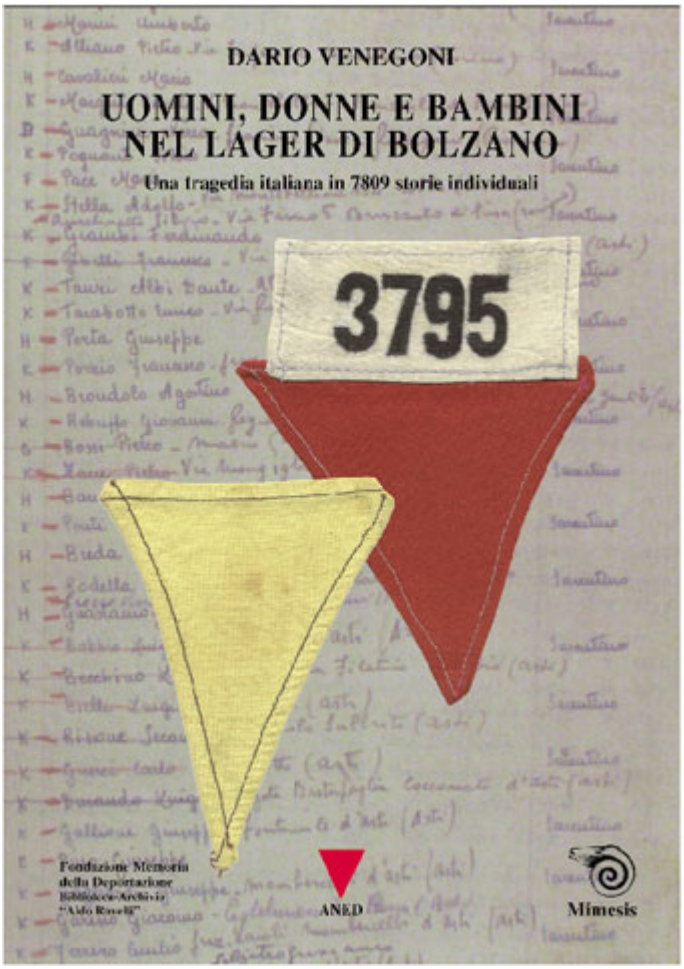
Dario Venegoni

# Men, Women and Children in the Bolzano concentration camp

## An Italian tragedy in 7,982 individual stories




Translation by Corey Dimarco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*Dedicated to Italo Tibaldi,*
*who worked for 50 years to identify deported Italians.*

# Acknowledgements

This research would not been possible with the collaboration of a wide number of people and organisations.

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Any errors, inaccuracies or omissions which remain in the book despite all the help I have received, are therefore my responsibility alone.

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# Contents

# Preface to the second edition

This second edition appears nearly one year after the first. The publication of this research in June 2004 generated considerable interest in a Nazi camp about which little had been said or written. Inspired by this investigation, dozens of survivors and family members of ex-prisoners in the camp came forward, identifying new names, and suggesting corrections, integrations and deletions from the list of the deported.

The new list offered to readers in this edition contains 7,982 names, 173 more than in the first edition. This is the result of many additions and some twenty deletions: thanks to new research, it has been possible to clarify that some entries referred to the same person, in one case indicated by correct personal information and in another by a "war-name", false names used as cover during partisan operations. Two women were prioritised in the registrations with their own surnames rather than that of their husbands. One priest was included with his baptismal name rather than his religious name.

There are nearly 200 additions. The first indication of a name missing from the list came on 15 June 2004, the same day the research was officially presented at a convention hall in Bolzano. Maria Simoncioni, who had spent some weeks in the camp between September and October 1944 came to that presentation. Offering undeniable evidence of her status as an ex-prisoner, she brought with her original red triangle and release order signed by Karl Titho, an SS lieutenant in the camp. I have not found any trace of her deportation in any of the available sources, but there can be no doubt nonetheless. Since then, hardly a week has gone by without new information. In hundreds of cases, thanks to testimony by the people involved or documents supplied by family members, we have been able to add considerable new information to existing entries on the list: dates of birth, or date and circumstances of arrest, or other data that allows for a more precise rendering of the portraits that form the individual entries in this book. Compared to the first edition, for instance, we now know the birth-dates of an additional 500 people.

This new edition is the result of work that the publication of the first edition a year ago did not interrupt. Of all this work, we would like to highlight one case that has remained particularly close to our hearts: Anna Azzali, deported at the same time as her husband Luigi (who was then sent to Mauthausen and murdered in Gusen). As noted in the first edition, Anna Azzali was seven months pregnant in the first days of December 1944. This information came from a secret letter we had seen in which Ada Buffulini asked Ferdinando Visco Gilardi (who organised the assistance committee for the prisoners, from outside the camp), to send a packet of essentials "at least once a week", "because she is seven months pregnant and very wasted away, and needs nourishment urgently". We were unable to find out any more than this, except that the name of this woman appears on a list of prisoners helped by Visco Gilardi's committee, an indication that Ada Buffulini's request was met. Despite our investigations, we did not find out any more for months and months, until, in the process of producing this second edition, we decided to try the impossible and call every Azzali listed in the phone-book, in the hope of tracing a family member. We were fortunate. In March 2005, we managed to trace the very same Anna Rossi Azzali, who had turned 94 years old on 30 November 2004, and so we were able to resume her personal story in the entry dedicated to her. The lady remembers well those months in Bolzano, and has kept her red triangle (denoting a deported partisan) in a frame, along with her registration number from Bolzano. Her story deserved recounting as well, and today we are finally able to do so. Much that we have uncovered in this last year has added many distinct details to the picture suggested in the first edition of this work. And it offers additional confirmation of the critical role that the camp at Bolzano played in the Nazi extermination machine.

Sixty years after the end of the war, there are still at least 1,000 prisoners from via Resia to identify. And who knows if we will ever do so.

*d.v.*

*(English translator's note: this is a translation of the second edition from the original Italian - references and footnotes refer to texts in Italian, with original page references preserved)*

# Men, Women and Children in the Bolzano concentration camp

In via Resia, in Bolzano, in the zone where the Nazi *Durchgangslager* (DL) in Bolzano operated between the summer of 1944 and spring of 1945, there is today a large residential area. All that remains of the camp's original design is the outer-wall, forming a rectangle of 91 by 146 meters. For some time now, the wall has been under the protection of the City council in Bolzano, which has produced large illustrative panels around the perimeter.

For years, little was said about this camp, either locally or nationally, interest was low and memories erased.

The most significant research carried out on the Camp was done 25 years ago, when a committee was created in Trento to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Resistance and of liberation, conducted by a young researcher, Luciano Happacher, who gathered together everything then known about the DL.[1] In his work, Happacher reproduced the names contained in an unofficial camp register that had fortunately survived, and in lists secretly put together by the Resistance.[2] Other work on the War in the region greatly clarified the *context* in which the camp at Gries was located for nine long months. The horrors that are strewn across that period became even clearer, nearly 60 years later, thanks to the efforts of the Procurator of the Military Tribunal in Verona, Bartolomeo Costantini, who was able to bring the sadistic SS guard Michael Seifert to the dock (who was hiding from justice in Vancouver, in Canada) and secure a life sentence against him in November 2000.

However, this trial served to demonstrate the substantial disinterest within the mass media in dealing with an event that could have had significant impact on public opinion. This disinterest was partly the result of the extremely limited knowledge within Italy of the camp and its history.

In the spring of 2000, when Italo Tibaldi published (on the ANED[3] Internet site) his lists containing the names of nearly 40,000 Italians deported from Nazi camps (the result of research stretching back nearly half a century),[4] he was able to gather together 4,075 deportees from Bolzano, although he was well aware that he was well short of his ultimate objective, and that there were at least 5,000 other prisoners to identify.

This work was born here, from discussions with Italo Tibaldi. It was our clear opinion that if we could add the names of all the people known to have been in the camp when it was liberated to the names of all those who left had Bolzano previously for other camps inside the Reich itself, it would be a significant step forward. And if it was possible to draw on the rich vein of memories relating to the camp, and on research conducted locally on the victims of the annihiliation and extermination processes, we would be able to come much closer to the reality of the situation.

The publication by the European Union proclaimation of November 2003 for "projects aimed at preserving the sites of Nazi concentration camps as historical monuments" which had "the principal objective of keeping alive the memory of the victims of the Nazi concentration camps" was the push that had been lacking previously. The timescales indicated in the proclaimation – 12 months – soon seemed rather too tight for research on this scale. But we knew we could count on the help of many people who have been dedicated to this investigation for many years, locally or on a national level. What we could not have imagined, is that we found, in many different Italian archives that we worked through, various unpublished documents that supplied us with extremely valuable information.

This team-work allows us to present a list of names that is clearly richer in content that what we started with, but this is not all: the catalogue of individuals that follows contain a vast amount of information on arrests, mass round-ups, the repression of the anti-fascist resistance movement, the anti-Jewish persecutions, the activities of the prisons, the planning for annihiliation and extermination carried out by the Nazis, and the active collaboration offered by organisations of the RSI. We were looking for information on individuals, and instead we ended up with a complete picture of the final phase of the War, with its thousands of different aspects, its key personalities, and its many local pecularities. It is a picture in which the traces of thousands of individual experiences, which can only be touched on here, serve to outline the essential features of an immense Italian tragedy: a tragedy that threw entire communities into confusion, and changed forever the lives of thousands of men, women and children.

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[1] L. Happacher, *Il lager di Bolzano*, Comitato provinciale per il 30° Anniversario della Resistenza e della Liberazione, Trento 1979

[2] See the section "The Sources"

[3] Associazione Nazionale Ex Deportati politici nei campi nazisti; (ANED) is the organisation for survivors of the Nazi camps and the families of the victims. Founded immediately after the war, it has recently created the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione – Biblioteca Archivio Pina e Aldo Ravelli, based in Milan, to conduct research into the deportations and "to give a future to memory".

[4] www.deportati.it

Sixty years ago, many prisoners in via Resia risked their safety to discover the names of new arrivals and to sneak notes out of the camp containing their names to allow the Resistance to notify their families, in order to ensure that some remnant of the drama that afflicted so many prisoners remains available for the future; those men and women offered us a route, and we are proud to have followed it in our turn, even if only briefly and many years after the events in question.

## HOW TO READ THE ENTRIES

In order to easily consult the data that follows here, we have provided a type of *legend*, following the order in which the data appears in individual entries.

The objective of this research was to document the largest possible number of individual *names* of deportees from the camp. It was not to list for every name the large number of sources available. In the Notes, we have throughout documented all the sources from which we have gathered information on the names in our list; on occasions when the presence of a particular individual has been sufficiently documented, we have not sought out further confirmation. This is the reason why for each name, at most six sources are identified. We tried all that was possible, on the other hand, to provide further confirmation for names mentioned in only one source.

### The names

The two lists made up in 1945 when the camp at Bolzano was still operating that have reached us are written entirely by hand.[5] They are probably copies of lists originally drawn up by the camp administration, which were also almost certainly hand-written and which were destroyed. Both lists begin with register no27. In this register, the number is associated with the name Luigi Rimer, the second with the name Luigi Rinner. The similarity of first names is obvious, but the difference between the two lists, after the first name, is important. There are hundreds of discrepancies like this. Which of the two spellings is correct (assuming that either is)? Frequently, it has been possible to identify the exact spelling of names with certainity. But sometimes – as in the example mentioned above of Rimer/Rinner – no further sources have come to light. For all that is known, that prisoner might have called himself in either of the two ways. In controversial cases, sometimes, the first name is exactly known, in others the second. On some occasions, both are inexact. This is the case of Giovanni Faziani, from Ravenna, included in both lists as "Fozziani", and we know that this is definitely an error, as Mr Faziani later joined the Imola section of ANED, and in doing do, obviously gave his exact personal details.

So how can we resolve the discrepancies between the sources? For this research, we simply chose one version, and noted the existence of a second spelling, throughout or in different parts. It was decide to always choose the name noted in the registry – if known, obviously – compared to that by which many prisoners were known: we find many more Luigi's than Gino's, for example. In these cases, discrepancies between sources are indicated in the notes.

Similarly, female deportees were registered under their maiden name, instead of their married names, even if many of them were known by their married name. The female prisoner known to everyone in the camp as Margherita Montanelli (from the surname of her famous husband), who was already in 1944 a noted journalist, is included in our list as Colins de Tarsienne Montanelli Margareth.

From a large group of prisoners, who mainly came from Belluno, aside from the name, the patronym is also included. It seemed appropriate to included this additional information, because in some cases, only the use of the patronym allowed for identification between two namesakes. This occurs above all in cases of deportees rounded-up in groups from small towns, where many people had the same surname and often also the same first name. In our list, for instance, Luigi De Bernardin is listed twice: it is possible to confirm that this refers to namesakes and not to the same person, because we know that one of the son of Giovanni, while the other was the son of Luigi. There are other similar cases. Instances of probable examples of namesakes that cannot be clarified are indicated in the Notes by the symbol §.

Anti-fascists and partisans, who would give false documents when they were arrested, were also known in the camps by those false names, invented names, whenever the Nazis or the fascists had been unable to discover their real identity. Maybe the most notable example of this is Gianfranco Maris, president of ANED (Associazione Nazionale Ex Deportati politici nei campi nazisti), who was registered both in Bolzano and Mauthausen as Gianfranco Lanati. But there are many other similar cases, like that of Mattea/Mariani, or Daveri/Bianchi, and others beyond. In these cases, it was again decided to rely on real names, noting false names in brackets.

Analysis of the names allows us to individuate many entire families. Jews were often taken from their houses in groups, without any concern for the eldest family members or the youngest.[6] But the same thing also happened

[5] See the section "The Sources"
[6] See the section "Date of birth"

to many non-Jewish prisoners. Deportations of two or more brothers, of a parent with one or more children, and of both parents, are very common. At Bolzano, moreover, there were many cases of hostages, certainly running into the hundreds, people taken in place of a specific family member that the Nazis and fascists had not been able to find. When they could not locate a partisan, they often sent a family member to the camp instead. Augusto Tebaldi, a member of the CLN in Soave,[7] who had escaped arrest, gave himself up in order to free his brother who had been taken as a hostage, and was deported from Bolzano to Flossenbürg. Amabile Gorza, from Pedavena (BL), was taken to via Resia as a hostage in place of his uncle, Vittore Gorza. The entire family Nulli-Bonomelli (comprising six members) was deported and held in the camp in place of a partison who had been able to escape torture in the German headquarters in Brescia.[8]

**Places of birth**

At the moment of arrest, many of those who would later be deported to Bolzano were without identity papers, and a clerk registered what they said about their personal details. But even where documents did exist, registration was carried out nonetheless – as in the German section of the Milanese prison in San Vittore – by German-speaking personnel, obviously bewildered by Italian toponymy. The outcome was that frequently such registrations are rarely more than approximations, in the lists that we have consulted, and it is rare to find the name of the province listed along with the place of birth. Cesate, which is in the province of Milan, is nearly always listed as Cessate, without any further information. Such errors also occured in the case of the final deportations across the Brenner Pass.

Where there is absolute certainty of an error in transcription in the original register, it has been corrected here. Where such certainty is absent, we have stayed faithful to the details in the register in question.

Many prisoners gave as their place of birth areas that had already lost their administrative identity (Mario Molteni and Giovanni Pirovano, for instance, stated their place of birth as Gorla, which had already been swallowed up within Milan). In such cases, their preferences have been left in the list, which, in any case, add something to our knoweldge.

In the same way, we have not changed preferred details on the province of birth even where the later creation of new provinces would require updating the list. People born in Villadossola in 1944, for example, were in the province of Novara – as is written in our list – whereas today, Villadossola is part of the province of Verbania.

On the other hand, where only the city of birth is known, we have added the relevant province, to assist readers in identifying the origin of the deportees from their geographic area. Vittorino Rizzi, born in Colico, therefore came from the province of Lecco, even if at the time of these events, that province, as a discrete administrative unit, did not even exist. This is not always possible. Sergio Dalla Rosa came from Algange. But there is no such community in Italy today. Perhaps it is outside Italy; perhaps it relates to a hamlet, or maybe the place of birth was simply badly written. The fact remains that, today, we are not in a position to demonstrate which province this town relates to.

Analysis of the birthplaces of the prisoners in via Resia provides some interesting conclusions. In the first place, it reduces the high number of countries represented in the lists. People born in Italy were obviously the overwhelming majority: but roughly 150 people came from 29 other countries: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brasil, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Libya, Lithuania, Holland, Polond, Romania, Russia, Silesia, Slovenia, Spain, Swizterland, Tunisia, Turkey, Hungary, USSR, Uruguay and the USA. A list that today should be updated, following the dissolution of the USSR and the fragmentation of Yugoslavia.

From these various sources, we can clearly see a part of the history of the anti-Jewish persecutions that swept Europe, but also the result of decades of Italian migration abroad.

