

prisoners.¹⁰ Buechner refers to his own observations and the interpretation of a series of photos, among them the above mentioned picture. They had to be made just prior to his arrival.¹¹

Buechner's book was received by the German right-extremist circles shortly after its publication and interpreted by Ingrid Weckert, in the periodical "Deutschland in Geschichte und Gegenwart" as "indubitable confirmation" of an American massacre, while nevertheless rejecting Buechner's description of the gruesome conditions in the concentration camp Dachau.¹² Similar to Weckert, an American, publishing under the pseudonym "John Cobden," also strives to play down the conditions in the concentration camp and, citing Buechner, to depict the liberation as a great massacre.¹³

Among serious historians, Harold Marcuse in his dissertation of 1992, and Klaus-Dietmar Henke in his 1995 book about the American occupation of Germany were the first to deal with the events in detail.¹⁴ Though Henke indicates a strictly skeptical attitude in regard to Buechner and registers doubts both about the number of 480 executions and also regarding Jack Bushyhead as the main culprit, his description still depends strongly on Buechner, due to the lack of relevant sources. Similarly, this applies to Marcuse's research.

Now, new material came recently to the archive of the KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau that enables one to depict these events in detail, and, especially, to scrutinize the description by Buechner more thoroughly. It concerns the copies of an investigation by the Assistant Inspector General of the 7th Army, Joseph M. Whitaker, who by order of the Headquarters of the 7th Army from May 2, 1945, on the next day already initiated a meticulous investigation of the events at the liberation of the concentration camp Dachau,¹⁵ and

10 Howard A. Buechner, *Dachau. The Hour of the Avenger*, Metairie, Louisiana, 1989 (first edition 1986), pp. 84-107.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

12 Ingrid Weckert, *Dachau — Tag der Rache*, in: *Deutschland in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 35 (1987) H. 2, pp. 14-20.

13 John Cobden, *Dachau, Reality and Myth*, Newport Beach 1994.

14 Marcuse, *Nazi Crimes*, pp. 87-95; Henke, *Amerikanische Besetzung*, pp. 920-928; Robert H. Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart. Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps*, New York a.o. 1985, p. 92, also mentions already the shooting of prisoners.

15 The documents consist of over 160 pages and contain a reference with recommendations for further proceedings, the conclusion of the investigation, the transcription of Whitaker's interrogations (altogether 960 questions directed at 38 witnesses under oath), a statement of the Headquarters of the 7th Army, as well as a report of the commander of the 1st battalion of the 222nd infantry regiment of the 42nd infantry division. The originals of the sources are in the National Archives in Washington and were released in the summer of 1992.

also a collection of sources assembled by John H. Linden, for the purpose of documenting the role of his father, General Henning Linden, in liberating the concentration camp Dachau.¹⁶

The Initial Situation

The final months of Dachau were the worst. The camp was extremely overcrowded due to the continuous arrivals of transports evacuating the camps near the front. These transports resulted in a large number of fatalities. Most of the survivors arrived near death from exhaustion, undernourished and physically completely broken down. The hygienic conditions and the food situation were catastrophic. A typhus epidemic broke out in December 1944. Over 15,000 prisoners died due to sickness, undernourishment and by assault of the SS from the end of 1944 to the liberation. This is nearly half of the total of the fatalities of the Dachau camp. Cremation of the corpses was no longer possible. The bodies were piled up in the mortuaries and around the crematorium. There were over 32,000 prisoners in the camp at the end of April 1945. Hope of imminent liberation and fear of extermination by the SS or an evacuation of the camp caused the most diverse rumors and resulted in an atmosphere of the highest nervous tension. Actually, a mass murder of the prisoners was at least considered. The various evacuation transports, especially the death march put into action on April 26th, precipitated a high number of casualties.¹⁷

