olga (then at the age of only 21 and 17) to immigrate alone to the far country. Perhaps it was the memory what had happened to their cousin Gyuri Kohn (see Section 6.3) that eventually convinced the parents to agree.

Finally, after two additional years, Dr. Balog, my grandmother and Elvira Volda were able to immigrate to Israel in 1951 (after having to concede all their property to the benefit of the Communist authorities). Initially, Dr. Balog worked as a doctor in one of the many immigrant camps that were in Israel in those years. After some time, the whole family moved to Jerusalem, where Dr. Balog worked as a surgeon in the “Shaare Zedek” hospital (<http://www.szmc.org.il/eng/>). In 1960, Dr. Balog was diagnosed with cancer and died shortly afterwards of a heart attack at the relatively young age of 61.

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*Figure 35: Dr. Balog at his desk in Jerusalem (late 1950's) and his business card*



## 10 References

In July 2007, I visited St. Poelten and Viehofen by invitation of Mr. Manfred Wieninger who did an excellent research of the camp. Mr. Wieninger provided additional information, some of it reported here, and also some open questions regarding several details in this story. An article about our visit is given in Reference 4.

1. Eleonore Lappin, Susanne Uslu-Pauer and Manfred Wieninger, *Ungarisch-Judische Zwangsarbeiterinnen Und Zwangsarbeiter in Niederosterreich 1944/45*, NO Instituts fur Landeskunde, 2006.
2. Manfred Wieninger, *Die vergessenen Toten, Das Zwangsarbeitslager St. Pölten/Viehofen - eine Spurensuche*, Wiener Zeitung, April 1, 2005 (see the following link).  
<http://www.wienerzeitung.at/Desktopdefault.aspx?TabID=3946&Alias=wzo&lexikon=Geschichte&letter=G&cob=168347>
3. Yad Vashem website, <http://www.yadvashem.org/>
4. An article about my July 2007 visit in St. Polten,  
<http://noe.orf.at/magazin/daheiminnoe/unterwegs/stories/207226/>
5. Cathy Wills, private communication, October 2007. [Mrs. Wills is the daughter of Susan (Partos) Fisher].

Figure 36: My July 2007 visit in the St. Polten Rathaus. From right: Hani Granski, Miki Granski, Manfred Wieninger, Dr. Martha Keil (Director of the "Institut fur Geschichte der Juden in Osterreich", now located in the reconstructed old synagogue of St. Polten. Far left: Mr. Matthias Stadler, Mayor of St. Polten. We are holding a large high resolution photo of Figure 9.





Figure 37: The renovated old synagogue of St. Polten now hosts the "Institut für Geschichte der Juden in Österreich" (Institute for the History of Jews in Austria), <http://www.injoest.ac.at/>

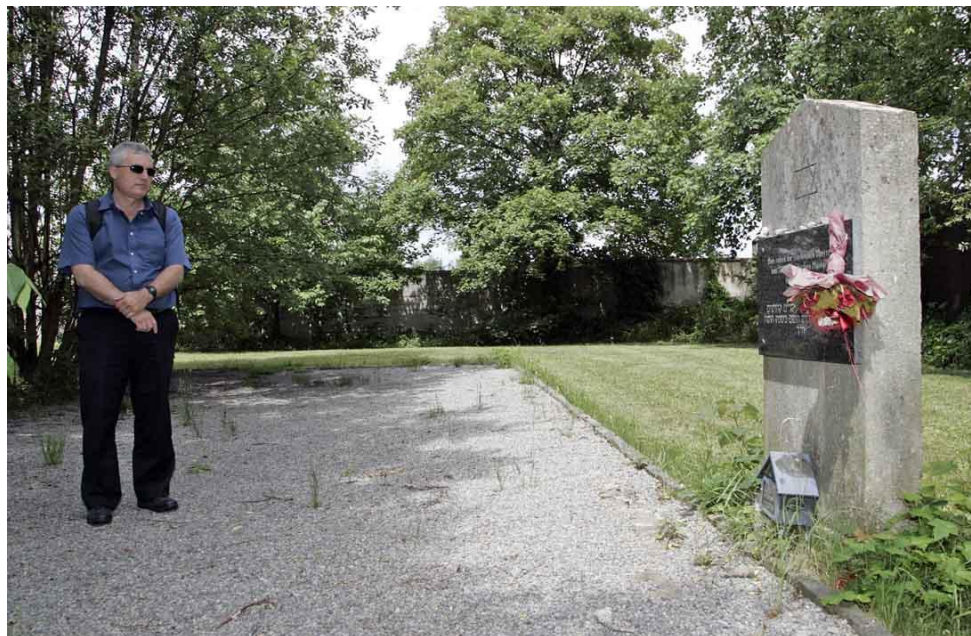


Figure 38: The memorial for the holocaust in the Jewish cemetery of St. Polten