As regards the anti-Jewish persections, we need only think of the 31 men, women and children who came from the Jewish communities in Istanbul and Smyrna (in Turkey); or the tragic fate of Alberto Nissim, born in Baghdad in Iraq, who arrived in Italy by means not currently known: arrested and deported to Bolzano, he was murdered in the camp on 24 February 1945.

The country of origin of camp inmates is testament, as suggested, to patterns of Italian emigration, and the links with the mother country maintained by many children of emigrants: there are children of Italians who went to

[7] English translator's note: CLN was the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (Committee of National Liberation), an underground cross-party anti-fascist partisan organisation.
[8] More details are given in the section "Date of birth"

seek their fortune in South America, Fiorenzo Barello, Angelo Fiore, Mario Re, Giuseppe Silvestri and Silvestro Verde, born in different parts of Argentina. Returning to their country of origin maybe due to conscription, they were arrested for reasons unknown and deported to Bolzano (from there, some to Dachau, some to Flossenbürg, and some to Mauthausen). There are many similar cases of Italians born abroad as a result of Italian emigration, like the many born in the USA with clearly Italian surnames, or the even greater number born in Switzerland, France, Belgium and Germany, or the colonies and territories under Italian administration, such as Libya or Dalmatia.

Alongside these Italians, we find various foreign citizens, about whom unfortunately personal information is currently lacking. There are Russians, Croats, Slovenians, French etc, about whom it remains to uncover journeys and destinations.

Analysis of places of birth contradicts, moreover, a widely held belief, that Italian deportees to the Bolzano camp were only from the northern regions. It is true that the authority of the Nazis and the fascists in the period when the camp functioned only extended across the area controlled by the Republic of Salò (excluding therefore the entire central and southern areas of Italy); however, it is also true that amongst the deportees, we find hundreds of people born in those central and southern regions that had already been liberated. Running through the names on the list, in fact, we can find 44 Neapoletans, 26 from Catania, 19 from Sassari, 13 from Cagliari, 42 Romans, 21 from Palermo, 17 from Messina, 24 from Bari, 18 from Foggia etc. Mostly, these are cases of young men recalled to the army and caught unaware in northern Italy by the Armistice of 8 September. In many other cases, they are immigrants, heavily involved along with the residents of these areas in the anti-fascist struggle, in strikes and partisan activity. In some of these examples, we can also see a bitter fate, like that of a group rounded-up in the Foligno (PG) mountains, already deported to Fossoli and then transferred to Bolzano (and later to Mauthausen and Flossenburg) at a time when their home towns were celebrating liberation.[9]

**Dates of birth**

The use of a wide range of sources has highlighted differences between them on the question of dates of birth as well. As always, in these cases, the criterion used has been to give weight to the sources closest to the people in question, in the absence of a birth certificate from the relevant town.

However, the birth-dates of nearly 4,800 deportees have been identified, which creates a picture considerably more detailed compared to that offered to date by the most commonly known registers from Bolzano,[10] which offered only a name, surname and registration number for each prisoner, plus – occasionally – some indication of address.

In the camp, there were young and old, and also various children.

The oldest group, amongst the known deportees to Bolzano, is represented by ten Jews (male and female). The oldest was Clelia Bassani in Cester, born in Rovigo in December 1864, and deported from Milan. She was definitely a victim of Bolzano: Clelia Bassani had just turned 80 when she died in the camp on 15 January 1945.

Maurizio Bolley was nearly 80 as well (born in Holland in 1865), when he was liberated from Bolzano at the end of the war. He was sent to via Resia when contact with the Brenner Pass had already been broken due to Allied bombing, and it was this that saved him from extermination.

The fate of Ida Ravenna from Ferrara was very different: born in April 1866, and deported from Verona on 1 August 1944, she was forced to climb with many others into a long train departing for Auschwitz on 24 October, regardless of her 78 years of age. Ida Ravenna was murdered in the gas chambers in Birkenau the same day she arrived there: it was 28 October 1944.

Amongst those deported for political reasons, the oldest prisoner for whom confirmed information exists was Eugenio Damiani, from Brescia, sent to Via Resia from Fossoli at the age of 74. Damiani could not endure the hardships of his deportation, and died in the hospital at Bolzano on 14 August 1944, a few days after his son, Mario, who had arrived with him from Fossoli, had been deported to Mauthausen. Another case is that Osvaldo Cipparoli, arrested at Busalla (Genova): he was already 70 when he was sent to Bolzano. He was also considered useful material for the Thousand-Year Reich: he deported for Dachua on a convoy of 5 October 1944, where he

[9] On the round-ups and deportations from Foligno (PG) see O. Lucchi (a cura di), *Curve nella memoria... angoli del presente. La deportazione in Germania dalla montagna folignate*, Foligno 2002.

[10] See the section “The Sources”

was assigned as slave labour. He survived for a month and a half, amidst suffering that is hard to comprehend: by 20 November the same year, he was already dead, broken by the unholy mechanisms of the Nazi camp.

Cipparole was not a rare case: Nazism had a great need for slave labour to help prop up their war-machine, which by now was in trouble on all fronts. The Reich needed airplanes, armoured vehicles, munitions, and also had to replace the men sent from the factories to the front. It therefore needed the strong, and the weak or slender could expect little. Another 70-year old, Candido Armellini from Polesella (Rovigo), already in Bolzano from 4 September, was deported to Flossenbürg as slave labour.

None of the 70+ year olds deported from Bolzano to camps in the Third Reich survived. The oldest survivor, from those who left Bolzano for camps across the Alps, was farmer Giovanni Zenore, born in March 1880. Hence, he was 64 when he was sealed inside a wagon sent to Mauthausen on 5 August 1944. In the Austrian camp, Giovanni Zenore survived for 9 months, long enough to witness the day of liberation on 5 May 1945.

The most common age groups in our list are those of people born between 1920 and 1926. Most common are those born in 1924 and 1925, with 360 and 348 prisoners respectively; men and women who were 20 years old when they were arrested. Young, fit people in the full bloom of life, we might say: they were the strength deemed necessary for Hitler's factories and building sites.

In the camp, there were also children. Our list contains ten children under 10 years of age.

The youngest of all was a Jewish girl, Esther Misul, known to all as Etti. Born in January 1944, she was one year old when she arrived in via Resia. Her cousin, Vittorio Coen (listed in the camp register as Vittoria) was only one year older. The exact date of birth of Patrizia and Roberta Melli (who were imprisoned in the camp along with their young mother, Nicoletta) is not known: but they were three and two when they were deported in 1945.[11]

Elia Cittone, son of Leone and Sara Ojalvo, was less than three years old when he was forced onto a train that left Bolzano for Ravensbrück on 14 December 1944. The details of this incredible experience are unknown, but it is clear from Liliana Picciotto's *Il libro della memoria* that both mother and son saw the day of liberation.[12]

Amongst those who stayed in the camp longer, we also a non-Jewish child, son of a partisan, arrested and deported as a hostage. Captured in Brescia and taken to the German command headquarters, the father of this child managed a daring escape from that place, at the time one of the most guarded in Italy. The Nazis could not tolerate this embarrassment, and in an attempt to convince the escaped prisoner to give himself up, raided his house, arresting his entire family: his wife, Rosa Nulli Bonomelli,[13] his sister-in-law, father, mother, and his mother-in-law. Apart from his son Ennio, just four years old, who remained in Greis from September 1944 until liberation. A network of help and solidarity (even with the little that was available) was extended around the child in the camp: many sought to get extra rations for him, and make his imprisonment less intolerable. Even Marshal Haage, who was known in the camp for rigorous discipline enforced with violence, is known to have ignored certain "liberties" taken on behalf of the young prisoner. On one occasion, Rosa Nulli Bonomelli remembers that the young boy found the small whistle which Haage used to call the prisoners to roll-call on the *Appellplatz*. Behind the block, he blew as hard as he could into the whistle, causing a real rumpus: all the prisoners stopped their work, whatever that was at that moment, in order to get in position for roll-call. It took several minutes for the camp officials to work out what had happened. On this occasion, the young boy's actions went unpunished.[14]

Amongst the very young in Bolzano, it is necessary to mention also Franco Cetrelli, the youngest of all the Italian political deportees: he was 13 and a half years old when he was arrested in La Spezia, and celebrated his 14th birthday in the Bolzano camp. But the worst was yet to come: forced on a goods train, Franco Cetrelli left for Mauthausen on 14 February 1945, where he arrived four days later. In that hell-hole, the young boy became prisoner number 126,119, and the red triangle was sewn onto his prisoner's uniform. Despite the support of other Italian prisoners, Franco Cetrelli lasted only two months in Mauthausen: destroyed by over-work and violence, he died on 22 April 1945, when in Italy the day of liberation was finally arriving.[15] Mino Micheli has given us a touching portrait of Franco: "He had large ears like propeller fans, a sharp face, a long chin; as he spoke, he gestured with his thin arms, he was educated, full of fear... he came in almost furtively, he was full of fear, and he

[11] Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea in Milan, Fondo archivistico "Cartoteca degli ebrei arrestati", dossier "Fuggiti e scampati".
[12] L. Picciotto, *Il libro della memoria*, Mursia, Milan 2002, pages 190 and 478.
[13] Statements by Rosa Nulli Bonomelli to the author, 10/11/2003 and 11/12/2003
[14] This episode clearly occured between 14 September – when the Nulli-Bonomelli family was deported – and 26 October 1944, since it is referred to in writing by the father Carlo, who escaped from the camp in via Resia on 26 October.
[15] I. Tibaldi, List of Italian deportees to Mauthausen, AFMD, partially published on the ANED site, www.deportati.it, online edition maintained by Dario Venegoni.

was looking for his Italian friends, like a dog who has been beaten and starved looks for his owner in a crowd. And he always asked the same questions: questions that needed a hopeful response; a response that would allow him to feel less alone amongst all these unfortunate unknown and sad people".[16]

Unfortunately, the example of this very young man from La Spezia is not unique. Secondo Robotti, from Soliera (Modena), had been born only months earlier than Franco Cetrelli, on 6 February 1930. He was less than 15 years old when he was deported from Bolzano to Mauthausen, where incredibly he survived to see liberation.[17] The Thousand-Year Reich demanded such contributions from young boys. Thousands of young Germans of Robotti's age were called up for military service in these very weeks, and sent to die on the front-lines.

Also only 14 years old was Noemi, the younger of the Pianegonda sisters, who arrived in Bolzano at the start of February 1945. She remembers that professor Egidio Meneghetti (who became rector of the Atheneum in Padova after the war) gave her lessons in history, Latin and German to keep her occupied: "you must exercise your mind – he repeated – exercise it: protect your memory and you will be free".[18]

In our lists, there are no less than 254 children and teenagers under 18 years old for whom personal details are known. Many of them were apprentices, working in the factories alongside the adults. And alongside the adults, they were also sent to suffer and die in the camps.

Two sets of twins were also transported to the camp: Silvio and Lorenzo Castelletti, born in 1913, who were arrested together and deported the same day to Bolzano and then to its sub-camp in Moos (Moso in Passiria). Even more dramatic is the fate reserved for handicapped twins Alberto and Antonio Vallata, born 23 March 1923, who were deported together to Mauthausen on 1 February 1945. On that same train were two other Vallata brothers, Fioretto and Vittorio, born in the same town as the twins, S. Tomaso Agordino (BL), in 1925 and 1921 respectively. Maybe there were four brothers.

**Women prisoners**

8.4% of the names on the list are female, 671 in total. They were workers, intellectuals, peasants, in percentages barely different from those of the men. Many were housewives, as Marisa Scala told us:[19] but this had not prevented them from helping out in the fields, or in family shops in addition to their domestic work. Many, maybe the majority according to Laura Conti,[20] were women rounded up at random, or had been taken as hostages in places of husbands, sons and family members who had failed to report for slave labour, or who taken to the mountain roads to fight the Nazis and fascists. Maybe the best known hostage was Margareth Colins de Tarsienne (mentioned above), wife of Indro Montanelli. She was in via Resia on the basis of an agreement made between Montanelli and Theo Saewecke, head of the SS in Milan.[21]

In the camp, there were also around 30 prostitutes, deported for reasons that are not clear, and then sent to Genova in November 1944, according to Italo Tibaldi.

All the women were closed inside Block F, regardless of which category they fell into: this proximity created a great deal of tension and constant arguments, but this did not prevent the female camp population from demonstrating the highest solidarity and courage.

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[16] M. Micheli, *I vivi e i morti*, Mondadori, Milan 1967, pp 76-78

[17] I. Tibaldi, Lista dei deportati italiani a Mauthausen, op.cit.

[18] L. Bertoldi, *"La tua memoria ti renderà libera"*, in "Patria Indipendente", no 2, 24 February 2002. Interview with Noemi and Wally Pianegonda by the author, Trieste, 25/9/2004.

[19] Interview with the author, 14/4/2004

[20] L. Conti, *Primi risultati di una ricerca sul Polizeiliches Durchgangslager di Bolzano*, in "Cristallo", VI, 1964, pp 27-41

[21] Letter secretly sent from Bolzano to Lelio Basso by Ada Buffulini: "Dear L., the wife of Montanelli is here with us... she told us that her husband came out of prison, with German permission, with the promise of helping them. For this reason, she is here as a hostage, and she is always afraid that he will do something "against his conscience", because Sevek has said that her fate depends on the behaviour of her husband. Montanelli was to work in Switzerland, but instead he will be very close to Sevek and together with him, he is to exercise some control over the various marshals who produced our documentation at San Vittore with the aim of showing up their deficiencies and so concentrating everything in the hands of Sevek". Archive of the Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, Serie 7 - Resistenza, fasc. 2, s. fasc. 3. The details of the mission that Saewecke entrusted to Montanelli are unknown. It is a fact that Margareth remained at Bolzano until the end of the war, serving as the deputy for the women's Block, and that she earned the respect of all the prisoners (statement by Onorina Brambilla Pesce to the author, April 2004). Theodor Saewecke, sentenced to life imprisonment by the Turin Military Tribunal for crimes committed in Milan, died at his home in Hamburg in January 2001.

Women formed the majority of the clandestine resistance committee within the camp,[22] just as there were more women outside who risked their liberty and safety to help those deported to via Resia, to offer them help, clothing or food, when they were not organising escape attempts. The determination and generosity of these prisoners has been cited as the key to many successful and attempted escapes. The women would approach those who have been selected for transportation north and would secretly pass them files, saws and other utensils collected by the clandestine committee.[23] Thanks to these various tools, some prisoners managed to escape the trains taking them to the death camps. The lists document 61 escapes carried out at Bolzano, its satellite camps or on convoys leaving via Resia.

Outside the camp, it was also the women who undertook the majority of the assistance and solidarity work. Franca Turra should be remembered for all: after the arrest of Ferdinando Visco Gilardi, she became the key organiser responsible for co-ordinating the resistance committee outside the camp, helped by many other women (amongst them, Mariuccia, wife of Visco Gilardi) and various factory workers in the area. Franca Turra died in the winter of 2003, without ever really being properly recognised for her essential role in the Bolzano resistance, conducted in the most difficult circumstances.[24]

The work of the secret committee was doubly risky and difficult for these women: they had to avoid spies and the vigilance of the camp guards and policemen, and overcome the indifference, not to say the open hostility, of many men, who even in the anti-fascist movement struggled to accept that women could assume positions of prominence within the secret organisations, rather than simply accepting orders with discipline.

For some, however, imprisonment proved particularly costly. Bianca Paganini recalls (in statements published by Lidia Beccaria Rolfi e Anna Maria Bruzzone, *Le donne di Ravensbrück*, Einaudi, Turin 1978) that in the convoy that left Bolzano for Ravensbrück on 7 October "was... a pregnant women and others who were ill".

Another pregnant woman was kept in the camp, with its hard work regimen and very poor food. She was Anna Azzali, wife of Luigi Azzali (who was deported and murdered in Mauthausen): the other prisoners rallied round her as well. In a letter secreted out of the camp on 3 December 1944, Ada Buffulini (co-ordinator of the secret resistance committees inside the camp) wrote to "Giacomo" (Ferdinando Visco Gilardi, who co-ordinated assistance activity outside) "I ask you to send regularly (at least once a week) a packet of essentials for Anna Azzali, because she is seven months pregnant and very wasted away, and needs nourishment urgently."[25] This request was certainly acceded to, because her name appears amongst the hundreds of prisoners "assisted" by the secret committee.[26] Mrs Azzali herself, now nearly 95 years old and traced to Milan, remembers receiving food, contained in a large military-type metal box. Freed from Bolzano at Epiphany, her son Giancarlo was born on 4 March 1945, already deprived of his father. He was a very delicate child, and his mother was unable to breastfeed him, as she had spent nearly her entire pregnancy in prison or the camp. Giancarlo Azzali died only a few months later, and so should be counted amongst the victims of the camp at via Resia.