The disintegration of the Nazi regime resulted both in more brutalization and also in a feverish search by individual leading figures for options to avoid the visible collapse. The attempts by Heinrich Himmler to use the Jews in his power as "bargaining chips" is the most characteristic example.¹⁸ In this context belong also the modest achievements of the International Red

16 The material assembled by Linden is of the most varied origin. Partly, it derives from the estate of his father, and contains, among others, newspaper items, personal testimonies, correspondence and copies from archives. The background of Linden's efforts regarding documentation is an old quarrel between the 42nd and 45th division of the 7th army about which of them should have the credit for the liberation of Dachau. Cf. Henke, *Amerikanische Besetzung*, pp. 916 u. 918 ff.

17 Henke, *Amerikanische Besetzung*, p. 867 ff.; Barbara Distel, *Der 29. April 1945. Die Befreiung des Konzentrationslagers Dachau*, in: *Dachauer Hefte*, 1 (1985), pp. 3-11; regarding the evacuation marches, Henke, *ibid.*, pp. 898-913; Andreas Wagner, *Todesmarsch. Die Räumung und Teilräumung der Konzentrationslager Dachau, Kaufering und Mühldorf Ende April 1945*, Ingolstadt 1995.

18 Yehuda Bauer, *Freikauf von Juden? Die Verhandlungen zwischen dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und jüdischen Repräsentanten 1933-1945*, Frankfurt a.M. 1996, p. 376 ff.

Cross in its efforts to gain access to the concentration camps. On March 12, 1945, Carl Jacob Burckhardt, the president of the International Red Cross, received the consent, after consultations with the Chief of the Reich Main Security Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt), Kaltenbrunner, that delegates of his organization would gain access to the concentration camps, provided they were ready to stay there until the end of the war.¹⁹ Due to this agreement, the Swiss delegate of the Red Cross, Victor Maurer, who was stationed at the Red Cross base in Uffing near the Staffelsee (Staffel lake), about 70 kilometers from Dachau, was directed to proceed to the camp.²⁰ Maurer brought five trucks with food packages, which were unloaded by prisoners.²¹ Maurer stayed in the camp according to agreement. He stayed for the night in a barrack outside the prison camp.

During the first night that Maurer stayed in the camp, a railroad transport with prisoners from Buchenwald arrived. This transport, of at least 4,480 but probably 4,800 prisoners, had left Buchenwald already on April 7th. The time for travel was estimated as 24 hours and supplied with food accordingly: according to the testimony of the SS-Untersturmführer Hans Mehrbach, in charge of the train, a handful of cooked potatoes, 500 gram bread, 50 gram sausage and 25 gram margarine per person. Actually, the train was nearly for 21 days on the way and Mehrbach could only once, on the twelfth day, obtain further supplies in the form of 3000 breads

- 19 Report of the International Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War (September 1, 1939–June 30, 1947). Volume I: General Activities. Geneva 1948, p. 620; Hans Haug, *Menschlichkeit für alle. Die Weltbewegung des Roten Kreuzes und des Roten Halbmondes*, Bern, Stuttgart 2001, p. 69; Werner Rings, *Advokaten das Feindes. Das Abenteuer der politischen Neutralität*, Wien/Düsseldorf 1966, pp. 122–124.
- 20 *The Work of the IRC for Civilian Detainees in German Concentration Camps from 1939 to 1945*. Geneva 1975, p. 121 ff. (reproduced in the forms of extracts in the material from Linden); Marcus J. Smith, *The Harrowing of Hell. Dachau, Albuquerque 1972*, pp. 256 ff. The 1975 published version of Mauerer's report diverges in some formulations and details from the one of Smith. A detailed, however somewhat freely spruced up and inaccurate regarding dates, as well as based on uncertain sources, description of the Red Cross Commission, presented Christian Bernadac. *La Libération des Camps. Le Dernier Jour de Notre Mort*, Paris 1995, pp. 645–649.
- 21 Arthur Haulot, *Lagertagebuch Januar 1943–Juni 1945*, in: *Dachauer Hefte 1* (1985), pp. 129–203: here p. 192. According to the testimony of Haulot, who met Maurer personally, these food packages were intended for “the people of the West”. The Dutch prisoner Floris B. Bakels noted in his diary on April 27th “the French get packages again. In fact why not we?” Floris B. Bakels, *Nacht und Nebel. Der Bericht eines holländischen Christen aus deutschen Gefängnissen und Konzentrationslagern*, Frankfurt a.M. 1979, p. 338. According to Bernadac, *Libération*, p. 648, Maurer arrived with seven trucks at the camp.

