

L. The Vorbruck-Schirmeck security camp

The Vorbruck-Schirmeck camp was under the jurisdiction of the commander of the security police and security department (der Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD) for Alsace in Strasburg. It is mentioned in documents from July 19, 1940 to November 22, 1944 (see p. 511 and 512)

In his letter of July 2, 1940 to the commanders (Kommandeure) of operation commando 1 (Einsatzkommando) in Strasburg and operation commando 2 in Mulhouse about the creation of a concentration camp and transit camps in Alsace, the commander of the security police and security department does not mention the security camp (Sicherungslager) which, however, existed 12 days later.

The following is stated in this letter :

"The necessity of removing undesirable elements from <sup>the</sup> territories occupied by operation groups (Einsatzgruppen) requires the establishment of 2 transit camps (Durchgangslager) and 1 concentration camp (Konzentrationslager)".

It is further stated in this letter about the purpose of these camps that :

"The transit camps should only be used for the temporary detention of persons to be deported as soon as possible after their arrest to the unoccupied French territory.

The concentration camp, on the other hand, should take persons who will presumably stay a longer time in the camp".

I. The Vorbruck-Schirbeck security camp

The Vorbruck-Schirbeck camp was under the jurisdiction of the commandant of the security police and security department (der Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD) for Alsace in Strasbourg. It is mentioned in documents from July 19, 1940 to November 12, 1944 (see p. 511 and 512).

In his letter of July 2, 1940 to the commandant (Kommandant) of operation command 1 (Befehlshaber) in Strasbourg and operation command 2 in Mulhouse about the creation of a concentration camp and transit camp in Alsace, the commandant of the security police and security department does not mention the security camp (Sicherheitslager) which, however, existed 12 days later.

The following is stated in this letter :

"The necessity of removing undesirable elements from transit-camps occupied by operation groups (Einsatzgruppen) requires the establishment of 2 transit camps (Durchgangslager) and 1 concentration camp (Konzentrationslager)."

It is further stated in this letter about the purpose of these camps that :

"The transit camps should only be used for the temporary detention of persons to be deported as soon as possible after their arrest to the unoccupied French territory.

The concentration camps, on the other hand, should take persons who will presumably stay a longer time in the camp.

The following is stated about the commitments to the concentration camp :

- "Will be taken in the concentration camp : *list in general*
- a) Persons of German origin, who fought for communist Spain (Rotspanienkämpfer)
  - b) Persons who, by their attitude, would presumably disturb the German reconstruction work in this area.
  - c) Persons who, by their acts, committed offences against German troops or German nationals."

The following statement is taken from a letter addressed on January 27, 1942 by the SS Reich chief to the chief of the civil administration in Alsace :

"I thoroughly agree with you about the prisoners in Alsace; young Alsatians who want to join de Gaulle should be put (untergebracht) in a camp like Schirmeck and treated differently from communists and habitual criminals (Berufsverbrecher). I must however ask you to take steps for the evacuation of all severe cases to the former Reich (Alt-Reich), thereby giving the Schirmeck camp only a temporary existence (und dadurch das Lager Schirmeck nur eine zeitweilige Erscheinung sein kann)".

In another letter concerning the purpose of labour reformatory camps (AEL), which the chief of the civil administration in Alsace sent to the chief of department IV of the Main office for Reich security (Amt IV des RSHA) on 24.4.1944, the following is stated about the Vorbruck camp :

"It (the camp) should assume the task of imparting the correct attitude towards work, and the political order of the Greater German Reich (Grossdeutsches Reich) to elements from Alsace difficult to educate (schwer erziehbare Elemente".

The following is stated about the conditions in the concentration camp :

- "Will be taken by the concentration camp :
- a) Persons of German origin, who fought for Germany in Spain (Kampfbereitschaft)
  - b) Persons who, by their attitude, would presumably disturb the German reconstruction work in this area.
  - c) Persons who, by their acts, committed offences against German troops or German nationals."

The following statement is taken from a letter received on January 27, 1942 by the SS Reich chief in the chief of the civil administration in Alsace :

"I thoughtfully agree with you about the prisoners in Alsace. Young Alsatians who want to join the Wehrmacht should be put (untergebracht) in a camp like Soltau and treated differently from communists and political criminals (Gegner der Wehrmacht). I must however ask you to take steps for the evacuation to the former Reich (Alte Reich), thereby giving the Wehrmacht camp only a temporary existence (und darüber das Lager Soltau nicht eine zeitweilige Zwischenstation sein kann)."

In another letter concerning the purpose of labor relief camps (ALP), which the chief of the civil administration in Alsace sent to the chief of department IV of the Reich office for Reich security (Amt IV des RSHA) on 22.4.1944, the following is stated about the Wehrmacht camp :

"If (the camp) should serve the task of instilling the correct attitude towards work, and the political order of the Greater German Reich (Grossdeutsches Reich) to elements from Alsace it should be equipped (ausgerüstet) with the necessary facilities."

It is further stated :

"Because of the French democracy, the people of Alsace have adopted an attitude towards work and life in general that differs considerably from ours. Therefore, in Alsace, a special education of the people was necessary from the very beginning. This education was undertaken by the Party. But it was furthermore necessary to support the educational activity of the Party through special measures of the state security police ; education at the Vorbruck camp is part of these measures."

The following details can be read in the same letter :

"We proceeded with the conviction that the elements to educate were not in the least, or not necessarily, anti-social (asoziale Elemente).

The Alsatians' customary weakness is not, as a general rule, to be ascribed to inborn tendencies, but to their lack of education. It was therefore necessary, in our opinion, to keep elements difficult to educate (schwer erziehbare Elemente) at Vorbruck as long as deemed necessary".

Actually, persons from the annexed Lorraine were also incarcerated in the camp.

This lack of education, that the chief of the civil administration thought existed, was overcome in the security camp (Sicherungslager) by the same educational methods as those in concentration and labour reformatory camps (KL und AEL).

It is further stated:

"Because of the French democracy, the people of Alsace have adopted an attitude towards work and life in general that differs considerably from ours. Therefore, in Alsace, a special education of the people was necessary from the very beginning. This education was undertaken by the Party but it was imperative necessary to support the educational activity of the Party through special measures of the state security police; education in the Vorwerk camp is part of these measures."

The following details can be read in the same letter:

"We proceeded with the conviction that the elements to educate were not in the least, or not necessarily, anti-social (antisocial elements). The Alsatians' customary weakness is not, as a general rule, to be ascribed to inborn tendencies, but to their lack of education. It was therefore necessary, in our opinion, to keep elements difficult to educate (schwer erziehbar Elemente) at Vorwerk as long as deemed necessary."

Actually, persons from the annexed territories were also

incarcerated in the camp.

This lack of education, that the chief of the civil administration thought existed, was overcome in the security camp (Bücherrungslager) by the same educational methods as those in concentration and labor reformatory camps (KZ and ARB).