## Occupations

We have been able to identify individual occupations as practised at the time of arrest for only a third of the people on the list. Morever, we have to consider that in many cases, occupations indicated were what prisoners declared on arrival in the camp. Often prisoners already in the camp warned new arrivals not to reveal their real occupations, maybe of an intellectual type, and to pass themselves off as workers or peasants, something that would arouse less interest and suspicion on the part of the SS. Declaring themselves skilled in certain tasks,

[22] L. Happacher, op.cit., p73 and subsequently

[23] Arturo Banterla remembers the circumstances thus: "Before we left, we were able to contact the women, who were on the other side of the center-line that separated the Blocks.... given that they probably had more freedom of movement than us, they were able to procure tools for escape for us, they gave us hacksaws and pliers", filmed testimony, in the Historical Archive of the City of Bolzano. Bruno Vasari, for his part, recalls that: "at the moment we left, I received a bit of money and a hacksaw from a committee member. This saw was not for me, but for my companions who were planning an escape attempt, which in the end failed.... I kept the money in an overcoat that I had to give up as soon as we reached Mauthausen", inteview with the author, November 1998, tape in the Venegoni family archive.

[24] We should remember in this regard the letter from Armando Sacchetta (who was the co-ordinator of the resistance committee inside the camp at that time) to "Anita" (Franca Turra) on 9 April 1945: "Dear Anita, we are convinced, completely convinced that you cannot do any more than what you are already doing. I will never be able to thank you enough, and when all this is finished, no-one will begrudge a monument in your honour"; letter held in Visco Gilardi family archive, file 38.

[25] Letter secretly written by Ada Buffulini to "Giacomo", 3/12/1944, held in Visco Gilardi family archive, file 44.

[26] See L. Happacher, op.cit., pp 168-172

prisoners tried to reduce the risk of being given more dangerous or heavy work. Michele Tarantino, who in reality cut women's hair, declared on arrival at Mauthausen that he was a driver, in the belief – at first glance not groundless– that it would increase his chance of being given work as a driver, rather than a hairdresser.

For professional people, in cases of discrepancies between various sources, we have given greater weight to direct testimony from the prisoner or a close family member, where this exists.

Despite these limitations, the picture of Italy that arises from this analysis is nonetheless clear and vivid. Italy appears to be a country in which a large part of the population work in the fields, but also with a strong industrialised element., we can say that a large part of the intellectual class of the country passed through Bolzano, a class actively opposed to fascism and the RSI, and that the Germans and the fascists sought to destroy.

In the list, there are hundreds of argicultural workers, farmers, sharecroppers and farmhands, who make up maybe 15% of the total number of prisoners for whom a profession is known. And here, as in all the Nazi camps, workers appear to be significantly over-represented compared to the role they held in the society of the time: millers, welders, prop handlers, repairmen, mechanics, vulcanisers, apprentices, and workers with both specialist and general skills. Behind their presence, we can identify signs of diverse anti-fascist activites that encompassed large and small factories. There were many SAP (Squadre di Azione Patriottica) partisans operating within the large factories or who made contacts within the factory environment (and it is worth remembering that very few prisoners were sent to Bolzano after the huge labour strikes of March 1944, if only because the camp began its operations in the summer, when the striking workers had already been deported).

This strong presence of workers points in its turn to one of the unique features of the Italian Resistance, that it was inside the factories that one of its main sources of strength and recruitment could be found.

Workers and farmers: these were the two basic groups amongst deportees to Bolzano. Alongside them, we should not be surprised by the presence of coppersmiths, chimney-sweeps, embroideresses, lumberjacks, saddlers, copyists, laundrymen, cab drivers and coachmen, blacksmiths, milkmen, representing a working world that today appears archaic, but which was still very much alive even in the 1940s. The presence of 25 tailors and 31 cobblers in the list is indicative of a world in which clothes and shoes were still made to order, whether for gentlemen or not, and in which the standardisation of measurements and industrial production of clothes had yet to assert itself in Italy. The same can be said of the 94 joiners and 39 blacksmiths, champions of a world in which furniture passed from generation to generation, and the large-scale industrial distribution of furniture, door-frames, handles, locks and utensils did not yet exist.

There is also a high incidence of intellectuals and representatives of a higher social class, present in Bolzano in a much larger proportion than the average amonsgt the Italian population. The arrest and deportation of many doctors, journalists, lawyers, notaries, judges, company directors and professors is testament to the special tenacity with which the RSI and the Nazis sought to repress intellectual political dissent.

Amongst those who left Bolzano were Gian Luigi Banfi and Lodovico Belgiojoso, the two "B"s in the design studio BBPR, which made an indelible mark on Italian archictecture after the war,[27] but which had already earned itself a place in the *Treccani Encyclopedia*. Banfi, deported to Mauthausen with his friend and colleague Belgiojoso, was killed in the final, terrible gassing at Gusen, a few days before the end of the war and never returned, though his colleagues have kept the second "B" in the name of the studio since, in memory of their murdered friend.

Giuseppe Pogatschnig (his surname in Italian is Pagano)[28] was a noted architect, already director of the *Casabella* (the Bocconi University in Milan was just one of his projects), as was Raffaello Giolli, architect, professor and critic, involved in the most important architectural journals of the age. For his refusal to accept fascism, Giolli was banned from public teaching: interned at the start of the war in the fascist concentration camp at Istonio (in Vasto, Abruzzo) along with his 19-year old son Paolo, savagely tortured by the Muti[29] in September

[27] Several exceptional projects were delivered by the Studio BBPR, including the Torre Velasca and the Citibank in the Meda square in Milan, and the development of the Museum at Castello Sforzesco, also in Milan. Lodovico Belgiojoso, who died aged 94 on 10 April 2004, also created one of the most significant monuments to the memory of deported Italians: the Museo-Monumento di Carpi (Modena), the monument to the deportations at the Monumentale cemetery in Milan, the Italian pavilion at Auschwitz, and the monument to the deportations in the Parco Nord in Milan, created with his son Alberico.

[28] His courageous resistance in the face of his fascist torturers in the Koch squad, in the "Villa triste" in Milan, and his tragic end in Mauthausen are remembered in Mino Micheli, *I vivi e i morti*, cit., pp. 138-146.

[29] La Legione Autonoma Ettore Muti, created in Milan in 1944 by the fascist ex-"squadrista" Franco Colombo, is well known for the tortures and oppression they inflicted on prisoners in the barracks in via Rovello, whch today houses the Piccolo Theatre of Milan. It was "Muti"

1944 in their headqurters in via Rovello in Milan),[30] Giolli, like Banfi and Pogatschnig, ended his days in Mauthausen.

Professor Egidio Meneghetti however remained in Bolzano, due to the severing of train-links with the Brenner Pass: a famous pharmacologist (who after the war would take the place of Concetto Marchesi as rector of the Atheneum in Padova), he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Resistence. The same happened to Virgilio Ferrari, now Mayor of Milan[31] and to Abramo Oldrini, now Mayor of Sesto San Giovanni (MI).[32]

Less fortunate was Enzo Sereni, brother of Emilio, who parachuted into Lucchese wearing[33] an English uniform under the false name of Samuel Barda, to organise a contact point for the British Intelligence Service in occupied Nazi territory. Sereni was captured and taken to Bolzano, and from there to Dachau, where he was subjected to a special punishment regime.[34] He survived just over one month: he left Bolzano on 5 October 1944, and was dead by November 18, killed by the Nazi extermination machine. We discussed with his niece, the writer Clara Sereni, how we could best describe Enzo Sereni's occupation at the time of his arrest. He was above all a political activist, one of those - and there were hundreds at Bolzano – who sacrificed everything for their belief in liberty and redemption. We have written in this case "kibbuznik" because Sereni, who had emigrated before the war to Palestine, was an advocate of the kibbutz movement that preached – and sought to practice – a type of primitive communism, and at the same time re-affirmed the right of the Jewish people to return to the land promised to them.

Lawyer Luciano Elmo, a liberal, was one of the most important members of the Milanese Resistance, both before and after his deportation to via Resia. Having arrived there with many others on 7 September, at the end of November 1944 Elmo was loaded onto a train due to take hundreds of prisoners to Mauthausen. But thanks to tools that the secret committee had managed to obtain and deliver to various people trusted by those leaving, Elmo was able to escape from the wagon before it reached the Brenner Pass (and so Germany), and make his way back to Milan. His was one of the cases in which efforts at escape were successful.

Separate mention should be made of religious deportees, who were present in large numbers in Bolzano. In the list, we find 27 priests and 9 Capuchin brothers.[35] This is a significant presence, both numerically and qualitatively. Amongst the religious prisoners was Andrea Gaggero, who after Bolzano suvived deportation to Mauthausen, and who left the priesthood after the war to become a key member of the very first Italian pacifist movement. There was also Father Narciso Sordo, Father Albino Longhi, Father Domenico Girardi (to mention just a few), priests who always represented a reference point in the struggle for justice in their regions.

There was also Father Angelo Dalmasso, who was arrested for going to say mass with the partisans, and who was so taken by his experience of surviving the camps at Bolzano and Dachua that he accepted the presidency of ANED in Cuneo.

The Nazi regime and fascism reserved particularly severe punishment for priests who would not accept their rule. This is demonstrated by the fact that of the 27 priests in Bolzano, as many as 19 were later deported to

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men who shot the fifteen Martyrs of the Loreto Square in Milan on 10 August 1944. "Squadrista" meant a member of the fascist "Action Squads".

[30] On the day after liberation, traces of blood from tortured prisoners were still visible in the Palace cellars. These had been left where they were, and covered with a layer of lime. The torture cells later became the changing room for the artists of the Piccolo Theatre in Milan, which sought to describe these tortures and suffering in order to preserve their memory.

[31] Virgilio Ferrari, a social-democrat, served as mayor of Milan from 1951 until 1961.

[32] Abramo Oldrini, a communist, served as mayor of Sesto San Giovanni (MI) from 1946 until 1962, the year of his death.

[33] Emilio Sereni (born in Rome, 1907-1977), director of the underground PCI, was sentenced to 20 years in jail in 1930 by the Fascist Special Tribunal (later reduced to 15). Amnestied in 1935, he left for Paris, where he involved himself in intense cultural and propaganda activities. During the Resistance, he was one of the most important Communist operatives in Milan, and after the War, served in Parliament, and as a member of the Communist Party directorate. He produced many political and economic writings; his best known works are *Il capitalismo nelle campagne*, *Storia del paesaggio agrario*, *Il Mezzogiorno all'opposizione*, *La questione agraria nella rinascita nazionale italiana*, and *La rivoluzione italiana*.

[34] Raffaele Capuozzo remembers the atmosphere in Dachau: "the head of the camp came with a list, and called out Samuel Barda, an English parachute capitain. He spoke in German, I don't know what he said. He began to punch this captain in the face, he would have been about 1.55m tall, but he didn't move, he remained at attention undaunted as if he was being carressed". Taped testimony, in the Historical Archive of the City of Bolzano.

[35] We have not found any confirmation, on the other hand, of the transfer of Rabbi Giacomo Augusto Hasdà to Bolzano, as indicated by A. Cauvin, G. Grasso, a cura di, *Nacht und Nebel (Notte e nebbia)*, Marietti, Turin 1981, p. 189. Hasdà was in fact deported straight from Bologna to Auschwitz.

Mauthausen, Dachau and Flossenbürg (even if the majority were, fortunately, able to survive and make their way back to Italy).

An altogether peculiar case, however, is that of five Capuchin brothers from the convent in via Barana in Verona, captured and deported together to Bolzano. From the post-war reconstruction of these events by Father Corrado (Guido Toffano), the arrests were meant to suggest a relationship between the abbot of the convent, Father Vittorino (Mario Fraccaro), and the partisans in the area up to July 1944.[36] Father Corrado wrote that some relationships "obviously" were "secretly" maintained between the abbot, the partisans and the four other brothers, "but leaving all the other priests completely in the dark". The convent, in effect, "served as a base for supplying food and weaponry to the partisans". "With the help of the brothers, various documents bearing the seal and signature of the SS commander in Verona were produced". Such documents were used to smooth "passage" within the zone controlled by these SS troops: a dangerous game, which went on for some weeks while the falsifications were not discovered.

The five brother involved in producing fake documents were arrested on 2 January 1945. Kept in basement cells in the INA palace, where the SS in Verona had its headquarters, they were interrogated and detained for nearly three weeks before being transferred to the Bolzano camp, where they stayed until 29 April 1945.[37]

**Place of arrest**

Prisoners in via Resia had been captured by the Nazis and the fascists in nearly every province in Northern Italy, apart from Friuli-Venezia Giulia – with some exceptions. At the same time that the camp at Bolzano was operating, in fact, the Risiera di San Sabba camp in Trieste was also fully functional. This latter camp, at least in part, had a similar function of collection and deportation to Germany as that of the *Durchgangslager* Bozen.

It is no surprise that nearly 20% of prisoners were arrested either in Milan or in its province: Milan was, in fact known as "the capital of the Resistance"; it was also the largest and most populated urban area under the control of the RSI. It therefore had a very high percentage of arrests compared to other provinces, like Belluno (nearly 10% of all prisoners) or La Spezia (around 8%). These are very high percentages compared to the relative proportion of these two provinces in the whole population of Italy, today as then. These hundreds of arrests give us an indication of the special "attention" paid to these two provinces, which were in some ways under the sway of the RSI.[38]

In Feltre alone, a large round-up conducted on 3 October 1944 netted hundreds of people who were massed together in a cinema and selected for deportation to Bolzano. Around one hundred people from Feltre arrived in the camp over the next few days, while research has identified another 220 deported from the valleys in Cadore.[39] Hundreds of people were picked up in later round-ups. Men, women, old people and children were taken from the "Italia di Santo Stefano" cinema in Cadore on 8 October 1944. Each was evaluated: the majority of the women and the old people were ultimately released, but for the young and for men able to work there was no escape: they were taken to Bolzano in groups, issued with the red triangle of rounded-up prisoners, and set to work as forced labour. In different hamlets in Tambre, a town in Belluno which today has around 1,500 people, there were dozens of round-ups: there are personal details for 46 in those round-ups that are known about with some certainty.

How can we explain all this furious activity?

It is true that the valleys in Belluno were the scene of bitter battles by the Resistance. And in fact many of the deportees (in interviews after the war) remembered their roles in the partisan movement with pride. But many other survivors (contacted by ANED in the 1960s as part of their work to create "a databank on the deportations")[40]

[36] On these events, see "L'Atto Notorio" by Guido Toffano, AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Busta 4, f. 1, and the unpublished memoirs of Father Diego da Loreggia: original held in Archivio Provinciale dei Cappuccini, Mestre; copy in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Folder 26.

[37] This relates to an little-known episode in the history of the Resistence in Verona. When we asked Father Celestino (from the Curia dei Benedettini in Mestre) on 9 January 2004 why no account of this event had ever been published, his answer indicated his modesty: "we were almost ashamed to", he replied. "In those times, with everything that happened, many suffered much more than we did, and for reasons that are more noble. It didn't seem the thing to do". This reply concurs with the view of many other prisoners in Bolzano: the knowledge of what happened in other camps, and in the extermination camps, is without doubt one of the reasons for the reticence of many Bolzano survivors to discuss their own political and personal stories.

[38] There is a large bibliography on the round-ups of Italian men and women sent to work as slave labour, or sent to the KZ. An essential starting point on this subject is the research of L. Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia, 1943-1945*, Bollati Boringhieri, Turin 1996

[39] E. Da Re (a cura di), *Venti mesi di dominazione tedesca 12.9.43 - 2.5.45 - Il contributo del Cadore alla guerra di liberazione*, Magnifica Comunità Cadorina, no date given. Bozze di stampa presso la Biblioteca di Vigo di Cadore. Copy in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, file 23.

[40] I am grateful in particular to Giandomenico Panizza, survivor of Mauthausen, for this documentation.

quickly indicated their family as their point of moral reference at the time when they were arrested, traditional values like God, the motherland and family. Marcello de Candido spoke of his family (comprising parents, three boys and ten girls) being "dedicated to the home and to work"; Attilio De Bettin remembered his as "a working class family, with traditional values, that is, respectful towards religion and duly-constituted authority"; Celeste De Rigo Cromaro speaks of a "family [dedicated] to the motherland and work".

If these were not political opponents, therefore, what caused so many inhabitants of the Belluno valleys to end up in the camp? Quirino Quinz, from Sappada, offers an explanation for what happened to his town: "the population of Sappada was of Austrian background: the Nazis, who were occupying Alto Cadore, sought to conscript the men. As a result of the refusals to be conscripted, many of us were arrested and deported, like me".[41] The Nazis would not forgive a population of Austrian origin that refused to serve the Reich. This is a plausible explanation, but it cannot apply to the inhabitants of many other valleys in Belluno, who were definitely of Italian descent.

