

LECTURE/WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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Speaker

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Site visit of Ljubelj camp

The Ljubelj-Loibl concentration camp was built in the summer of 1943 on both sides of the Ljubelj pass as a satellite camp to the Mauthausen concentration camp. For strategic and economic reasons, the Nazis decided to improve traffic connection to the south and planned a tunnel through Karavanke. The first prisoners arrived at Ljubelj in June 1943. By the end of the war, approximately 1,800 prisoners were imprisoned. In addition, around 660 civilian workers were employed. The largest part of the prisoners were French, Poles, Russians and Yugoslavs. The other prisoners came from Germany, the Czech Republic, Norway, Luxembourg, Greece, Belgium and the Netherlands. In 1944, 15 Jewish prisoners from Hungary were deported to Ljubelj. After only a few weeks they were sent back to Mauthausen. The inhabitants of Tržič tried to secretly help the prisoners, as did the civilian workers. Several inmates successfully escaped from the camp. On April 16, 1945, due to partisan activity, the camp on the Carinthian side was closed and the prisoners were transferred to the southern side. On May 7, 1945 the prisoners had to go together with the SS men through the tunnel to Carinthia, where they were freed by the partisans.