and 3000 little bits of cheese.²² On April 22nd, when the train stopped in Nammering near Passau, the prisoners received additional food for the second time — the result of a food collection of the parish priest of Aicha vorm Wald, Johann Bergmann. Mehrbach deliberately did not mention this in his testimony before American interrogators, for in Nammering not only were prisoners who died during the transport cremated, but a large number of prisoners were shot. Altogether nearly 800 corpses were cremated or buried there.²³ According to Johann Bergmann's testimony, the train left Nammering on April 22nd with 3,100 prisoners. That “Mehrbach brought them safe and sound to Dachau,” as was told to the priest later, is, however, anything but correct. The train was parked at a rail siding within the confines of the SS-garrison in the night from April 27th to the 28th. The presumed scarcely 800 survivors were taken to the camp. More than 2,300 corpses remained.²⁴

According to a report by the American journalist Marguerite Higgins, who entered the camp as the first reporter, the prisoners in the camp had refused an order of the SS to unload the corpses.²⁵ This is entirely within the scope of the possible, for the SS displayed signs of disintegration already for a number of days. On April 23rd, the outside work detachments no longer left the camp.²⁶ During the following days quite a number of the commanding SS-officers took off.²⁷ The last camp commander, appointed in November 1943, SS-Obersturmbannführer Eduard Weiter, left the camp on April 26th. He shot himself in the castle Itter, a Dachau satellite camp in Tyrol, on May 6th.²⁸ It is not quite clear who assumed the command of Dachau after Weiter took off. There are, however, clues that for a period of two to three days Martin Weil, who had already been camp commander from September 1942 to November 1943 took over the command. According to Günther Kimmel, Weiß had been ordered back to Dachau shortly before the end of the war, “presumably to give a hand to the commandant

- 22 IfZ-Archiv, Nürnberger Dokumente, NO 2192, testimony Hans Mehrbach.
- 23 *The Death Train from Buchenwald. Eye Witness Report of Johann Bergmann*, former parish priest of Aicha vorm Wald, *Passauer Neue Presse*, 19 April 1955, reprinted in: *Buchenwald. Mahnung und Verpflichtung. Dokumente und Berichte*. Forth, completely new edited edition, Berlin 1983, pp. 503–505.
- 24 Pierre C. T. Verheye, *The Train Ride into Hell*. Unpublished manuscript. The author thanks Mr. Verheye, Tucson, Arizona, for important references about the train transport from Buchenwald.
- 25 Hermann Weiß, *Dachau und die Internationale Öffentlichkeit, Reaktion auf die Befreiung des Lagers*, in: *Dachauer Hefte 1* (1985), pp. 12–38, here p. 27.
- 26 Distel, *Befreiung (liberation)*, p. 6.
- 27 IfZ-Archiv, Nürnberger Dokumente, NO 1253, testimony Visintainer.
- 28 Johannes Tüchel, *Die Kommandanten des Konzentrationslager Dachau*, in: *Dachauer Hefte 10* (1994), *Täter und Opfer*, pp. 69–90, here p. 88 ff.