To this suggestion, Teresa Rocco (who was arrested in Belluno on 14 October 1944 along with her sisters Ermelinda, Egle and Prassede) when asked to describe the reasons for her arrest, wrote just one word and a question mark: "Italian-ness?". Belluno was an area of special vigilance for the Nazis, a province under direct German control and part of "*Operationszone Alpenvorland*", the "operations zone for the pre-Alps", along with the provinces of Trento and Bolzano: in effect, it was an Italian *enclave* on Reich territory. The mass-arrests and the deportations in autumn and winter 1944 in these valleys can be seen as the result of an ideology similar to a form of Nazi "ethnic cleansing" towards the Italian sections.

In the valleys of the *Alpenvorland*, soldiers were recruited for the German Army, but also workers for the Reich. Opposition to such forced recruitment lead to deportation to via Resia. A document dated 30 October 1944, signed by the commissionary prefect of the town of Cles (in Trento) and sent to "Kurt Heinricher, councillor to the German administration in the Prefecture of Trento" and to "Mr Wieser, Inspector of the provincial office for labour" clarifies this operation in an exemplary fashion.[42] The commissionary prefect recalls that in Cles, 175 people were called up for labour, and in an elaborate account, indicates that with the 77 who presented themselves on 26 October as requested, the 12 who had already been exempted, the 14 who "are servng a period of service with the military as draftees", the 10 who were workers interned in Bolzano (of whom 8 had been declared "reviewable"), the 24 who had already been employed by the Organisation Todt, and the "roughly 50" who had been drafted the same day of the letter, the town of Cles had met the targets set by the German authorities. For this reason, the commissionary prefect "ardently prays to the Codesta Autorità to speedily organise the release of citizens from Cles in the concentration camp at Bolzano where they are still held", that is, 9 people, the brothers, sisters and parents of drafted prisoners who had been sent to the camp for refusing to work for Germany.

Another province where the Nazi and fascists round-ups send dozens and dozens of people to the *Durchgangslager* Bozen was La Spezia. It should be recalled that the front-line stopped between La Spezia and Massa for a long time, in autumn and winter 1944. Confronting the Allied troops who were advancing up the peninsula were enlisted German units. The hinterland around La Spezia was for weeks the scene of innumerable round-ups and massacres of civilians and partisans. Lodged in a consolidated position high up in the hills, the German army wanted to protect its rear, and so totally destroyed every partisan resistance cell it could. The deportations are the product of these battles and round-ups.[43]

One other terrible round-up, destined to stay forever in the history of one small town, was that at Rocchetta Tanaro, in Asti province, on 6 December 1944. Dozens and dozens of people were detained and deported that day: nearly every family in the town had someone in Bolzano.[44]

[41] AFMD, Banca dati sulla deportazione, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, file 27, f. 51.

[42] This document was pointed out to us by Lionello Bertoldi, of ANPI in Bolzano section; copy in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, file 19.

[43] The most important round-ups in the area were in Migliarina (a suburb of La Spezia) and in Vezzano Ligure, where dozens of young people were seized in November and December 1944 and then deported.

[44] The town of Rocchetta Tanaro, of roughly 1,500 inhabitants, also had 11 martyrs of the resistance. For this, it was awarded the Silver Medal (we owe much of our knowledge on prisoners from Rocchetta Tanaro to the helpful collaboration of ex-mayor Stefano Icardi, who spent weeks researching on location, interviewing survivors and consulting Council registries).

**Information on arrests**

Prisoners sent to Bolzano were mainly arrested in the period when the camp was fully functional (summer 1944 to end of April 1945). In some cases, however, deportation to via Resia happened some weeks after arrest – in some cases, even some months. This was the case, for example, for many prisoners sent from the concentration camp at Fossoli (near Carpi, in Modena). Amongst these, we find partisans and anti-fascists arrested in spring 1944, held in various prisons for different lengths of time, and then deported to Fossoli. From there, hundreds (the exact number is not known) were sent to Bolzano, and nearly all of them were sent onto Germany (to Mauthausen and Dachau): only a minority ever returned home.

If the *Durchgangslager* Bozen served as a collection point for prisoners intended to be transferred to Nazi camps to serve as slave labour in war production in inhuman conditions, then the San Vittore prison in Milan served in turn as an important centre in the service of the Bolzano camp for collection and sorting prisoners. Examination of the arrests in the list of deportees clearly indicates that this was the function of the Milan prison. Nearly half the prisoners at Bolzano had passed through San Vittore, mainly those who had been arrested in Lombardy, but also inmates arriving from prisons in Turin and Genova, which served in their turn as collection points for candidates for deportation from Piedmont and Liguria respectively.

The number of prisoners deported from Belluno and Verona are also very high. Verona was in particular a collection and sorting point for political prisoners, and people captured in the round-ups: they made up more than 10% of the prisoners in via Resia, often after heavy interrogation and torture in the Nazi command centre, in the INA palace. A considerable number of prisoners in *Durchgangslager* Bozen also came from the Emilia, from Bologna, and maybe more from Parma.[45]

Who actually carried out the arrests that led to deportation? Answering this crucial question was not a primary focus of this research. However, it is worth noting that many documents demonstrate the active involvement of many of the diverse police units that served the RSI, operating according to plans drawn up by the Germans. The *Durchgangslager* Bozen was under the direct control of the SS, and played its part in the Nazi extermination machine.[46] In Milan, responsibility for organising transports to the camp fell to the German department in San Vittore. But without doubt, the SS was not the only agency involved in the arrests. In fact, in the register of the German department in San Vittore, the name of the organisation that had delivered each prisoner was noted. In at least half the cases, this was one of the fascist organisations: the names of the Legione Ettore Muti, the X Mas, the "Brigata Nera", the "Questura", and the frontier police appear repeatedly.

For many men and women, falling into the hands of the RSI police was particularly painful: in questionnaires compiled after the war, survivors routinely mention torture, abuse and violence of every sort.

For the majority of Jewish prisoners, in particular, deportation to Gries was only a part of a ruthless persecution that had already started in 1938. Some arrived in Bolzano after already being sacked from their employment, imprisoned or interned in fascist concentration camps. And still the persecution did not end there, because for them the camp in via Resia served really as the "ante-chamber" to an ultimately fatal "transport" to the extermination camps.

For many political prisoners, Bolzano represented a short step in a long walk marked by endless forms of repression, dreamt up by the fascists to eliminate all opposition voices. In the list of deportees, we find people who had already been punished by the Special Tribunal,[47] or who had been in prison, or the concentration camps. Luigi Tansini, an anarchist born in 1888 (he had been an active trade unionist from 1912), was sacked from his job in the Falck steelworks in Sesto San Giovanni (MI) for political reasons in 1917, then arrested in 1935 for speeches opposed to fascism and the war in Abyssinia, and sentenced to three years in prison. Deported in 1944 to Fossoli and from there to Bolzano, Tansini was then deported to Mauthausen, ending his days in the sub-camp at Gusen a few days before Christmas 1944.

Aristide Cucchi, born in 1909, had been a International Bridage volunteer in 1936, created to defend the Spanish Republic: deported from Bolzano to Flossenbürg, he died in February 1945 at Bergen-Belsen.

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[45] According to the data in this research, there were twice as many prisoners seized from Parma as from Bologna. But the information available is unfortunately incomplete, and therefore not indicative: it is possible that these figures are therefore only the result of an absence of information.

[46] Not for nothing does the camp feature in the list of the KZs (published in 1977 by *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Federale Tedesca*, reproduced as an appendix in Teo Ducci (a cura di), *Bibliografia della deportazione nei campi nazisti*, Mursia, Milan 1997

[47] On the activities of the Special Tribunal see A. Dal Pont, A. Leonetti, F. Maiello and L. Zocchi, *Aula IV - Tutti i processi del Tribunale speciale fascista*, ANPPIA, Rome 1962

**Departure for Bolzano**

As we have noted, the largest numbers of deportees to Bolzano came from the Milanese prison. Groups of prisoners from all over Lombardy, but also from Novara, Piacenza, Turin and Genova, were sent by train or bus to the Milan prison, where they remained, some for a few hours, some for a few days, in apparent confusion. Many camp survivors, in their recollections and interviews after the war, mentioned this total confusion, and the casualness that seemed to regulate arrivals and departures. But in fact, examination of these lists allows us to rule out any casualness in the organisation. The flow of arrivals and departures from San Vittore towards Gries was clearly based on requests made at Bolzano – in fact, in all probability, these requests actually originated in Verona, where the German high command was located and which had responsibility for the camp.

Departures from San Vittore and transports from Bolzano form a web of inter-dependence, which seem to suggest that the destination of individual prisoners had already been decided from the time of their arrival in the prison at San Vittore. Some "adjustments", some smudging of the deportation plans, can be confirmed with certainty, when at the roll-call at Gries it became a question of physically delivering the convoys directly to camps in the Reich via the Brenner Pass. But in the vast majority of cases, we can speak with certainty of a journey that had already been worked at the point of registration in the Milan prison.

In the register of the German section in San Vittore, the fate that awaited each prisoner is already usually indicated next to the notation of the organisation that had carried out the arrest: KZ I, KZ II, or KZ III.[48] It is notable that the only KZ in category III was Mauthausen, reserved for "incorrigible" prisoners who were destined for extermination through slave labour. Those prisoners who were destined for the "stairway of death" at the granite quarry in Mauthausen had therefore already been selected at the moment when they entered the German section of the Milan prison. The times of this journey were in fact quite long: the fate of each prisoner had therefore already been determined in the meantime.

Examining what we know of the itinenary of movement from Milan to camps in Germany, we can state that *all* those who were sent from San Vittore to via Resia on 17 August 1944 then left for Flossenbürg on 5 September, with only five exceptions.[49] This related to 150 people who made exactly the same tragic journey to Calvary: this is therefore not a question of a simple coincidence.

The next transport from San Vittore to Bolzano, on 7 September 1944 (comprising 250 prisoners), formed, in the vast majority of the known cases, the convoy that Bolzano for Dachau on 5 October 1944.[50]

On the same day, 5 October, most of a third important transport that had left Milan on 20 September 1944 set out for Dachau (and Ravensbrück, in the case of women prisoners).

Prisoners sent to Bolzano from San Vittore on 17 October 1944 were instead destined for Mauthausen: the majority were deported there on 20 November, but a few left on 14 December and one on 8 January. Of all those for whom it has been possible to confirm presence on the coaches that had left Milan, only one, Aristide Resmi, was not sent to Mauthausen but to Flossenbürg. Nonetheless, the convoy that left the *Durchgangslager* on 14 December divided into three: some of its wagons were sent to Mauthausen, some to Ravensbrück and some to Flossenbürg. The male prisoners could theoretically have been divided up between Mauthausen and Flossenbürg, but instead *all* of them ended up in the huge Austrian camp. This confirms the existence of a precise plan for each prisoner, from the moment of arrest.

The fact that these deportations were not random but regulated and organised is also confirmed by later transports from Milan. Of those for whom we know the journey to the Brenner Pass, *all* of the prisoners who left San Vittore on 11 November 1944 were on the train that left Bolzano on 20 November for Mauthausen (with only two exceptions – one prisoner was sent to Dachau, the other to Flossenbürg). Of those on the transport from Milan on 22 November, the prisoners were divided roughly half and half between Flossenbürg and Mauthausen; the prisoners who left Milan on 21 December *all* ended up at Mauthausen; the prisoners who left on 15 January 1945 *all* went to Mauthausen (with one exception)

Other similar examples are available, like that of prisoners sent from Turin on 16 December 1944, who *all* went to Mauthausen apart from one who went to Flossenbürg; or the prisoners from Cadore deported from Santo

[48] English translator's note: "KZ" was the Nazi abbreviation for "Konzentrationslager", meaning concentration camp

[49] Four of these five were deported to Mauthausen the following 14 December. The fifth arrived in Mauthausen on 1 February 1945. The women who arrived on the 17 August transport from Milan were all sent to Ravensbrück on 7 October.

[50] The few exceptions relate to people deported to Mauthausen on 14 December (in the case of the men), and to Ravensbrück on 5 October (in the case of the women).

Stefano in Cadore on 3 December 1944, who *all* ended up at Mauthausen; or finally, that the prisoners deported from Fossoli on 21 July, *all* sent to Mauthausen on 5 August, and from there to Gusen.

The details of Italian deportation journeys towards the camps on the other side of the Brenner Pass via the *Durchgangslager* in Bolzano are tabulated below: the first column indicates the city from which the largest group of prisoners that we could identify originally left. Successive columns indicate the date of their arrival in Bolzano, their final destination, the date of their departure from Bolzano and the total numbers on each "transport". The dates of departure from Bolzano and the total numbers in the transport are those indicated by Italo Tibaldi in his research, amongst them the case of a convoy sent to Innsbruck, about which we currently have only indications, as discussed later.

**Transports from the camp at Bolzano**

| No. | Arriving from | Date of arrival at Bolzano | Destination | Data of departure | No of prisoners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fossoli | End July 1944 | Mauthausen | 05/08/1944 | 307 |
| 2 | Milan | 17/08/1944 | Flossenbürg | 05/09/1944 | 435 |
| 3 | | | Innsbruck | 18/09/1945 | ?? |
| 4 | Milan | 07/09/1944 and 20/9/1944 | Dachau | 05/10/1944 | 518 |
| 5 | Various cities | | Ravensbrück | 07/10/1944 | 31 |
| 6 | Various cities | | Auschwitz | 24/10/1944 | 134 |
| 7 | Milan | 17/10/1944 and 11/11/1944 | Mauthausen | 18/11/1944 | 282 |
| 8 | Various cities | | Dachau | 20/11/1944 | 38 |
| 9 | Milan | 22/11/1944 | Mauthausen | 14/12/1944 | 298 |
| 10 | Various cities | | Ravensbrück | 14/12/1944 | 31 |
| 11 | Milan | 22/11/1944 | Flossenbürg | 14/12/1944 | 40 |
| 12 | S. Stefano Cadore | 05/12/1944 | Mauthausen | 08/01/1945 | 484 |
| 13 | Milan | 16/01/1945 | Flossenbürg | 19/01/1945 | 358 |
| 14 | Milan | 15/01/1945 | Mauthausen | 01/02/1945 | 541 |
| 15 | Various cities | | Dachau | 22/03/1945 | 36 |

It is therefore appropriate to speak of genuine organised planning in the deportations: a level of planning that presupposes a single central decision-making body, and which suggests the existence of a central sorting office of appropriate size. The camp in via Resia met these requirements: here, prisoners could be used as slave labour in various tasks for the Nazi occupiers, while they waited to reach their final destination. Bolzano therefore formed a key part of the extermination machine and the programme of annihiliation through work. We can say, in view of this data, that the prison at San Vittore was the key referrer for Bolzano, itself serving in its turn as a place to collect, select and sort prisoners.

As we have seen, this amounts to a fairly complex procedure, the logic of which escaped those unfortunates who ended up caught in its operations. Of this procedure, in effect we find little trace in either the large number of memoirs relating to the camp, or in the historical studies conducted to date, and which has had to be trusted to in witness statements from the time, in the absence of official Nazi documentation.[51]

The decision on the fate of each prisoner was made above all on the basis of the seriousness of the offences (including political offences) they were accused of. For example, the "rose triangles" (worn by prisoners who had been rounded-up) from Belluno were mainly sent to camps as forced labourers, while the political "red triangles" ended up in the KZ.[52] Amongst the political prisoners, it can be stated, the quotas of those who would be sent on to Germany and those who would presumably remain as workers in the Gries camp had been decided on departure.

In the German register in San Vittore, reasons for each arrest are also listed: people would end up in the camp for being partisans or friends of partisans, for what was badly defined as "subversive activity", for trying to emigrate illegally, for "espionage" or "sabotage", or for having helped Jewish people. This latter reason was the case for 50-year old Antonio Bianchi and 20-year old Francesco Herstein, deported from Milan on 21 November

[51] It is worth noting that all the existing documentation on Gries was burnt by the SS when the camp was closed down: all the witnesses agree that the bonfire made by these documents burnt for several days in the oven in the camp's bakery.

[52] Lutz Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia*, op.cit., page 391 and subsequent pages

1944: their names would one day be listed amonsgt the "Righteous amongst the Nations" for opposing the Holocaust.

On 28 August 1944, when Carlo Venegoni,[53] Enrico Pozzoli and Ambrogio Colombo were surprised by a GNR[54] squad in Milan in a typographic studio where they were preparing the illegal underground edition of *Unitá*, their fates had already been decided. Major Ferdinando Bossi, director of UPI (Ufficio politico investigativo – office of political investigations) within the GNR wrote on 2 September 1944 to the Nazi command based at the Hotel Regina in Milan, to announce the capture of the three prisoners and recommending interrogation by the Gestapo. The letter concluded "these prisoners are recommended for transfer to a concentration camp, as they are culprits from a political point of view, and a danger to internal security".[55]

At this point, the game was over. Sent to Bolzano, Carlo Venegoni quickly became involved in the secret resistance committee, and managed to get himself assigned to Block A (which housed workers who were useful to the camp), as a carpenter. He also managed to take Pozzoli with him into Block A; Pozzoli had been the owner of the typographic studio and involved with Venegoni in publishing the underground anti-fascists newspaper, and was now set to work on the camp's internal printing needs. Prisoners commonly believed that workers who were clearly useful to the running of the camp could avoid deportation across the Brenner Pass to Germany. In reality, this research demonstrates that, on many occasions, this kind of protection did not exist. Enrico Pozzoli and Ambrogio Colombo did in fact end up in Germany, as the GNR had requested, and were murdered there. Carlo Venegoni only survived by escaping, on 26 October.

