

Bezirkshauptmannschaft Perg
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INFORMATION

on the press conference with

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Manager of the Mauthausen Memorial, BMI

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Deputy Chairperson, Institute for Contemporary History
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Monday, January 26, 2015, 10am

on the subject of:

Expert reports on the tunnel system “BERGKRISTALL” in St. Georgen/Gusen

Other speakers:

1. **Dr. Paul Mahringer**, Federal Monuments Office, Deputy Manager of the Department for Archiving and Memorial Research
2. **Mag. Heinz Gruber**, Federal Monuments Office, Department for Archaeology
3. **Ing. Thomas Styrsky**, Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft m.b.H.
4. **Mag. Dipl.(HTL) Ing. Martin Scheiber**, S Consult Management GmbH (on behalf of the BIG)
5. **HR Dr. Sigrid Sperker**, Office of the Upper Austrian State Government, Department for the Environment and Water Management, Department for Environmental Protection, Group Leader for Protection against Radiation
6. **Ing. Erich Wahl, MBA**, Mayor of St. Georgen / Gusen
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No evidence for further tunnels in St. Georgen/G.: Speculations about the tunnel „Bergkristall“ being bigger than currently known lack scientific basis. Expert report is now finalized.

During the last months there has been widespread public discussion concerning the size and usage of the gallery system „Bergkristall“ near St. Georgen an der Gusen which has been built by the National Socialist regime.

The basis for these speculations were plans, aerophotos, interviews with contemporary witnesses, photographs, microfilms, maps and construction documents as well georadar and geoelectric examinations. To find the truth the local authorities in Perg introduced a step by step program consisting of reconnaissance drillings, collection of relevant environmental data and an objective scientific evaluation done by senior experts.

A senior interdisciplinary group of experts (geologists, archaeologists, historians and archivars, experts in environmental and construction) together with representatives of the organisations involved (BMI – Ministry of the Interior, BDA – Antiquities and Monuments Office, BH Perg – local authorities, Gemeinde – Municipality) evaluated all communicated hypothesis and assumptions scientifically and methodically:

1. Reconnaissance drillings (Depth 122m) didn't result in finding interstice volume

Drillings done in December 2013 and February 2014 didn't find interstice volume in any depth. There were no indications for artificial radioactivity nor groundwater. The drilling locations were decided upon exclusively by filmmaker Andreas Sulzer and his team of experts. Usage of inserted cameras didn't result in any findings.

2. Extensive evaluation of environmental data did not return any indications of alleged activities with nuclear material

The metering of the local ambient dose does not produce any results outside the normal margin of deviation and matches natural occurrences. This goes as well for „Stofflager Gaisbach-Wartberg“.

Analysis of water-based mud as well as samples of ground and drinking water of drilling points (Pt. 1) didn't return any abnormal results.

3. Plans for Langenstein im Harz (Germany) instead of expansion plans for St. Georgen/G

The basis for the decision on Andreas Sulzer's drilling points were assumed expansion plans of the gallery system in St. Georgen/G. During the course of the scientific evaluation by the historian Prof. Dr. Bertrand Perz an error of the filmmaker was identified. In the present case the plans were designed for a gallery system in Langenstein im Harz in Sachsen-Anhalt (Germany) for the airplane producing company Junkers.

4. Plans for Mainz-Weisenau instead of plans for St. Georgen/G

Another assumed expansion plan for „Bergkristall“ turned out to be a plan for the gallery system in Mainz-Weisenau to be occupied by MAN Maschinenfabrik.

5. Train inspection records of the years 1944 and 1945 show no evidence of suspicious cargo

Closer examination of the journals has led to the conclusion that allegedly "suspicious shipments" from the St. Georgen train station are more likely to have been shipments of conventional goods, e.g. food, cement, iron, coal, semi-processed products or components for the local aircraft construction.

6. Speculations about ten thousands of dead inmates from the KZ Mauthausen proven wrong

This hypothesis could not stand up to scientific scrutiny. Based on the precise records the SS kept of the number of prisoners kept in the concentration camp Mauthausen-Gusen (and also of their deaths), the latest death toll estimates achieve high accuracy, as recently published scientific papers (2014) and the prisoners data base of the Mauthausen Memorial indicate. Those leave no room for speculation about "missing" bodies.

7. Viktor Schaubberger's workplace

In April 1943 Schaubberger started his work in Mauthausen, the following year he moved to Wien-Schönbrunn, another year later he was relocated to the scythe factory Leonstein in Upper Austria. There is no evidence he could ever have been active in hidden parts of the mine of St. Georgen.