and to stop irregularities".²⁹ Kupfer-Koberwitz confirms the presence of Weiß on April 23, 1945.³⁰ On April 28th, SS-Standartenführer Kurt Becher arrived at Dachau and engaged in a discussion with the camp commandant. Becher maintained later that he could no longer remember the name of the man. However, it stated with a "W" and it was a lieutenant colonel of the SS, thus an Obersturmbannführer. This is exactly the rank that Weiß had then.³¹ It is, therefore, to be assumed that Weiß was Becher's partner in the discussion. Becher informed that the concentration camp was to be handed over through a negotiator. He could refer regarding this to an order by Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the chief of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, who was near Linz and to whom Himmler had delegated his functions in the South-German region shortly before.³² Though Kaltenbrunner had described a surrender as obsolete, considering the war situation, in a telephone conversation with Becher on the same day, Becher, however, succeeded to get Kaltenbrunner's consent for it. Becher told Weiß, who had stated that he did not believe in the possibility of an orderly surrender, he definitely didn't have to execute the surrender personally.³³

It seems that Weiß took off — he was arrested by the Americans in Mühldorf on May 2nd³⁴ — and entrusted the just 23-year-old Untersturmführer Heinrich Wicker, who was stationed in Dachau since the turn of the year 1944/45, the surrender of the camp.³⁵ On April 29th, when the arrival of the American troops was just a question of hours, Wicker also wanted to take off with his men. Victor Maurer tried his best to deter him from that. The Red Cross delegate was afraid of assaults by the unguarded CC-prisoners against the local population and the spread of the typhus epidemic.

29 Günther Kimmel, *Das Konzentrationslager Dachau. Eine Studie zu den nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen*, in: Martin Broszat/Elke Fröhlich (Hrsg.), *Bayern in der NS-Zeit, Bd. 2: Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konflikt*, München u.a. 1979, pp. 349–413, hier p. 373.

30 Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz, *Dachauer Tagebücher. Die Aufzeichnungen des Häftlings 24814*, München 1997, p. 432.

31 Tuchel, *Die Kommandanten*, p. 87.

32 Peter Black, *Ernst Kaltenbrunner. Vasall Himmlers: Eine SS-Karriere*, Paderborn u.a. 1991, p. 271 ff.

33 IfZ-Archiv. Eichmann-trial, *Beweisdokument 827*, witness evidence by Kurt Becher, pp. 3–5.

34 Tuchel, *Die Kommandanten*, p. 88. Condemned to death in the first large Dachau-trial, Weiß was executed in Landsberg on May 26, 1946.

35 *The Work of the IRCS*, p. 122 ff. Maurer incorrectly spells the name 'Wickert'. The biographical date about Wickert are based on a friendly information of the Deutsche Dienststelle, Berlin, from May 13, 1997. The identity of Heinrich Wicker with the one mentioned by Maurer as 'Wickert' is confirmed by the comparison of a picture on the list of missed personnel with the pictures of the meeting of Maurer and Eicker with General Linden.

He succeeded to persuade Wicker to stay and to come to the following agreement: The guard towers were to remain occupied to keep the prisoners under control and to prevent them from fleeing. Companies not engaged in guard duty were to assemble unarmed in a yard,³⁶ the entire garrison were to retain the right to withdraw to their own lines.³⁷ Since the Americans were already so close in the night from Saturday to Sunday that the sound of battle could be heard, most of the officers, rank and file and employees had fled the SS-garrison.³⁸ When Maurer arrived at the prison camp Sunday morning about 10.30 am, he found the guard towers manned. A white flag fluttered from one of the towers.