Even clearer are the examples of Maria Arata, Ada Buffulini and Laura Conti, socialists who had been captured by the fascist Gruppo Filzi in Milan. On 4 July 1944, Laura Conti, who had been followed for some time, went to a political meeting at the house of Maria Arata, in the course of which Ada Buffulini was to meet a group of young people on behalf of the Socialist Party. It was thus that everyone present was arrested. The interrogators sought to clarify the role of each of those at the meeting. All the young people were released after a few days. Ada Buffulini managed to get rid of some documents that would have compromised her, even though it was obvious that she was partly responsibile for organising the meeting, along with Laura Conti. Without doubt, in the end, the person most compromised was Maria Arata,[56] partly because the meeting had taken place in her house and partly because, as Ada Buffulini secretly wrote from prison to Lelio Basso (the leader of the Party) "in her house, she had a load of stuff", secret material from various anti-fascist parties, which allows us to suggest that she had a prominent co-ordinating role: "for her, this was the worst affair, in that she considered herself to be an organiser and instigator of everything, in contact with subversive and judicial elements and who knows who else. Poor devil!"[57] Following the interrogations, matters later became clear, such that after a few days, Ada Buffulini (again using secret channels to communicate) wrote another letter to Lelio Basso: "things are going alright for the others, except for us women. New complications have arisen for L. [Laura Conti]. The lieutenant told me that he does not know whether to turn me over to the Germans. Yesterday, he had said that I would be alright in a concentration camp, because I would be a doctor".[58] Therefore, already in July, nearly a month and a half *before* leaving for Bolzano, a "lieutenant" in San Vittore had told Ada Buffulini that she might be transferred to a concentration camp; this announcement would soon become reality.

## The registration numbers

In the *Durchgangslager* Bozen, as in all the Nazi camps, prisoners were routinely given a registration number, issued in sequence. Contrary to what happened at Buchenwald, for instance, registration numbers at Bolzano were

[53] Born in 1902, sacked from the Franco Tosi plant in Legnano (MI) in 1920 after the occupation of the factories; member of the central committee of the secret Communist Party of Italy in 1926; sentenced to 10 years prison by the Special Tribunal in 1928; placed under special surveillance after detention; then interned in the fascist camp at Colfiorito in 1940; a partisan, he was a director of CGIL after the war and a communist deputy. See D. Venegoni, *Carlo Venegoni tra carcere, internamento, deportazione*, in O. Lucchi (a cura di), *Dall'internamento alla libertà*, Editoriale Umbra/ISUC, Foligno, 2004.

[54] English translator's note: GNR stands for "Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana", a fascist paramilitary police force of the RSI

[55] Minutes of the arrest of Carlo Venegoni, Enrico Pozzoli and Ambrogio Colombo by the GNR. ASMI, Gabinetto di Prefettura, II V., c. 401. The GNR minutes are also reproduced in their entiriety on the Internet at www.venegoni.it\fratelli\carlo\arresto44_verbale.htm

[56] See M. Massariello Arata, *Il ponte dei corvi: diario di una deportata a Ravensbrück*, Mursia, Milan 1979.

[57] Letter from Ada Buffulini to Lelio Basso in early July 1944, Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, Series 7 - Resistence, fasc. 2, s. fasc. 3

[58] Ibid

never re-assigned. Yet in our list, we find 30 cases in total of prisoner with the same registration number. This is almost certainly the result of errors in the sources we have searched, and we have been unable to correct these cases.

Of the 7,991 names in our list, we have been able to identify 4,300 registration number, just over 50% of the total. It is important to remember that, however, that the SS deliberately destroyed the official records of the camp in spring 1945. Furthermore, some survivors admitted in interviews after the war that they had forgotten their Bolzano registration number. This should not come as a surprise: many of those who were interned at Bolzano and later deported across the Brenner to Germany had to memorise a new registration number in German given to them on arrival on another camp. And they would have lived with that number for perhaps months. At Bolzano, on the other hand, daily existence was carried out mainly in Italian by prisoners who were given the task of co-ordinating various functions in the camp. And the prisoners knew each other mainly by name, not by number. Very frequently, amongst those who were later in Mauthausen, Dachau and other KZs, the number from that camp would be remembered, and not that from Bolzano.

A batch of prisoners in via Resia in fact were not issued registration numbers. Given the current state of research, it is possible to suggest that non-registration generally only applied to people who were imprisoned in the camp cells (its internal prison) for the entire time they were in Bolzano before being deported to the Reich. There are many witness statements to this effect. Giuseppe Castelnovo, who arrived in Gries on 22 December from San Vittore, left for Mauthausen on 8 January. He was imprisoned all that time in the prison cells, and has confirmed that he was never registered. Other survivors also confirm that they never received a registration number, becuase numbers "were only for prisoners destined to remain in Bolzano". In the absence of official camp documents, this is a controversial question. Certainly, many political prisoners were never issued registration number, but it is very difficult to say how many: probably there were several hundred in this situation.

Jewish prisoners were also not issued registration numbers. Jews were given a yellow triangle to sew onto their prison uniform, without any registration number.[59] In the lists presented here, those Jews who stayed in Bolzano and who had a yellow triangle on their prison shirt are, as a matter of course, identified by registration number 0 (zero). We have been able to identify just over 360 Jews who arrived at the camp. Of these, around half were deported across the Brenner (mainly to Auschwitz, on the transport of 24 October 1944); the other half stayed at Bolzano until the camp was closed down, essentially due to the breakdown in the train links with the north after February 1945. The numbers of Jews transferred from Fossoli to Bolzano can be counted on the fingers of one hand, because they were considered useful for the running of the camp: amongst them were the cooks.

Gypsy prisoners were not given registration numbers either. Laura Conti remembers seeing "Italian and Spanish Gypsy children" amongst the prisoners, who lived with their mothers in Block K (the female block) and that "since they only spoke their own language, it was difficult to learn anything about them".[60] The Sinti Vittorio Mayer (who survived by staying with partisans) remembers the arrest of his entire family at Castello Tesino and their deportation to Gries. His sister Edvige, he recalls, died in Bolzano aged twenty.[61] However, so far, we have not been able to identify with any certainty Gypsies amongst the prisoners.

In the "Prison Cell Registers" reproduced by Happacher in his work, various symbols appear throughout: SM, SC and KdS. It is possible that SM means "without registration number" ("Senza matricola" in Italian) and that SC refers to "without a coloured triangle" ("Senza colore" in Italian). Kds almost certainly referred to the *Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei* (in German): this indicates prisoners held in the camp prison cells at the order of the German security forces in Bolzano.

All the witnesses are however clear on the fact that the "red triangles", rounded-up prisoners and "green" prisoners (who were being held as hostages in place of relatives who had fled) had sequential registration numbers. The only "blue triangle" (meaning an enemy of foreign origin) for whom we have a direct witness statement was that issued to 20-year old Mike Bongiorno, an American citizen. He confirms that during the dozen days he spent in the camp prison cells, he was given the blue triangle, but no registration number.[62]

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[59] We are aware of just one exception, Alma Hirschstain, prisoner number 4710. It is possible that the Germans were not at this point aware of what they were supposed to do with a Jewish woman.

[60] L. Conti, Primi risultati di una ricerca sul Polizeiliches Durchgangslager di Bolzano, op.cit., pp. 27-41.

[61] G. Boursier, *Sinti e rom nel nazifascismo*, in AA.VV., *Alla periferia del mondo – il popolo dei Rom e dei sinti escluso dalla storia*, Fondazione Roberto Franceschi, Milan 2003

[62] Conversation with the author, 23 April 2004

In October 1944, the camp administration created some confusion in the registration of new arrivals. In a clerical error, from number 5000, registration now began at 5501, followed by 5502 and 5503 etc. The mistake was noticed, and the relevant numbers were changed.[63]

Probably for this reason, the lists that have become available to us[64] are not uniform on the use of numbers between 5000 and 5500: in correcting the errors, it is likely that the lists ended up with double registrations for a single prisoner.

The lowest registration number that we know of today is that of Luigi Rimer[65] (mentioned above), for whom we do not however have an arrival date in Bolzano. Based on his statements, Vinzent Demetz, prisoner number 36, would have arrived in Gries at the beginning of June 1944. Certainly, a group of political and round-up prisoners from Belluno (given registration numbers between 71 and 84) did arrived on 8 July 1944, that is a couple of a weeks before the arrival of the first prisoners sent in from Fossoli, who reached Bolzano on 21 July.[66] This first group of prisoners, distinguished by by such a low prisoner number, worked on the completion of the basic structure of the camp. The life of the *Durchgangslager* can therefore be dated to the start of July.[67]

There were also some prisoners from Belluno and Alto-Adige issued numbers between 103 and 225. From there, higher numbers were issued to a group of prisoners who arrived from Fossoli, as Fossoli was being closed down. It was from that camp, in Emilia Romagna, that all the prisoners with numbers between 225 and 2900 arrived (for whom the point of origin is known).[68]

For some deportees (Luigi Tansini, number 306; Renato Mattalia, number 1124; Francesco Messina, number 1965; Cesare Pasquali, number 1914; Odoardo Focherini, number 2506; and father Mario Crovetti, number 2544) we can state with certainty (thanks to their direct testimonies) that they kept the same number at Bolzano that they had had at Fossoli. Gianfranco Maris, who was issued number 315 at Fossoli, was certain when we interviewed him that he was not issued a new registration when he reached Bolzano from Fossoli. Furthermore, in a letter from Bolzano to his wife on 15 August 1944, Odoardo Focherini writes "the address is fine, you can complete it with the number 2506", i.e. the same registration number he had been given in Fossoli. In a post-card Odoardo Focherini had written to his wife from Fossoli on 5 July 1944, in fact, he had indicated the sender as: "sent by number 2506, barracks 19, *Pol*. *Durchgangslager* Carpi"[69] [Carpi was the town where Fossoli was located]. This demonstrates that he had the same official registration number in Fossoli and in Bolzano.

All this indicates that it was at Bolzano, where the command structure, the administration, the security forces, and as we have seen, even the cooks were the same as at Fossoli – numbering of prisoners in fact commenced (apart from those "low numbers" we have already noted) at the point where numbering had stopped at Fossoli. This explains why, in our list, there are many gaps in the numerical sequence of prisoner numbers below the number 3000.[70]

[63] Statement by Vittore Bellumat: "at first I was given number 5514: after two days, this was swopped with number 5014: from 5000 they went straight to 5501, and on from there", AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Busta 27 f. 19.

[64] See the section "The Sources"

[65] See the section "The Names"

[66] Germano Sommavilla, prisoner number 82, expressly states in an interview with Luciano Happacher in the 1960s that he arrived at Gries "before the arrival of prisoners from Fossoli", Museo Storico di Trento, Archivio Resistenza II parte, Busta 6, Fasc. 5/6

[67] According to Quintino Corradini, a partisan from Trento known as "Fagioli" (Italian for "Beans") who survived Bolzano, his father who was already 74 and a friend Degiampietro were picked up as hostages on 25 May 1944 because their children were partisans. Both were transferred to Bolzano on 26 or 27 May, and set to work on the construction of the camp in via Resia, which was then in preparation. In those days, alongside them, we find other workers involved in building the basic camp structures. In some sense, these two hostages, Corradini and Degiampietro, were not wrong to claim the title as the first prisoners in the *Durchgangslager*. On this, see the testimony of Quintino Corradini in G. Mezzalira and C. Villani, *Anche a volerlo raccontare è impossibile* - Quaderni della memoria, n. 1, Circolo Culturale ANPI Bolzano, Bolzano-Bozen 1999. A document dated 23 June 1944 (preserved in the Historical Archive of the City of Bolzano), bearing the stamp and signature of the *Kommandantur der Sicherheitspolizei* in Bolzano, confirms the existence of an SS *Arbeitserzichungslager* (a re-education and labour camp) at Bolzano from that date on. Photocopy held in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Busta 118.

[68] With the exception of one prisoner who came from Verona.

[69] O. Focherini, *Lettere dal carcere e dai campi di concentramento*, Baraldini Editore, Finale Emilia 1995, pages 159 and 235.

[70] In our list, the numbers jump from 416 to 1005: the names and registration numbers of hundreds of people are unknown, who were evidently not transferred to Bolzano from the start of August 1944 when the camp at Fossoli was closed down. this evidently relates to prisoners who were sent directly from Fossoli to other camps in the Reich, or to slave labour camps, or who were released.

The first number that we can reasonably consider to have been issued at Gries – always apart from the first "low numbers"– is number 2979 sewn onto the shirt of Bruno Galmozzi, a typograopher who arrived from Milan on 17 August 1944.[71]

This suggests a new calculation of the estimates – by necessity appoxiamately, given the state of current knowledge – of the number of people who were actually transferred to the camp in via Resia. If the numbering process at Bolzano did not start from number 1, but more or less from number 2979 and stopped at 11115 (this is the highest assigned number we have evidence for),[72] then we have a total "block" of some 8136 people. To this, we can add at least 220 "low numbers" assigned to the group of first deportees from Bellunmo, and so the total reach 8356. Adding all those who were transferred from Fossoli with the same registration number, as we have seen above (witnesses suggest around 300 people), the total now reaches around 8700. We can also add the 400 Jews and another 200 political prisoners who were not assigned registration number, and the total now reaches around 9300 people. Even allowing for some over-estimation in these figures, it is probably not far from the truth to conclude that the total number of prisoners sent to Bolzano was around 9500.

If this is correct, then the list attached below contains the names of around 80% of the total prisoners in Bolzano. Therefore, a large part of the obscurity that has surrounded the story of this camp for decades has been removed, and today we can claim to substantially understand its role within the Nazi extermination and destruction processes, and its cargo of stories and individual and collective dramas.

Relating the dates of arrival in Bolzano to known registration numbers, we can also suggest with good approximation the following "calendar" for the assigning of registration numbers:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 81 | – 8 July 1944 | **7000** | – 8 December 1944 |
| **3000** | – 17 August 1944 | 7500 | – 19 December 1944 |
| 3500 | – 27 August 1944 | **8000** | – 23 December 1944 |
| **4000** | – 7 September 1944 | 8500 | – 16 January 1945 |
| 4500 | – 22/23 September 1944 | **9000** | – 31 January 1945 |
| **5000** | – 6 October 1944 | 9500 | – 10 February 1945 |
| 5500 | – 20 October 1944 | **10000** | – 23 February 1945 |
| **6000** | – 11 November 1944 | 10500 | – 2 March 1945 |
| 6500 | – 24 November 1944 | **11000** | – 21 April 1945 |

The camp at Bolzano continued to fully function until the end of April 1945. The outcome of the war was already decided by now, but the mechanisms created by Nazism to destroy all those that Hitler considered his enemies did not cease functioning until the very end.

A large group of prisoners – we have identified with certainty 61 people, with registration numbers around 10900 – left Milan for Gries on 10 April 1945. In his memoirs,[73] Edgardo Sogno remembers being deported to Bolzano "around the middle of April 1945". He was not registered – and in fact there is no trace of his journey to the camp in either of the two "Superintendent "registers from 1945[74] – but was immediately sent to the camp cells. He remained in camp for at most two weeks, before release and his return to Milan – on foot!

His arrival was certainly not the last. On 21 April 1945, when everything was collapsing around the Nazis, and the entire state structure of the RSI was melting away, a truck loaded with prisoners handcuffed together in groups of four incredibly left Parma. Avoiding a thousand different perils along the way, the group boldly passed the Po river, where the bridges had already been destroyed by months of Allied bombing and – after a stop in Verona – finally reached the gates of via Resia with its cargo of prisoners. They were undressed, shaved and registered as if nothing unusual was happening, as if the world was not crumbling around the Nazis, who by now were in retreat on every front.[75]

The prisoners from Parma received registration numbers from 11000 upwards. The highest number allocated that is known for definite on 21 April was 11044. But the highest overall number allocated, as mentioned, was

[71] Galmozzi nonetheless states that he worked from the start on the completion of the printing press in the camp, which did not yet exist; he was in charge of that press until liberation. AFMD, Fondo Felice Pirola, due for publication soon.
[72] See the section "The Sources"
[73] E. Sogno, *Guerra senza bandiera*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1995, p 381
[74] See the section "The Sources"
[75] Interview by the author with Giacomo Musiari, prisoner number 11028, 17/5/2004.

