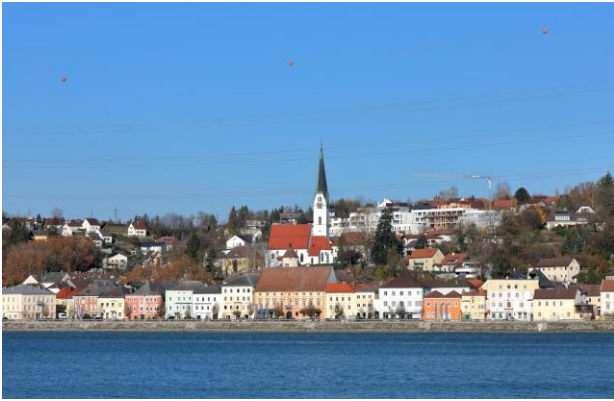


Mauthausen

A small Austrian Village



On March 12, 1938, Hitler's home country of Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany. As Nazi propaganda spread throughout the country, it was obvious that they wanted to demonize the Jewish people and political opponents. Soon after annexing Austria, the Nazi party began building and expanding their reach throughout the country. In Mauthausen, the Nazi's quickly converted an old castle into a camp for enemies of the Nazi's.

The Nazi's tried hard to keep what was going on in these camps a secret, but some things were too difficult to hide from the villagers in Mauthausen. Villagers in Mauthausen report buses filled with people arriving at the castle. Only to be followed by thick, dark clouds of smoke pouring from the chimneys and a stench that spread throughout the whole town. The people who lived in Mauthausen were worried about what was secretly going on in their town. When the townspeople questioned the Nazi officials, the Nazis assured them that they were only burning shoes and personal belongings that would be converted to a type of oil to fuel German submarines. The Nazi's also threatened the townspeople saying they would send anyone who spread these "absurd rumors of burning bodies" to a concentration camp.



The people of Mauthausen were bystanders. They did not ask the Nazis to take over their town. They knew something sketchy was going on in these Nazi buildings, but they didn't do anything. Many of them were scared for their lives. If they spoke up, they would be next. Others were just focused on getting food on the table for their families and turned a blind eye to the evil that was taking place in their town.

Should the people in Mauthausen be considered guilty of any crime?