Shock and Irrational Reactions (Kurzschlussreaktionen)

On the same morning, the 3rd battalion of the 157th infantry regiment of the 45th infantry division of the U.S. army received the order to occupy the camp Dachau. The battalion commander, Felix S. Sparks, designated the I-company to execute the order and personally took over the command. Shortly before noon, the Americans, coming from the west, reached the SS-compound.³⁹ This consisted by no means of only the concentration camp; actually the camp comprised only a small part in terms of area. The SS-training camp on Dachau represented "a central military base for soldierly and ideological education of the SS-rank and file".⁴⁰ Dachau was the garrison of the executive school (Führerschule) of the SS-Economic and Management Service, the technical armament educational school, the medical service school of the Waffen-SS and other educational institutions. In addition, there were numerous administrative offices and the location of large economic enterprises of the SS. There were 224 structures in the SS part of the compound alone.⁴¹ In the east it was bounded by the small canalized creek Würm which at the same time formed the western boundary of the prisoners' camp. This was shaped in the form of a rectangle with the measurements of 583 times 278 meters.⁴² The entrance to the entire camp

36 It is not quite clear which yard was meant; probably the one behind the main building of the prison camp.

37 *The Work of the ICRC*, pp. 122 f.

38 In January 1945, the guard detachment comprised 3544 men and 62 women; cf. the compilation of the IfZ Fa 183, Bl.8.

39 Henke, *Amerikanische Besetzung*, p. 917.

40 Sybille Steinbacher, *Dachau — die Stadt und das Konzentrationslager in der NS-Zeit: die Untersuchung einer Nachbarschaft*, Frankfurt a.M. u.a. 1993, p. 90.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Klaus Drobisch/Günther Wieland, *Das System der NS-Konzentrationslager 1933–1939*, Berlin 1995, p. 271.

complex was about one kilometer west of the prisoners' camp and was not visible from there.⁴³

Nevertheless, the Americans were immediately and without warning confronted by the extreme horrors of the concentration camp universe: On the access road to the entrance of the SS-camp there stood the train that had arrived from Buchenwald one and a half days before — a long train with 39 wagons⁴⁴ — and in most of them there were corpses, the emaciated bodies of dead prisoners. Some lay shot next to the tracks. The scene was described in the following way in an informational bulletin for officers of the 42nd division: "In these stinking cars were seen the bodies of these people prisoners too weak even to get out. A few tried, and they made a bloody heap in the door of one of the cars. They had been machine gunned by the SS. A little girl was in that car. In another car, sitting on the bodies of his comrades, his face contorted with pain frozen by death, was the body of one who completed the amputation of his gangrenous leg with own hands and covered the stump with paper. Underneath was one with a crushed skull (...) Close by was one who had been beaten until his entrails protruded from his back. But most of them had simply died in the attitudes of absolute exhaustion that only starving men can assume."⁴⁵ This sight distressed the U.S. soldiers profoundly: "Combat veterans wept, stared with sullen moveless faces, and anger sharpened their already edgy nerves."⁴⁶ The whisper slogan "Take no prisoners here" made its rounds and found evidently general assent.⁴⁷

43 Cf. the camp plan by Paul Berben, Dachau 1933-1945. The Official History. London 1975, p. 271, as well as the large-format printed aerial picture in Mollo, Dachau, p. 6 ff.

44 Verhey, Train Ride.

45 Cited in Weiß, Internationale Öffentlichkeit, p. 20 ff. Pictures of the train a.o. in: Abzug, Vicious Heart, p. 90; München — 'Hauptstadt der Bewegung', hrsg. von Münchner Stadtmuseum, München 1993, p. 244; Antony Penrose (ed.), Lee Miller's War Photographer and Correspondent with the Allies in Europe 1944-1945, London 1992, p. 182 ff; Gun, Stunde Bildteil 1.

46 Abzug, Vicious Heart, p. 90; further proof for the mood in Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 50 (in this protocol the question and reply number is always referred to). GI's who came to the camp shortly after liberation were also deeply shocked at the sight of the train. Cf. Dan P. Daugherty, My Recollection of Dachau, in 45th Division News, February 1997. Copy in the archive of KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau. Similarly, Holger Hagen, 'Im schlimmsten Alptraum meines Lebens'. Die Eindrücke des ehemaligen US-Leutnants Holger Hagen vom kurz zuvor befreiten Konzentrationslager Dachau, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung/Dachauer Neueste: 50th anniversary of the liberation of Dachau. Special edition, May 1995, p. 14ff; Chuck Ferree, Dachau Liberation, <http://remember.org/dachlib.html> (The author thanks Margret Chatwin, Munich, for the transmission of this testimony).