11115. From 21 April, therefore, at least another 65 prisoners arrived in Gries, and were subjected to the registration procedure. The date of the final arrivals is not known, but it is certain that at the threshold of the camp, they must have crossed the path of groups of prisoners who were leaving via Resia for freedom, and these final groups of new arrivals.

**The blocks and the satellite camps**

As in every Nazi camp, prisoners at Bolzano were housed in barracks with bunk-beds. In the jargon of the camp, each barracks was called a Block. At Gries, the Blocks were separated by partitions made from sections of the old existing hangars, and were identified by letter. The most feared Block was that of the cells, the camp prison. These were tiny cells (in a secret letter sent from the camp, Ada Buffulini, who was kept in a cell for two months, wrote that her cell was 3.5m long and 1.2m wide)[76] and almost completely without light. Two very young Ukranian SS guards, above all, rampaged through these cells,[77] and were responsible for horrendous criminal treatment of prisoners in this Block.

In our list, we find the names of 322 people sent to the cells. Many came out of this internal camp prison only to be included in a "transport" to camps in the Reich. Others, unfortunately, came out only in a crude wooden box, killed by the tortures they were subjected to by the two Ukranian guards.

Bolzano also had satellite camps**.** At first, these were largely little more than decentralised work *Kommandos*, at least until when, in February 1945, a large transport headed for Mauthausen was prevented from reaching its destination by the heavy Allied bombing that had cut off the train-line to the Brenner Pass. From February, hundreds of prisoners were moved from the main camp – where overcrowding had already created an impossible situation – to satellite camps. In the same way that prisoners who were forced to work daily in the Virgolo tunnel (where the machinery of the IMI firm in Ferrara had been installed to avoid bomb damage), in the last months of the war, they were forced to walk back and forwards from the camp (this long journey did favour opportunities for many an escape), but they were later quartered nearby to the tunnel. There are 456 prisoners in our list who were set to work in the tunnels.

The largest group sent to work away from the main camp in via Resia was however at Sarentino, with 501 people. The Sarentino valley runs almost parallel with the valleys that led to the Brenner Pass, and all the witnesss agree that the prisoners in this sub-camp were basically involved in road-work. It is for this reason that the theory developed that the Nazis were trying to create a "duplicate Brenner" in the final months of the war, to guarantee its troops a way to reach the north, so as to be able to send a considerable amount of manpower in that direction. If this proposal was ever seriously considered in the Nazi high command, it was soon abandoned, due to the war situation.

In unpublished memoirs dated 22 June 1945, Father Diego da Loreggia (Luigi Carraro) offers an important description of life and work in the sub-camp at Sarentino. "Our main work revolved around a road that needed widening... life was like that in the main camp, with one difference, which is that ordinarily there was more work to do. We were woken at 5am; at 6am, assembly; at 6.15am, we set out for work; we arrived for work at 8am. At midday, if it had arrived on time, there was mess, otherwise we had to carry on working until it did arrive. Half an hour after mess, we re-started work, which lasted until 5.30pm. Long hours, interminable hours, especially when the work was hard!... on Sundays, we worked until midday; from Easter, maybe because it was Easter, we were made to work all day long.... every morning, an interminable column of prisons (maybe 200) left that camp, marching five by five, each one with a pick or spade on their shoulders. Flanked by guards, dressed like jail-birds, all with the cross of St Andrea clearly visible on their backs, it really looked like a procession of slaves to me."[78]

These are illuminating words. Sarentino was clearly a road-building site of considerable size, if we consider that it involved 200 prisoners working on it every day, and that from 1 April 1945 (Easter Sunday), the weekly rest was abolished to speed up the work.

Other sub-camps were also sent consignments of manpower: we can find, in fact, 271 prisoners sent to Vipiteno, 120 to Moso in Passiria (in our list, as in the sources we have consulted, this is known by its German

[76] Letter from Ada Buffulini to Lelio Basso, 1 April 1945, Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, Serie 7 - Resistenza, fasc. 2, s.fasc. 3.

[77] Otto Sein and Michael Seifert; the latter, tracked down to Canada where he had lived since 1951, was condemned to life imprisonment by Italian military justice for his crimes at Bolzano, and in particular in the cells.

[78] Padre Diego da Loreggia, *Quattro mesi di prigionia tedesca*, pp. 18-19, unpublished memoirs, copy in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Busta 26.

name, Moos) and 103 to Merano. We can also find 21 prisoners sent to Bressanone and 17 to Colle Isarco, and we know the names of three prisoners moved to Certosa Val Senales. We have also identified four cases where the symbol OT was indicated in place of the Block (OT obviously refers to the Organisation Todt, and therefore these are cases of slave labour).

In our individual entries, occasionally, next to a prisoner's registration number is also indicated more Blocks or sometimes the names of different sub-camps. The criteria we have used is to follow as far as possible a chronological sequence. Thus, if "I D Sarentino" is found next to the name of a prisoner, it indicates that – as far as we can tell - the prisoner was initially sent to Block I, then moved to Block D, and finally to the sub-camp at Sarentino.[79]

**Deported to the Reich**

There are 3559 prisoners sent from Bolzano to camps in the Third Reich in our list, 44,5% of the total in the camp. In reality, it is likely that another 1000 Bolzano prisoners who remain unknown were sought in higher priority than those transferred to other destinations, from which they maybe did not return. The registers produced in 1945 that are available today[80] were clearly compiled on the basis of the "Superintendent" camp register of 5 February 1945, and then updated daily up to the first days of May. Clearly missing from these lists are those who were transported from via Resia *before* 5 February, maybe for a short period of time before being deported again.

We probably know the vast majority of the names of those who were deported to a KZ, thanks above all to the work of fifty years on this question by Italo Tibaldi (who heads the ANED Research section) and to Liliana Picciotto's *Libro della memoria*. On the other hand, however, we have very limited information on those who were sent into slave labour from Gries, maybe hidden in the records as "free workers" even with signed contracts in via Resia.

Despite these qualifications, the list of departures for camps in the Reich is significant: the extermination and destruction mechanisms swallowed up men, women and children without pause, and frequently returned to claim its tribute of human goods from via Resia.

Of the 3559 prisoners sent into the territories of the Third Reich, we know the names of 1927 sent to Mauthausen; 782 to Flossenbürg; 614 to Dachau; 136 to Auschwitz and 74 women sent to Ravensbrück.

In examining memoirs and testimonies from survivors, we have identified another 12 who were sent to Innsbruck-Reichenau, which is certainly an underestimate. After the war, brothers Renato and Gualtiero Malvano and the sexton Vinzent Demetz remembered being deported to Innsbruck on 18 September 1944, and it is highly unlikely that a transport was organised for only three people. In his memoirs, Pietro Chiodi speaks of being transferred to Innsbruck on 15 September, wiuthout doubt with many others whose names are unfortunately unknown. It is possible that Chiodi was in fact on the same transport as the Malvano brothers. But it is certain that there must have been many other men sent together with them. It is notable that the Austrian camp and that in the Sud-Tirol worked very closely together,[81] and all this suggests that investigation of Innsbruck would uncover evidence of many Italians deported from Gries to work in labour-*Kommandos*. We do not know, for instance, the journey that took Piero Pierini (a prisoner from Lucca) from via Resia to Reichenau, and then from there to the KZ at Dora Mittelbau, or the journey that took the Piedmontese prisoner Enrico Giuseppe Bonnin to work in an electrical plant in Germany.

Giorgio Santarelli, from Florence, remembers escaping from Caldaro in October 1944, where he had been put to work. Pierino Stroppiana, from Piedmont, relates a similar experience (together with other prisoners) while being sent to repair a birdge near Verona in April 1945. It is currently impossible to reconstruct all the movements of small groups of prisoners from Bolzano towards zones some distance from the work, where they were set to work in labour-*Kommandos*. It is practically certain that the official camp registers would have contained notes on these transfers, but as we have seen, those registers were destroyed.

The first large transport from Bolzano to a KZ was on 5 August 1944, when 307 prisoners left for Mauthausen. A large part of these – maybe the majority – had come from Fossoli. It is certain that 62 men on this transport had for months followed the same route: they were in the San Vittore prison when they were transferred to Fossoli on

[79] See Luigi Perazzolo, prisoner number 9145
[80] See the section "The Sources"
[81] The camp at Bolzano was created under the regime of SS captain Georg Mott, who had been the camp commandant at Reichenau.

27 March 1944. From there, they reached Bolzano together and then, still together, left for Mauthausen: after this, they were all transferred to Gusen, where the majority unfortunately ended their days.

Other dates and transports are also known. On 5 September, a transport left directly for Flossenbürg, with 435 people. On 5 October, a convoy left that then separated into two: one section went to Dachau with around 500 prisoners on board, the other went to Flossenbürg, with around 110.

On 24 October 1944, the only direct transport from Bolzano to Auschwitz left, with one hundred prisoners aboard: Jewish men, women and children. It is possible that Gypsy prisoners were also deported on this occasion, but there is no way of checking this.

On 20 November 1944, another convoy left for Mauthausen, with just under 300 people aboard.

On 14 December, a convoy took 330 people to Mauthausen; one wagon carried on to Ravensbrück and another to Flossenbürg.

On 8 January 1945, another large transport left for Mauthausen, with around 500 prisoners.

On 19 January 1945, around 400 people were sent to Flossenbürg.

On 1 February 1945, around 500 prisoners were transferred to Mauthausen. This was the last transport of this size that left Bolzano for camps in the Reich. On 22 February, the SS tried to organise another large transport to Germany, but the destruction of the train-line to the Brenner Pass by heavy Allied bombing, prevented the departure of the train. After a delay of around three days spent closed inside the sealed wagons, the prisoners were then taken off the train and sent back to the camp. It was in this period that the decision was made to expand the satellite camps – above all, as we have seen, that at Sarentino – in order to house some of the prisoners who continued to flood into via Resia from prisons across Northern Italy, and who the main camp was no longer in a position to send north (to Germany).

On 22 March 1945, camp administrators managed nonetheless to deliver anothe transport to its destination: 40 men were loaded onto a truck with an escort for transfer to Germany, and were sent to Dachau.[82]

**Prisoners who did not return home**

Of the 3562 prisoners known to have been deported from Bolzano to other Nazi camps, 2052 never returned home: less than a third survived. To properly evaluate these figures, which are in themselves appalling, it is necessary to remember that the camp in via Resia was operational for only the last nine months of the war. As we have seen, [83] many people were deported even in February and March 1945, when only weeks remained before the total defeat of Nazism. Catapulted into camps which were begining to lack even the basics for human survival, where food rations for prisoners were reduced to the absolute minimum possible and at a time when the violence inherent in the system reached its peak, prisoners arriving from Gries survived on average less than half the time of other prisoners who had arrived in these camps earlier.

In this respect, the enormous list of deaths in the final days of the war is particularly distressing. 98 deaths are recorded for the month of May, mainly people who had survived to see the day of liberation but who did not have any strength left to recover and return home. Forty prisoners died on 25 April 1945, when Italy was already celebrating liberation and victory over Nazism and fascism.

In some cases, we know with certainty that a prisoner died as a result of deportation, but it has not been possible to identify exactly when or where; these cases are marked in our list with three asterisks (***) where the place or date of death should be listed.

In our list, there are 48 established deaths (with names and surnames) inside the perimeter of the camp at Gries, including 23 shot on 12 September 1944. A list put together by the City of Bolzano and reproduced by Luciano Happacher in his work, contains the names – some inexact – of 14 deaths, or to be more accurate, 14 murders in via Resia between January and April 1945.

We have been able to only make some modest progress on this important issue. It is still not possible to identify many of the victims who are scattered through the accounts of survivors: such as the young man who was recaptured after escaping and then beaten to death during September, as mentioned by Pietro Chiodi in his book;[84] or the young man accused of attempting to escape who was murdered on 17 December after remaining immobile for two nights, hung from a pole in the freezing cold in the centre of the *Appellplatz*. These are destined to remain

[82] I. Tibaldi, *Compagni di viaggio. Dall'Italia ai Lager nazisti - I "trasporti" dei deportati 1943-1945*, Consiglio regionale del Piemonte, Aned/Franco Angeli, Milan 1994.
[83] See the previous section "Deported to the Reich"
[84] P. Chiodi, *Banditi*, Einaudi, Turin 2002.

nameless for the time being, like the inmate beaten to death by Haage with a metal bar in front of all the prisoners in the middle of the evening roll-call, who appears many times in the account of witnesses.

Even to reconstruct the number of these murders would be important.

Laura Conti, who was in the camp right through from the start of September until the end of April, and who was part of the secret resistance committee (and hence is able to offer better information than that of many of her unfortunate counterparts in the camp) mentions roughly 300 deaths in the camp in recently-published statements.[85] This is a very high number, for which concrete confirmation has not been found. Laura Conti, who was a doctor, mentions a certain number of diabetic prisoners who died for a lack of insulin, and in general the terrible level of healthcare available to the prisoners.

Ada Buffulini, who worked as a doctor in the hospital block, recalls in an article published in the ANED journal, *Triangolo Rosso (Red Triangle)*: "Block E was always the destination for so-called "dangerous" prisoners whom it was forbidden to talk to. It was a hallucination-like environment, always dark because everything was closed, in air infected with the smell of gangrene from frozen prisoners (and there were many of these cases amongst partisans in the mountains in the winter of 1944-45), and the groans of prisoners with fever, whom no-one was able to help". Moreover, in relation to the prison cells (in which she was kept for nearly two months), Ada Buffulini recalls "cries, kicks, blows with clubs or with horsewhips given out for the most stupid reasons, or for no reason at all; savage beatings with sticks that came in the command centre and in the cells, especially by the two Ukrainians, Otto and Miscia, who were truly wild beasts and who were responsible for the deaths of twenty prisoners in the cells, murdered in the most barbaric manner".[86]

Therefore, Laura Conti's estimate was perhaps excessive; certainly, however, deaths within the perimeter walls, in those nine months, were significantly higher than the 48 that we have managed, after some effort, to document today.

Even on the basis of the very scarce information available on the 48 deaths that can be confirmed between July 1944 and the end of the April 1945, this still means that the camp was a place with an average of more than one murder every week; a place of violence and terror for hundreds and thousands and men, women and children.

[85] M. Abbiezzi, a cura di, *L'altro volto della Shoah*, Bine Editore, Milan 2004, pp. 110-127.
[86] A. Buffulini, *Il lager di Bolzano*, in "Triangolo Rosso", no 3, ANED, Milan 1976

## THE SOURCES

This research comes from consulting many different sources: douments and witness statements gathered together over the course of nearly hald a century, and which therefore often conflict. Each source has been given a sequential number, purely for reasons of clarity; the numbering refers only to the order in which each source was consulted.

Grouping various sources together in a logical order, we can offer a typology:

**A – Lists of prisoners deported to Bolzano up to 1945**

These are made up of two groups:

- the two Superintendent registers of 5 February 1945 that have survived, indicated with numbers (**1**) & (**2**);
- registers put together from different parts of the secret resistance committee records, available in the archive of the Buffulini-Venegoni family (**8**); in the archive of the Visco Gilardi family (**30**) and in the work of Luciano Happacher (**23**).[87]

**B – Lists of Italian prisoners deported from Bolzano**

These lists are the result of fifty years of work by Italo Tibaldi (who survived Mauthausen-Ebensee) on the camps at Mauthausen (**3**), Auschwitz (**4**), Dachau (**5**), Flossenbürg (**6**) and Ravensbrück (**7**), and the microfilm list produced by Valeriano Puccini Zanderigo from the original camp registers at Flossenbürg (**6bis**).

**C – ANED archives**

Over the course of its continuous work of nearly half a century, ANED has collected a vast amount of information on Italians deported to the camps. In this case, the archives of ANED sections in Milan (**15**), Rome, Turin, Verona (**26**), Genova/Liguria (**31**), Bologna, Imola, Cormons and Schio (**24**) have been consulted above all.

**D – Archive of the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione**

The archive of the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione has also proved a vital source, in which documents and private and association archives of great significance are being constantly brought together. We have particularly consulted the arrival and departure registers from the Milanese prison in San Vittore (**11**). In the Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, in the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione, correspondence gathered in the course of this research has been deposited: this includes correspondence with many camp survivors, with the families of many ex-prisoners, and with researchers and institutes on the history of the resistance who have studied the phenomenon of deportations in various localities.