8. Excavation site at the Shooting Club St. Georgen reveals only parts of an SS-shooting range

When excavations carried out on the property of the Shooting Club of St. Georgen a few weeks ago revealed the ruins of several walls, speculation was rife about it. After close examination, experts concluded that these walls were the remains an old shooting range, more specifically a structure that provided cover for the personnel servicing the range. This structure is located exactly at the end of the longest of three shooting ranges, 150 meters from the club house. The shooting range is of common design, ranges of similar form are still in military use. The whole site has recently been declared national heritage by the Austrian Federal Monuments Office (BDA).

Prior to the examination, there were theories about the walls being part of the entry to a vast system of tunnels. Those theories were based solely on the finding of a handle that was part of an old truck. From a scientific point of view, however, this finding alone does not suffice to

conclude that there was an entry at the site, allowing trucks to enter a subterranean complex. Experts agree that the handle has been disposed of there and has no connection whatsoever to this place.

9. Nuclear weapon facility theories unfounded

The mechanical part found in the area in 2014 has been identified as a slip ring, which is an essential component of the slip ring motor. As experts both from the Institute for High Energy Physics from the Austrian Academy of Sciences as well as from the renowned Swiss Research Center CERN state, any possible connection to the construction of a particle accelerator can be ruled out. Therefore, the mechanical part in question could in no way support the theories about nuclear weapon research activities in the respective area.

10. Statements of a survivor taken out of context

Not even a single statement – neither in written nor in verbal form – from those who survived the Gusen camp and who were forced to work in the building of the tunnel system or in armament manufacture in “Bergkristall” has been noted for supporting the rumors concerning a previously unknown tunnel system.

Dusan Stefancic’s statement – presented to the experts – was taken entirely out of context. The potential ambiguity was used in a manipulative way. In an interview extract presented by Andreas Sulzer, he stressed in relation to the Gusen camp and “Bergkristall” that there was still much to clarify, without getting into details more precisely.

11. Allegedly new discovered original plans are disposable for decades and well researched since the 1980s

A series of plans about the “Bergkristall” project from the Engineer’s Office Fiebinger was published after the war in 1945 in an (initially secret) US American anthology under the title: “German Underground Installations Part one of three, unique design and construction methods, CIOS Section Intelligence division office, chief engineer, USFET, Washington, D.C. 1945”. These plans provided detailed information about the tunnel plans for “Bergkristall”. They do not contain any indications regarding to the existence of a second tunnel system as asserted by Andreas Sulzer. The files cited by Sulzer from the participating Grün & Bilfinger (ARGE Grüku) company also prove the known existing level of tunnels.

12. The “B 7 (Esche I)” project assumed in St. Georgen set up in Hersbruck-Happurg (Germany)

Initially, there were two tunnel set ups with the designations “Project B 7 (Esche II)” and “Project B 8 (Esche I)” in discussion in Kammler’s project list for B buildings for St. Georgen. However, only one of these two was realised in St. Georgen. In the course of the final

determination of Kammler's A and B buildings, the project in St. Georgen was managed as Kammler project "B 8" and received the code name "Esche II" (a code name originally allocated to project "B 7"). A subterranean building project by Kammler in Hersbruck-Happurg (near Nuremberg) for the relocation of BMW aeroplane engine production was given the project number "B 7 (Esche I)".

13. Supposedly previously unknown "Führer" discussion log published in 1969

Hitler's demands, documented in the log of March 5, 1944, for large-scale projects at a level of 600,000 to 800,000 m² related explicitly to the construction of concrete bunkers as known from Kaufering etc., and not to "Bergkristall"-type tunnel systems. In the log regarding the Führer discussion of April 6/7, 1944, a clarification would have been found. The supposed previously unknown Führer discussions have been published in 1969.

14. Newly "discovered" Goudsmit collection microfilmed many years ago (USHMM)

The tunnel project plans (including those from the Fiebinger office) are freely accessible and can currently be viewed at <http://nazitunnels.org/archive/items/show/155>. The documents are an interesting source, but do not contain any indications that would substantiate the assumptions of a further tunnel system. Extracts of the collection have also been in the Mauthausen Memorial archive since 2003.

15. Himmler visited "gigantic" subterranean projects, and that is why Bergkristall is bigger

Just because it is documented that Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler visited "gigantic" subterranean projects does not mean that "Bergkristall" must be bigger than it actually is. The fact is that "Bergkristall" is a "gigantic" subterranean project. The question is how to define "gigantic".