47 Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 177, 856 ff., 884 ff.; Buechner, Avenger, p. XXIX.

The Americans encountered the first SS-men at about the end of the train or a little further on. Four men approached the GI's with folded hands on their heads and surrendered to lieutenant W., the commander of the I-company. He ordered them to enter an empty wagon of the train of corpses and shot them down with his pistol. The prisoners — or at least some of them — were not dead, actually. Cries of pain and moaning could be heard from the car. The Private P. entered the car and finished off the men who were lying on the floor with eight or nine shots. "Well, I don't know who suggested it," replied the soldier, clearly agitated, to the corresponding question of the deputy inspector general Whitaker, "but they were all hollering [the wounded are evidently meant] and taking on and I never like to see anybody suffer, and I had one brother killed by them and one lost his leg, so I didn't like to see them suffer."⁴⁸

When advancing further, the American soldiers faced the military hospital buildings that stood in the immediate vicinity of the entrance. At least one hundred Germans, among them also a few women, were taken out of the hospital to the road.⁴⁹ Two GI's checked if the patients who remained in the beds were actually unable to walk.⁵⁰ In the meantime, the SS-men were separated from the other prisoners, by order of the commander of the battalion. A Polish prisoner who identified the SS-men, who had exchanged their uniforms for other clothing, helped with that. He mistreated them and punched and kicked them.⁵¹

The Pole was evidently assigned to work in the nearby heating plant.⁵² While the rest of the prisoners stood near the hospital under guard, the segregated SS-men were led to a yard that was divided from the hospital complex by a wall and was not visible from there; it evidently belonged to the power station. The information about their number varies significantly. At the interrogations by Whitaker, estimates between 50 and 125 were given, with the majority ranging from 50 to 75.⁵³ Kern alleges to "about forty men".⁵⁴

48 Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 813-829, 854 ff., 867-875. 915-942, quotation 940 ["Well, I don't know who suggested it, but they were all hollering and taking on and I never like to see anybody suffer, and I had one brother killed by them and one lost his leg, so I didn't like to see them suffer."]

49 Ibid., pp. 50, 378.

50 Ibid., pp. 221. Cf. th. description of Kern, Meineid, p. 245.

51 Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 242, 261, 285. On a picture published by Gun, Bildteil 2, Mollo, p. 15, and Buechner, p. 114, one can see two men in prison uniform who berate a knocked down SS-man. One of them holds a shovel in his hand.

52 Weiß, Internationale Öffentlichkeit, p. 24.

53 Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 56, 163, 222, 258, 349, 378.

54 Kern, Meineid, p. 245.

In the yard, where the coal was stored, the SS-men were lined up against the wall. The officer of the company requested a machine gun. According to some witnesses, the prisoners moved towards the U.S. soldiers from the flanks when the machine gun was placed and made ready to fire.⁵⁵ Another witness, however, testifies that the SS-men just stood there. The company commander had said "get ready to shoot them," someone else had called "fire", and then the shooting had started.⁵⁶ According to the first version, the commander started the firing with his pistol when the prisoners started to approach the Americans, and called "let them have it". The machine gunner C. testified to this, and further stated that Lieutenant W. had wanted to fire the machine gun himself, however, could not get to it on account of the movement among the SS-men.⁵⁷