**E – Publications and research into the Italian deportations**

We have also gathered together and assessed the data presented in different research publications conducted over the last few decades either with the colloboration of ANED or in tandem with them. We are particularly referring to the studies on deportations from Liguria (first edition published in 1978 and the last in 2004)[88] or from Verona (1982);[89] to the heavy-weight research on deportations from Pavia (**9**)[90] and the industrial area of Sesto San Giovanni (MI) (**25**) that have yet to be published;[91] but also to the volume *La vita offesa*, which gathers together oral statements from nearly 200 camp survivors.[92] The monumental work on the Jewish deportations by Liliana Picciotto (**10**)[93] is also part of this section, as is the study by Federico Steinhaus on Jews deported from Alto Adige (**28**),[94] along with Gianni Faronato's research on deportations from Belluno to Bolzano (**18**),[95] and that of Emilio

[87] L. Happacher, *Il Lager di Bolzano*, op.cit.
[88] ANED, a cura di, *Dalla Liguria ai campi di sterminio*, ANED Genova, La Spezia, Imperia, Savona, Genova 2004
[89] B. Taddei, a cura di, *I veronesi deportati dai nazisti*, ANED Verona, Verona 1982.
[90] Antonietta Arrigoni and Marco Savini (a cura di), *Dizionario biografico della deportazione pavese*, Unicopoli, Pavia, due for publication soon
[91] By Giuseppe Valota, in collaboration with Giuseppe Vignati.
[92] A. Bravo, D. Jalla, *La vita offesa. Storia e memoria dei lager nazisti nei racconti di duecento sopravvissuti*, Franco Angeli, Milan 1992.
[93] L. Picciotto, *Il libro della memoria*, op.cit.
[94] F. Steinhaus, *Ebrei/Juden - Gli ebrei dell'Alto Adige negli anni Trenta e Quaranta*, Giuntina, Florence 1994.
[95] G. Faronato, a cura di, *8 settembre 1943-3 maggio 1945. Ribelli per la libertà, testimonianze sul lager di Bolzano*, Castaldi Editore, Feltre (BL) 1995.

Da Re on deportations from the Cadore valleys (**29**).[96] A specific mention should also be made for the careful documentation and research carried out by ANPI (Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia) in Bolzano, and its "Circolo Culturale". In particular, as far as this research is concerned, the two *Quaderni della memoria* dedicated to the statements of survivors of the via Resia camp (**21**)[97] and the trial records of Michael Seifert, ex-SS guard at the camp (**22**) also proved valuable.[98] We must also pay tribute to, finally, the patience and helpfulness of Stefano Icardi, ex-mayor of Rocchetta Tanaro (in Asti) for considerable information on the victims of Nazi and fascist round-ups that transported dozens of young people from Rocchetta Tanaro (**19**) to Bolzano.

**F – Memoirs**

There have been many memoirs written by survivors of the Bolzano camp. In the footnotes, we have listed the titles of memoirs that we have gathered information from. On various particular aspects of life in the camp, and on their specific personal experiences, we have had the privilege of conducting interviews – face-to-face or by letter – with a number of survivors: Carlo Bernardini, Mike Bongiorno, Giovanni Boni, Nori Brambilla Pesce, Giuseppe Castelnovo, Osvaldo Corazza, Dante Cordara, don Angelo Dalmasso, Nunzio Dicorato, Luigi Guadagnini, Gianfranco Mariconti, Gianfranco Maris, Luigi Mazzullo, Francesco Messina, Esther Misul, Aurelio Monti, Giacomo Musiari, Rosetta Nulli Bonomelli, Afro Percalli, Berto Perotti, Noemi and Wally Pianegonda, Guglielmo Pisani, Anna Rossi Azzali, Marisa Scala, Donato Spanò, Bruno Vasari and Valerio Zampol, along with family and friends of very many prisoners.

**G – Archives**

The strict timescales imposed by the EU proclamation[99] led us to believe that we would only be able to gather and select information that had already been published. In fact, the opportunity to investigate possible new sources was too important to pass up. Therefore, we have researched in various public and private archives:

- in the State Archive in Milan, we consulted the register of the German section in San Vittore (**12**) and – in part – the registration book of the Italian section of the prison, in relation to the period between July 1944 and April 1945 (**13**), along with dossiers on individual prisoners.[100]
- in the State Archive in Turin, we consulted the sources of the Prefecture of Turin, in relation to the *Attestazioni di ex-reduce civile dalla deportazione e dall'internamento* (**17**).[101]
- In Cdec – Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea in Milan (the Foundation Centre for contemporary Jewish life), we consulted the archive sources "Cartoteca degli ebrei arrestati", dossier "Fuggiti e scampati" (**33**).
- In the archive of the historical museum in Trento, we studied documents deposited by Luciano Happacher at the completion of his research at the end of the 1960s, and in particular questionnaires that he gathered from survivors at the camp in Bolzano (**20**).[102]
- At the Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco in Rome, we examined the secret correspondence carried on from inside the camp by Ada Buffulini to Lelio Basso (**8**).[103]
- In the historical archive of the City of Bolzano, we consulted the 516 replies received to a detailed questionnaire sent to camp survivors in 1996 (**32**).[104]
- We also found complete documentation on the deportation of the five Capuchin brothers from Verona at the start of 1945 in the Archive of the Curia Provinciale dei Cappuccini di Mestre.
- At the ANED section in La Spezia, we received a photostatic copy of the register "Rubrica matricola delle Carceri Giudiziarie di La Spezia 1943-1945".[105]

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[96] E. Da Re, a cura di, *Venti mesi di dominazione tedesca*, op.cit.
[97] G. Mezzalira, C. Villani, a cura di, *Anche a volerlo raccontare è impossibile*, op.cit.
[98] G. Mezzalira, C. Romeo, a cura di, *Mischa l'aguzzino del campo di Bolzano* – Quaderni della memoria, n. 2, Circolo Culturale ANPI Bolzano, Bolzano-Bozen 2002.
[99] Proclamation A-3035: invitation for proposals for projects to conserve the sites of Nazi concentration camps as historical monuments (2002/C 320/12).
[100] ASMI sources currently being catalogued and published.
[101] I would like to pay tribute to the valuable collaboration of Dr. Sabrina Giolitto, whom I thank for her professionalism and availability.
[102] Archivio Resistenza II parte, Busta 6, Fasc. 5/6.
[103] Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, Serie 7 - Resistenza, fasc. 2, s.fasc.3.
[104] City of Bolzano - Assessorato alla Cultura Archivio storico - Progetto "Storia e memoria: il Lager di Bolzano" - Questionario sul Lager di Bolzano, 1996.

**Additional information on the sources used in this research**

As the original camp registers were destroyed by the SS in April 1945, the most complete lists that are now available are two distinct registers put together in 1945, when the camp was still functioning. Both are included in a sleeved Superintendent's edition headed "Numerical list of prisoners" and refer to the date 5 February 1945 (which it is clear was the original used to make the copy) that for a long time was thought to be the same register.

• *Source* 1

Indicated here as Source "**1**" is a register complied by Renato Matteini, a political prisoner in Bolzano with registration number 9985, as we can see from an annotation in his hand on the first page. This register was then donated to Bruno Galmozzi, "councillor of the Bolzano camp", as Iside Farina called him, of a group of survivors: Iside Farina, Teresa Rabolli, Corrado Curzio Marchi, Ermanno Pasqualini, Luigi Pirelli and Laura Conti. The date of this collective donation is unknown, but it is certainly after 30 August 1945, the day when Teresa Rabolli states that she returned to Italy from the camp at Ravensbrück. Many years later, on 9 April 1968, Bruno Galmozzi donated this register to "Sezione Prov. di Milano" of ANED. The register remained with ANED for decades, until a few years ago, someone illegally removed it. Traced by researchers from the CDEC Foundation, it was returned by CDEC to ANED on 21 April 2005, and is now in the possession of the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione in Milan. For his work, Renato Matteini used a pristine German register, probably originally from the camp: it is divided into columns and leaves spaces for names of prisoners, date of arrival and departure etc. In fact, Matteini only copied the names and surnames from the original, running in sequence of registration number. The lowest number registered is 27, to Rinner Luigi, and the highest is 11115, to Tullo Franz.[106] This register, which we have identified as "**1**", has proved to be particularly useful to this research, because it also includes data on transfers from one camp Block to another, and on transfers from Gries to sub-camps.

• *Source* 2

The second "Superintendent" register is considerably more well known. Compiled in an ordinary school-book with a paper cover, it is owned by the Marsilli sisters, who lent it to the Museum in Castel Tirolo (BZ) in winter 2003. This was the register that Luciano Happacher photocopied and reproduced in his research that, for nearly thirty years, served as the essential starting point for any study of the camp in via Resia.[107] This register also has many, mainly hand-written, annotated entries generally relating to the address of each individual prisoner. When we have been unable to reconstruct personal details of an individual through other sources, today the address in the register is the only indication that indicates, even with a large degree of approximation, where the prisoner came from. In these annotations in the margins, there are a great number of errors (such as "Bergamo Alto",[108] or even "left for Mathausen", which should read Mauthausen),[109] which have been deliberately left as they were in the original.

Alongside a name is frequently a date. It is not clear to what this refers, partly because on some occasions, two dates are added to a name, and on some exceptional occasions, the same date is listed twice. For all we know, this could refer to the registration of a particular corvee, or to a punishment, to the day of release, or the date of a transfer to a sub-camp. Moreover, in both lists, many names have been crossed through with a pen-stroke. Sometimes, we also find an annotation (release, exchange, escape etc) written in another hand, and that we have included in a note. This happened on very few occasions, and no date was included for these annotations.

On occasions, personal statements offered a useful method for interpreting these annotations. immediately after the war Osvaldo Bertinetti stated to the Prefecture in Turin that he was freed on 2 April 1945: in source (**1**) we find the annotation "exchanged" and his name crossed through. Probably, these two pieces of information coincide: he could have been freed precisely on the day stated, in an exchange of prisoners.

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[105] Digital photographic reproduction on CD, producted by AFMD, Milan

[106] In the register, numbers 11105, 11106, 11110, 11111, 11112 and 11116 are listed without any names. Maybe these numbers were actually issued, but excited by the liquidation of the camp at the time, Matteini was not able to reconstruct this part of the official camp register.

[107] Luciano Happacher, *Il Lager di Bolzano*, op.cit.

[108] See Giacomo Zaccaria

[109] See Tranquillo Gagliardo and others

Frequently, information in source (**2**) is very close in time to the dates of liberation and of the liquidation of the camp (the date of 21 April, for example, recurs very frequently). Attached to the name of this same prisoner, source (**1**) mentions a transfer to a sub-camp. It is perhaps legitimate to speculate that this prisoner was transferred to another location, and then freed. Many statements by witnesses agree, in fact, that in the last days of April, prisoners were loaded onto trucks and released in groups in areas not far from Bolzano.[110] Whatever the significance of these annotations in register (**2**) is, we have included them in the notes. Perhaps further work and research will be able to definitively clarify this issue.

Register (**1**) contains 3268 names, 276 of whom are not found in register (**2**). In register (**2**) we find 3553 names, 536 of whom are not included in the other register. Integrating the information in these two documents means that we have been able to identify 3829 prisoners in via Resia.

As we suggested above, in cases where the two registers are not in accordance, there is no single criteria by which to decide which is the more reliable.

In fact, there is a third register compiled in 1945. Father Daniele Longhi (Bolzano prisoner number 7459) mentions this in a letter sent to Bruno Galmozzi on 11 June 1945: "All the documentation from the concentration camp at Bolzano has also been lost. The SS had enough time to destroy all the paperwork. For many days, in the camp autoclave and the ovens in the Corpo d'Armata in Bolzano (headquarters of the SS), all these precious documents, minutes, registers, lists etc were turned to ash. The only remaining document is a list compiled by registration number of the political prisoners who were in the camp on 2 February 1945. We are listing each prisoner in alphabetical order, and it will be ready in a week. I will send you a copy".

The original of this alphabetical list, which Father Daniele Longhi personally helped draw up, is today in the Archive of the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione in Milan.[111] This is a typed copy, list in an alphebetical order that is in fact somewhat approximate, of register (**2**), which also includes the annotations in the margins next to each name. For this reason, it is not included in the sources used for this work.

In hundreds of cases, we have been to establish that both registers initially assigned a prisoner to a specific Block. In Register (**1**), often the Block identification is crossed through in pen, and substituted with another Block, or with a satellite camp. This leads us to suggest that, on this specific point, register (**1**) is more up to date than register (**2**), and has allowed us to reconstruct with logical certainty the journeys of many prisoners into various parts of the camp.

• *Sources* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

These numbers indicate the lists on Italian deportations to camps in the Third Reich, based on fifty years of research carried out by Italo Tibaldi with endless commitment and well-known research abilities. In particular, we have indicated the sources as follows:

**3** – list of deportees from Bolzano to Mauthausen;
**4** – list of deportees from Bolzano to Auschwitz;
**5** – list of deportees from Bolzano to Dachau;
**6** – list of deportees from Bolzano to Flossenbürg;
**7** – list of deportees from Bolzano to Ravensbrück.

Today, more complete and reliable information is available than what Italo Tibaldi was able to work with. Deposited with AFMD and partially published on the ANED website[112] from May 2000 onwards, these lists have been studied and verified over many years, and have proved to be extremely accurate.

Alongside these lists, we have included in this second edition a list produced by Valeriano Puccini Zanderigo, who copied the official camp register at Flossenbürg onto microfilm, noting the personal data of Italian prisoners. This work, indicated as (**6bis**) is different from that of Tibaldi essentially in that it includes prisoners' birth places, information which is sometimes lacking in Tibaldi's lists.

Tibaldi was able to reconstruct the transports from via Resia towards the north (i.e. the Brenner Pass, and Germany), collating the personal details of around 3,300 prisoners – some for many long months, some for only a

[110] See Battista Robba and others
[111] AFMD, Fondo Pirola, due for publication soon
[112] www.deportati.it

few days – who were transported from the *Durchgangslager*.[113] Many hundreds of the prisoners included in Italo Tibaldi's lists also feature however in other sources that we have consulted. How can we know for certain that prisoner Andrea Tavolini (who was deported to Mauthausen, and is listed by Tibaldi) is really the same Andrea Tavolini found in the register of the camp prison cells?[114] The latter source says that this prisoner remained inside the camp prison until 1 February 1945, which is in fact the very same day as the prisoner in Tibaldi's list is noted as leaving Bolzano for Mauthausen. Therefore, there is good reason to believe that we are talking about the same person.

On the other hand, the prisoner Francesco Battaglia listed in the register of the camp prison cells is certainly not the same as a prisoner with the same name who was deported to Flossenbürg on 5 September 1944. His registration number – 8126 – was assigned around Christmas 1944, which is therefore nearly three months after the deportation of 5 September; futhermore, he was still held prisoner in the camp calls in January 1945. If he there is in the cells then, clearly he was not deported to Flossenbürg in September 1944.

• *Sources* 8, 14, 30

Ada Buffulini and Carlo Venegoni, parents of the author, were deported together from Milan to Bolzano on 7 September 1944. Together, they worked on the committee of the secret resistance movement inside the camp. Carlo Venegoni escaped from the camp on 26 October 1944 and resumed his work with the Resistance, directing the SAP in central Genova in 1945. Ada Buffulini remained in Bolzano until 29 April 1945. Due to her secret work with the Resistance, she remained inside the prison cells from 2 March until 20 April 1945, and escaped deportation to the Reich only because the train-link with the Brenner Pass had by now been cut.

Both kept their red triangles and original registration numbers from the camp. Many years after their deaths, their children found, amongst various family papers, a secret note sent to Carlo Venegoni in the camp. This note that would have been delivered in the moments immediately before his escape (otherwise, he would certainly have destroyed it). Apart from this note, other evidence was found, signed by Ada Buffulini, a statement issued in the name of the CLN in Bolzano that was sent to camp prisoners the day after liberation, and various letters from Franca Turra up to the last days in April 1945 (**8**).

In the private archive of the family of Ferdinando Visco Gilardi (**30**), who co-ordinated assistance efforts for prisoners from outside the camp and who was the key player for the resistance organisation inside it, there are a large number of original letters written by Ada Buffulini,[115] Laura Conti, Armando Sacchetta, Renato Serra and others, some of whom are unknown. These mainly relate to "service" letters which noted arrivals and departures in the camp, and which requested deliveries of foodstuff or clothing to those prisoners who found themselves in the greatest difficulty. Where these sources have been cited in our research, the letters are indicated by the sequential number noted on the original, numbers which do not however follow a chronological order.

In the archive of the Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco in Rome, there are other letters secretly written by Ada Buffulini, now a socialist activist, to Lelio Basso (**14**). These letters were sneaked out of the prison in San Vittore (starting in the days immediatelt after her arrest, on 4 July 1944), and from the camp in Bolzano (from September 1944 to April 1945). These documents are testimony to the risks, difficulties and tensions that characterised the activities of the secret resistance committee, of which Ada Buffulini was the co-ordinator. These letters were originally numbered from 0-21 in chronological order, and the notes in the list bear the same numbering system.[116]

[113] See the section "Deported to the Reich"
[114] See paragraph 23
[115] The two did not know each other personally, despite keeping up an adventurous relationship based on letters written to each other nearly every day, and risking their lives in the same secret activities. Thus Ada Buffulini describes to Lelio Basso, secretary of the Socialist Party, the day when Ferdinando Visco Gilardi, "Giacomo", who had been arrested and heavily tortured, arrived in the camp hospital ward: "You know that G. has been arrested. You can imagine, however, the impression I had one day, when I suddenly heard my name called out by a prisoner whom I had gone to treat for wounds on his backside [from beatings by the guards], and he said to me "I am Giacomo". I can assure you it was a nasty moment, even if, if everything turned out for the best, I think we could laugh about it one day, given that I knew G. by his backside before I knew him by his face!" Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, op.cit.
[116] Fondazione Lelio e Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, op.cit.

