



...What Really Happened continued

The old women were sent to Camp Sekitsch; the young ones remained in the Subotitza labor camp. The men were led away, never to be heard from again. I worked two months in the Partisan hospital in Subotitza, became disabled, and was sent to Sekitsch”.

Prisoners were given no change of clothes, and often wore the same thing for months or years. At times, raging typhoid epidemics ravaged the camp and people died in mass. Large work parties were taken away from camp for many months, especially during the winter. Just before nightfall, these work parties were brought to one of many open sheds scattered throughout the area, to spend the night. In the earliest morning hours, they were returned to their workplace, regardless of the weather, day-in and day-out. In this way, prisoners were unable to lay down and rest decently for weeks on end. Those who became disabled from these constant physical demands, were brought to Sekitsch.

As time passed, the labor camp at Subotitza found itself slowly dissolving. Yet, only when the last man was no longer able to work, were the camp doors left open. By January 1948, the camp housed only sick people, 50 of which were bedridden with Spot-Typhus.

Sekitsch-Feketitsch

The two German-Lutheran communities of Sekitsch and Feketitsch on the international Autobahn north of Werbaß came under Soviet occupation on October 12, 1944. Three days later, the Partisans were left in charge. On the first day of Partisan control, a number of German men were arrested and beaten to within an inch of their lives.

The Partisans immediately began to create a slave labor force. At first, the work was mostly within the town itself, and the workers were allowed to go home at day's end. However, this soon changed as people were led to other communities in the area, and no longer allowed to return home. In October, all men between the ages of 18 to 60 were required to register and report for work. They never returned home. Most of the young men were sent to Camp Subotitza, while the older men were sent to Topola.

On November 20th, Sekitsch was officially declared a camp. The population east of the international Autobahn was evicted from their homes and moved to the other side of town. Near the end of November, the displaced people from Bajmok were placed in their empty

houses. As time went on, the entire able-bodied German population in the surrounding area was brought into this “Sammellager” (collection camp). No German returning to Yugoslavia via Subotitza was allowed to return to his or her hometown. Those considered fit enough to work were kept in Subotitza; the rest were kept in Sekitsch. Yet, even among the amassed assortment of unfit and disabled men and women in Camp Sekitsch, people were still sought out and taken to work in Topola, Morawitza, Bajmok and Subotitza. Mothers with small children received no special reprieve. They had to leave their children regardless of whether someone cared for them or not.

The death rate in Camp Sekitsch, compared to other internment camps, was relatively low. Since only a small number of people fled before the Russian troops arrived, most of the population remained at home and was, therefore, able to make some provisions for later on. Just the simple fact that the citizens of Sekitsch were allowed to stay in their hometown, although not in their own houses, was a stroke of luck. This meant that they were not solely dependent on the camp food for nourishment. This was of great advantage, not only to them but also to the Germans that were brought into Sekitsch from the surrounding area. The portions of unused camp-provisions benefited the outside workers.

Unfortunately, on October 1, 1945 these favorable circumstances took their revenge. At that time, nearly the entire population of Camp Sekitsch was moved to Gakovo and Kruschevlje. Only those few still able to work were left. The poor conditions in Kruschevlje had decimated its population so that nearly all 7,000 Sekitsch prisoners could be absorbed. The sudden subjection to the camp food in Kruschevlje created havoc with the health of most people coming from Sekitsch. They became violently ill and died like flies - en-masse.

Before leaving Camp Sekitsch, everyone was searched. All but the barest of clothing was taken away. Therefore, while the people in the Kruschevlje camp still had a few possessions to trade for food on nightly excursions, those coming from Sekitsch had absolutely nothing left. The prisoners were transported from Sekitsch to Kruschevlje by train in open boxcars. The journey took two days, during which it rained the entire time. In Sombor, the Partisans came alongside the train and beat the women and children as they stood in the boxcars.

In 1946, a secret poll was conducted by church groups