The machine gunner declared that he fired about 30 to 50 shots in three rounds. Three or four other Americans also fired at the captured SS men, among them Lieutenant Bushyhead, who was armed with a carbine.⁵⁸ The ones hit, fell to the ground, and the uninjured let themselves also fall. Only some SS-men remained standing with raised arms.⁵⁹ "Everything happened so fast, and they were all driven there together, and everything was over. It seemed like a kind of dream to me," thus described Lieutenant Bushyhead this event.⁶⁰ The shooting lasted only a few seconds.⁶¹ But GIs made preparations to continue it. In the meantime, two SS-men tried to commit suicide by cutting their carotid arteries.⁶² It is possible that the interruption of the shooting was caused by the jamming of the machine gun, which the gunner C. tried to repair.⁶³ Linberger ascribes it to the appearance of drunken CC-inmates who "had armed themselves with shovels to kill a man by the name of Weiß".⁶⁴ This statement corresponds

55 Ibid. 50 ff., 73, 194, 237.

56 Ibid. 231-233.

57 Ibid. 342-344.

58 Ibid. 192 ff., 233. Whitaker spells "Busheyhead".

59 This scene is captured in the above described photo: cf. also the testimony Linberger's in Kern, Meineid, p. 245 ff.

60 Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 173.

61 Ibid. 378.

62 Ibid. 104 and Linberger in Kern, Meineid, p. 246. According to Linberger, a man with a red-cross-arm band throw razor blades to the survivors of the shooting and urged them to commit suicide. The wife of a Dr. Müller had in desperation during the shooting action poisoned herself and her two children. The death of a woman and two children is also confirmed by a GI, questioned by Whitaker, who undertook a futile rescue attempt with the help of a German doctor; Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 115.

63 Ibid. 345.

64 This could have meant the former camp commander Martin Weiß, who, however, at that moment, was no longer in Dachau.

with an often published photo, among others also in Buechner, in which two CC-inmates can be seen who threaten and insult a man lying on the ground. One of them has evidently a shovel in his hands. In the background, the SS-men lying at the wall, as well as an American are visible.⁶⁵ It cannot be established from the available sources if the prisoners actually killed the man. One indication that points to this, however, is that Whitaker found among others the corpse of a man with a broken skull when he inspected the coal yard on May 3rd.⁶⁶ According to a report of the "Associated Press" of May 1, 1945, the corpses of two Germans "slain by a Pole and a Czech, who had worked in the engine room" lay in front of the power station.⁶⁷

The events in the coal yard lasted in any case only a few minutes before Colonel Sparks appeared on the scene and ordered, evidently very angry, to cease the firing.⁶⁸ Sparks, who had been positioned about 100 to 200 meters on the other side of the wall, ran immediately to the coal yard where he heard the shooting.⁶⁹ "When I went over there there were" testified one of his aides, "I should say about seventyfive or so lying on the ground. It looked like they were pretty badly wounded. Then, somebody gave the order for them to get up and most of them got up."⁷⁰ The survivors were brought to the old town of Dachau where they were kept first in the hall of the Hörhammer Inn together with other prisoners of war.⁷¹ A witness, who a short time later was at the coal yard, saw there 15 or 16 dead or wounded Germans lying at the wall. He recognized that a few were still alive from their slight movements. The witness in question is Howard Buechner, the author of the book "Dachau. The Hour of the Avenger".⁷²

Howard Buechner's Constructions

Buechner's description, published in 1986, differs quite substantially from his witness testimony on May 5, 1945. He describes the scene in his book the following way: When he and his companions arrived at the hospital buildings, they had heard machine gun salvos and pistol shots. Because of curiosity, he had walked towards the noise, looked around the corner

65 Buechner, Avenger, p. 114.

66 Whitaker investigation documents, inspector's exhibit.

67 Weiß, Internationale Öffentlichkeit, p. 24.

68 Ibid., pp. 345, 50, 234 ff., 269, 281.

69 Ibid., pp. 393 ff.

70 Ibid., p. 378.

71 Linberger in Kern, Meineid, p. 246.

72 Whitaker, Interrogation protocol 363-374 (testimony Buechner). The spelling in Whitaker — Howard E. Buchner — is incorrect, correctly, Howard A. Buechner.