• *Source* 11

This refers to photostatic copies of various registers from the San Vittore prison in Milan, from 1944 and 1945, that were held for decades by ANED in Milan and now in the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione. The original of one of these list can be found in the Museum of Contemporary History in Milan. The locations of the original versions of the other lists is unknown. In many, the registration number, the prison wing and the cell number of each prisoner are noted alongside the name and surname.

• *Sources* 12 and 13

In the register of the German section of San Vittore (**12**) – now deposited in the State Archive of Milan – details of the deportation of hundreds of people to Bolzano are noted, from November 1944 to April 1945. This consists of various Italian registers for registering mail, later brought together into one bound volume. The left-hand pages in this volume bears the heading "Papers on arrival", and on the right-hand pages, "Papers on departure". These lists are compiled in German, and each entry includes the name and surname of the prisoner, place and date of arrest, occupation and address. Nearly always, there is a notation relating to the charges against each prisoner, or identifying the organisation that had carried out the arrest. For prisoners sent to Bolzano, the following mark was used: "*Am* (date) *mach Bozen überstellt*", which translates as "sent to Bolzano on..." There are entire pages in this volume, one after another, where this mark is made repeatedly.

Obviously, it cannot be proved that all those *sent* to Bolzano actually *arrived* there. Furthermore, we know that in cases this did not happen, due to the various attempts at escape that constantly marked the transports to the camp, and some of them fortunate enough to succeed. We know for instance, that on the transport from San Vittore on 14 February 1945 (made up of a motorised coach with two carriages linked by a canvas concertina partition), some prisoners managed to escape by cutting through the partition, helped by diversions created by other prisoners. Some of those who escaped on this occasion are known by name: Mario Bonzanini, Giulio Perri, Dialma Previti and Aldo Pera, names which in fact do not appear in our list.[117] We cannot exclude the possibility, therefore, that other prisoners were also able to escape deportation that day.

However, these are very rare occurrences. The vast majority of the names listed in the register in the German section in San Vittore can be found through other sources as prisoners in via Resia. In any case, this register has proved to be exceptionally useful, providing information on personal data and on the prison experience of a large number of prisoners who are only known by name.

Similarly, the registration book of the Milanese prison (**13**) offers a wealth of information, including personal details on prisoners and the date and reason for their arrest. In the vast majority of cases, those preordained for transfer to Bolzano were handed over by the German section to local police supervision for their journey, indicating the extremely close working relationship between organs of the RSI and the Nazi occupiers.

• *Source* 23

In his work published in 1979, Luciano Happacher included (apart from a transcription of the Superintendent's register noted as (**2**) above) many lists of deportees secretly put together by the resistance movement,[118] and a register from the prison cells that was definitely put together when the camp was still functioning (although its author is unknown). It is only thanks to these lists that the names of 1000 camp inmates are known, lists drawn up and distributed at great risk to many prisoners. In itself, such activity can be considered a form of resistance to Nazism and fascism, as it opposed the purpose of the *Nacht und Nebel* decree (which means Night and Fog in German) personally ordered by Hitler and signed by Marshal Wilheim Keitel on 7 December 1941. Anyone who was identified, denounced or even just suspected of activities against the interests of the Reich was to be arrested "in the middle of the night", and "made to disappear into the fog of the unknown", without leaving any trace.

Of particular significance is list N, which relatives to the "Assistiti" of the CLN and contains nearly 250 names (of people helped by the CLN), testament to the incessant work of this group of daredevils on behalf of inmates,

[117] We owe this information to Maria Antonietta Arrigoni and to Marco Savini, authors of the Dizionario biografico della deportazione pavese, op.cit.
[118] L. Happacher, *Il lager di Bolzano*, op.cit.

whom they supplied with foodstuffs, clothing and money.[119] This list is derived from a telephone book compiled from February 1945 onwards by Franca Turra, which he kept until his death. The Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione has a photocopy of this list.

Amongst the lists reproduced as appendices in Happacher's book, Document 4 (pages 200-1) is none other than the list of Jewish prisoners compiled by Renato Matteini in his register (1). The list identified as L on page 163 of Happacher's book is a transcription of the list of prisoners in the camp prison cells that Armando Sacchetta sent to Franca Turra ("Anita") on 8 April 1945. In our work, it seems appropriate to attribute each list to its correct author.

• *Sources* 27 and 32

One of the most significant archives sources relating to the camp in via Resia can be found in the Historical Archive of the City of Bolzano, where amongst other material, the 516 questionnaires completed by camp survivors in 1996 are stored (**32**). In 63 cases, the survey was completed by a family member, where it was no longer possible to ask the survivor themselves to do so.

The survey has ten sections, ranging from arrest to the post-war period, and including deportation, the transports, forced labour, the secret committee of the resistance, liberation and the return home. This material has yet to be fully processed: it could offer a very vivid picture of life in the camp, and of the people who were deported. Alongside these surveys, the Archive holds the widest collection of video interviews with camp survivors (**27**), some of which have been published on the Internet (www.testimonianzedailager.rai.it).

• *Source 33*

In the huge Foundation CEDC archive in Milan, there is a collection of all available information on the arrest of Jews and their deportation either to fascist concentration camps or to the SS camps at Fossoli and Bolzano.

[119] Money was given at every opportunity even to those due to depart for Germany, indicating that at Bolzano there was no idea what awaited the deportees on their arrival at Mauthausen, Flossenbürg or Auschwitz. In reality, hundreds of thousands of lire between 1944 and 1945 were confiscated from the prisoners on the same day that they reached their destinations.

## INDEX OF SOURCES

1 Superintendent's register from ANED in Bolzano, AFMD.
2 Superintendent's register from Bolzano owned by the Marsilli sisters, held in the Museum in Castel Tirolo (BZ).
3 List of Italian deportees to Mauthausen maintained by Italo Tibaldi (AFMD, partly published on the ANED website, www.deportati.it).
4 List of Italian deportees to Auschwitz maintained by Italo Tibaldi (AFMD, partly published on the ANED website, www.deportati.it).
5 List of Italian deportees to Dachau maintained by Italo Tibaldi (AFMD, partly published on the ANED website, www.deportati.it).
6 List of Italian deportees to Flossenbürg maintained by Italo Tibaldi (AFMD, partly published on the ANED website, www.deportati.it).
6bis List of Italian deportees to Flossenbürg produced by Valeriano Puccini Zanderigo, based on microfilms of the original camp register (in AFMD).
7 List of Italian deportees to Ravensbrück maintained by Italo Tibaldi (AFMD, partly published on the ANED website, www.deportati.it).
8 Family archive Buffulini-Venegoni.
9 Antonietta Arrigoni and Marco Savini, *Dizionario biografico della deportazione pavese*, Unicopli, Pavia, due for publication soon.
10 Liliana Picciotto, *Il libro della memoria*, Mursia, Milan 2002.
11 Register of arrivals and departures from the Milanese prison at San Vittore. Photostatic copy held by AFMD.
12 List of registrations in the German section at San Vittore - ASMI, currently being catalogued.
13 Registrations book at San Vittore - ASMI, currently being catalogued.
14 Secret letters from Ada Buffulini to Lelio Basso, held in Fondazione Lelio and Lisli Basso-Issoco, Fondo Lelio Basso, Serie 7 - Resistenza, fasc. 2, s. fasc. 3.
15 Anna Bravo and Daniele Jalla (a cura di), *La vita offesa, storia e memoria dei Lager nazisti nei racconti di duecento sopravvissuti*, Franco Angeli, Milan 1986.
16 CLN list of people in Bolzano "in September 1944, and who were actually deported either to Flossenbürg or Hersbruck", undated document from before 10 February 1945, in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Folder 28.
17 Statements made to the Prefecture in Turin by non-military veterans on deportations and internments, held in the Turin State Archive (the relevant folder number is included in the notes).
18 Gianni Faronato (a cura di), *Ribelli per la libertà, testimonianze sul campo di Bolzano*, Castaldi Editore, Feltre 1995.
19 Information gathered by Stefano Icardi in 2004 on deportations from Rocchetta Tanaro (AT), in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Folder 46.
20 Historical archive – Historical Museum in Trento, Archivio Resistenza II parte, Folder 6, Fasc. 5 / 6.
21 Giorgio Mezzalira and Cinzia Villani (a cura di), *Anche a volerlo raccontare è impossibile - Scritti e testimonianze sul Lager di Bolzano*, Quaderni della memoria n.1, Circolo Culturale Anpi di Bolzano, Bolzano 1999.
22 Giorgio Mezzalira and Carlo Romeo (a cura di), *Mischa, l'aguzzino del campo di Bolzano – Dalle carte del processo a Michael Seifert*, Quaderni della memoria n. 2, Circolo Culturale ANPI in Bolzano, Bolzano 2002.
23 Lists from various sources reproduced in Luciano Happacher, *Il Lager di Bolzano*, Comitato provinciale per il 30° anniversario della Resistenza e della liberazione, Trento 1979.
24 Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, AFMD.
25 Research on the deportations from the industrial zone in Sesto San Giovanni (MI) by Giuseppe Valota, in collaboration with Giuseppe Vignati, due for publication soon.
26 Documents from the ANED archive in Verona, AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Folder n. 16.
27 Filmed interviews «Testimonianze dai Lager», by the City Councils in Bolzano and Nova Milanese (MI), partly available at www.testimonianzedailager.rai.it.
28 Federico Steinhaus, *Ebrei/Juden - Gli ebrei dell'Alto Adige negli anni Trenta e Quaranta*, Giuntina, Florence
29 Emilio Da Re (A cura di), *Venti mesi di dominazione tedesca 12.9.43 - 2.5.45 - Il contributo del Cadore alla guerra di liberazione*, Magnifica Comunità Cadorina, undated. Drafts held in the Biblioteca di Vigo in Cadore. Copy in AFMD, Fondo Bolzano Ricerca, Folder 23.

30 Papers of Ferdinando and Mariuccia Visco Gilardi in relation to the secret committee of the resistance at the camp. Originals held by the Visco Gilardi family, copy held by AFMD. The numbering of the sheets is as per the original, although not always in a strict chronological order.
31 Rosario Fucile, Liliana Millu and Gilberto Salmoni (a cura di), *Dalla Liguria ai campi di sterminio*, Regione Liguria, Provincia di Genova, ANED, Genova 2004.
32 City of Bolzano – Assessor of the Historical Cultural Archive – Project «Storia e memoria: il Lager di Bolzano» - Survey on the camp in Bolzano, 1996.
33 Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea, Milan, Fondo "Cartoteca degli ebrei arrestati", dossier "Fuggiti e scampati".

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED

| | |
|---|---|
| § | indicates that two entries probably relate to only one person, and not to two different people |
| *** | indicates that the place or date of liberation, or death, of a prisoner is unknown |
| Dec. | In Italo Tibaldi's lists, indicates camp survivors who died before 2000, when partial publication of those lists began on the ANED website |
| Quest. | Questionnaire |
| SC | In the register of the camp prison cells, SC perhaps referred to "Senza Colore" (Italian for "without colour"), that is prisoners who had not been assigned a coloured triangle. |
| SIR Arolsen | Certificates issued by the International Research Service of the International Red Cross in Arolsen, Germany |
| SM | In the register of the camp prison cells, SM perhaps referred to "Senza Matricola" (Italian for "without registration number"), that is prisoners who had not been assigned a prisoner number. |
| Sup. | In Italo Tibaldi's lists, indicated camp survivors who were still alive in 2000, when partial publication of those lists began on the ANED website |

## SYMBOLS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

| | |
|---|---|
| AFMD | Archive of the Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione, Milan |
| ANED | Associazione Nazionale Ex Deportati politici nei campi nazisti – national association for prisoners deported to Nazi concentration camps |
| ANPI | Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia – national association of Italian partisans |
| ASMI | State archive in Milan |
| CLN | Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale - Committee for National Liberation |
| GAP | Gruppi di Azione Patriottica - Italian partisan units |
| KdS | Kommandeur der Sicherheit - SS Security Commander |
| SAP | Squadre di Azione Patriottica - Italian partisan units |
| SD | Sicherheitsdienst - SS intelligence service |

# Appendix

# The Resistance

*Original in Italian by Andrea Felis*

The resistance movement inside the camp has been the subject of various studies, which have sought to restore the correct picture of the forms of resistance that the prisoners were able to organise to stand against the politics of isolation and submission developed by the concentration camp system. On the basis of various indications, we can divide the help on offer to prisoners into three sections: "political" help; help by clerics, although this often coincided with the first category; and finally, spontaneous help offered by prisoners' relatives, and ordinary people who decided to show their solidarity with the prisoners, above all the inhabitants of the working class district adjacent to the camp.

As far as political assistance is concerned, the largest form of help was that organised by the CLN in Milan, led first and foremost by Ferdinando Visco Gilardi (administrative director of the FRO factory in Bolzano) and helped by Renato Serra, from the moment of the construction of the camp until the arrest of the entire CLN in Bolzano in December 1944, Gilardi included; after this, political assistance from the outside was co-ordinated by Franca Turra, and by Ada Buffulini, Armando Sacchetta and Laura Conti on the inside; Happacher also recalls the assistance offered by the "Alvise Bari" brigades, the "Giovane Italia" units, and the "gruppo Condanni", led by Armando Condanni.[120]

Amongst the clerics who helped, the Bishop of Belluno, Monsignor Bortignon (who also visited the camp) is by general consensus remembered by witnesses, as is above all Father Daniele Longhi, before he was arrested in his turn; Father Guido Pedrotti, who was also later arrested and deported to the KZ (Mauthausen and then Dachau); father Andrea Gaggero (later interned in the camp and deported to Mauthausen); and the Domenican priest Nicola Bellagamba. Three nuns are also mentioned: Teofila Mattielle, Adelia Alvarà and Agnese Muzzati; Father Primo Michelotti distinguished himself at the sub-camp at Merano.[121]

Many different sources however also mention the spontaneous character of much help offered by various cilivians to the prisoners, maybe only for humanitarian motives or for family reasons.[122]

It remains difficult to assess the scale of the resistance within the camp, above all the political resistance and its links with the role played by the Church, even if the high number of escapes are testimony to a very dynamic situation (23 escapes are known prior to the arrest of Gilardi, with an unknown further number in the period afterwards). Certainly the role played by the CLN, who were at the centre of the anti-fascist movement in Milan, was to encourage internal resistance, as well as the ability to focus rescue efforts on specific prominent individuals on their way to the camp: see, for instance, the attempt to free the industrialist Lepetit, and that for Giuliano Pajetta, and many other escapes up until March 1945. Even the role of the heads of each Block (this was a very different role from those who "collaborated" with the SS in the larger Nazi camps: no head of a Block was ever regarded as guilty of maltreatment or other crimes, as statements by prisoners have confirmed) is testimony to the high levels of resistance activity organised by the CLN. In the same way, the role of the unofficial head of the camp, Armando Maltagliati, an anti-fascist activist, demonstrated the capacity of the "political" prisoners to control the situation –

[120] Happacher, op.cit., page 78
[121] Mascagni Lilli Nella, *Rapporti tra gli internati nel lager di Bolzano e la città*, in IVSR, a cura di, *Tedeschi, partigiani e abitanti dell'Alpervorland*, Marsilio, Venice 1984, p. 252, and Luciano Happacher, pp 79-81; on A. Gaggero, see his autobiography: A. Gaggero, *Vestìo da omo*, Florence 1991, pp 113-131.
[122] Silvio Lancerini, *Rapporti tra formazioni partigiane urbane e popolazione. Esperienza alla Lancia di Bolzano,* in *Tedeschi, partigiani e popolazioni nell'Alpenvorland*", op.cit., pp. 489-492.

within the limits of what was possible inside the camp – as regards the help offered to prisoners, and indicating above all an ability to mediate with the Nazi authorities running the camp.[123]

The Resistance, weakened by the arrest of its leadership tier in December 1944, managed to continue functioning in prohibitive conditions, even if it did not play a prominent role in the liberation of the camp: this was certainly due to a direct agreement between the Allied military authorities and the Nazi commanders in Bolzano, but it should not be forgotten that only the intense Allied bombing along the Brenner Pass (particularly from January to 2 May 1945) was able to stop or at least slow down the mass deportations towards the KZ and the extermination camps, deportations that ceased from 1 February 1945 precisely because of the Nazis' inability to move people either by road or rail.

[123] Ada Buffulini, in Happacher, op.cit., p. 65, footnote 164.