16. Concrete octagon: Ventilation shaft "S 6" vs. rocket launcher

The "octagon", which has already been known for many years now, is actually the "S6" ventilation shaft at the Bergkristall tunnel system and not, as rumoured, a rocket launcher. This can also be determined from the original plans and an aerial image dated April 16, 1945, in which an octagonal shape can be seen. The site plan of the ventilation channels from the Fiebinger Engineer's Office dated October 31, 1944, is not in line with this.

Ventilation systems have to withstand aerial attacks and at the same time have to be pressure-sealed and gas-tight. In terms of an emergency shock waves or poisonous gases should be prevented from entering the tunnel system. The structures were therefore generally provided with, among other things, massively reinforced concrete slabs at the top end, often several metres thick. In the course of the safeguarding measures from 2003 to 2009, the entire ventilation structure was filled in, meaning that there was no longer any risk of a cave-in.

17. Report of the Austrian Research Association for Atomic Energy from 1968 supposedly kept under tight wraps is freely accessible to the public in the Library of the Geological Federal Office

Univ.-Prof. MR Dr. Leopold Weber, an internationally renowned expert in geology, geotechnical engineering and mining, has reviewed the report and determined that the geological conclusions therein are extremely vague and not verifiable. The tunnel network shown in the map attachment do not in any way correspond to the extent of the subterranean cavities available at the time of the compilation of this expert opinion. The statement on the tunnel cross-sections does not correspond with reality either. Indications that there is another level above the known tunnel system could in no way be confirmed through drilling in the course of the safeguarding measures. The existence of another system at a deeper subterranean level below the well-known and present system is improbable; this is because groundwater bodies would be encroached upon and part of them would be in the granite. The continuing use of the designation "maximum extent of the tunnel system" is speculative and entirely unfounded.

18. A. Sulzer's communicated excavated volume can absolutely be attributed to the well-known tunnels

Andreas Sulzer reported that he's got access to an original file which refers to an excavated volume lifted from underground of approximately 340,000 m³. From the filled cubic content recorded in the safeguarding measures performed by the BIG, a mass of 297,068 m³ must be assumed. Within this, the collector ducts, "Möglegube" and structures that have already been taken away, ... continue not to be taken into account. Therefore, no indication of further systems can be deduced here either.

19. Cracks in a house clearly not caused by subterranean cavities

Reports and geotechnical investigations rule out cavities as the cause.

20. Analysis/assessment of aerial images and plans without new expert reports

Five aerial images from the period June 13, 1944 to May 8, 1945 did not provide any indication of a larger tunnel system. They got georeferenced by Prof. Dr. Claudia Theune-Vogt, associated with the current land register map (DORIS) with further historical data and plans in the ArcGIS program and analysed. All construction work corresponds with the plans from the Fiebinger Engineer's Office. In particular, no kind (above-ground) of building work can be determined in the west of the known Bergkristall area. *(Note: subterranean systems leave traces above ground - entry areas, ventilation systems, conveyors for transporting excavated material away, track systems, sidings and narrow-gauge railways, etc.)*

21. Discovered (parts of documents) documents taken out of context

The currently known level of research can be precisely verified from a myriad contemporary sources (*authorities' files, in particular from the Ministry of Armament and War Production, the Ministry of Aviation, company files, building files, documents from the Karl Fiebinger Engineer's Office, which was responsible for the planning and building management for this site, SS files, regional files, etc.*). It is also confirmed through sources from the post-war period (memories of former concentration camp prisoners, case records, etc.). In the course of collecting and researching existing sources over years, not a single source becomes evident that refers to an additional tunnel system or even atomic research in St. Georgen, or would even make this appear plausible.

Conclusion:

The experts asserted that there is not a single piece of evidence. Furthermore all speculations and assumptions couldn't stand up to scrutiny. There is no conclusive indication concerning the tunnel system being bigger than already known as well as hidden activities in particular atomic or rocketry research centers.

The tunnel system in St. Georgen/G. was raised by thousands of concentration camp prisoners between 1944 and 1945. The system served as a subterranean armaments factory called "Bergkristall" respectively "Esche II". The production mainly focused on pursuit planes (Messerschmitt Me-262).

The construction covers around 200.000 square meters southwest of the town center. It all started near the existing sand pits. The whole length averages around 6 and a half kilometres. Twelve years ago the Federal Estate Ltd. secured the tunnel system in St. Georgen/G. by investing a total amount of 15 million euros.

NOTE: Excavations solely through certified experts

§ 11 law for the protection of ancient monuments clarifies that investigation in forms of altering the surface (unearthing) for the purpose of discovering and examining ancient monuments underneath earth's surface is only allowed with permission of the federal antiquities and monuments office. Such permissions may only be granted for persons who successfully completed appropriate academic studies.

Members of the group of experts

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