



Kleine Berlin. The main tunnel (5) from which eleven lateral ramifications branch off.

land-surveyor Gerdol's company, which worked on behalf of Todt. The main tunnel and the lateral ramifications of the complex German antiaircraft shelter was probably entrusted to Todt's company Mazorana & Co. The passage connecting Globocnik's Villa Ara with the ceiling of a lateral tunnel of the antiaircraft shelter was carried out by the Schwarz company, also working for Todt.

After the bombing of June 10, 1944 the building of the shelter became crucial. Therefore, the Germans ordered the workers of the Colombo company to collaborate with Todt in the excavation of their antiaircraft shelter, with a wide use of mines.

Some inscriptions found in the tunnel used by the Germans and reaching via Fabio Severo (IV entrance, where guided tours start) suggest that the main works were finished in December 1944. With no doubt, trimming works continued until the end of the war and for this reason were never completed. Evidence to this, current generators were never installed, even if cement basement are still visible in two places.

As regards the illumination of the shelter, the Germans had a service pipe connected to the then public utilities company ACEGAT. As a matter of fact, an electric distribution panel, still visible today, was installed near the entrance, along a passage reaching the main tunnel of the shelter.

Ancillary light, which was activated in case of lack of electricity, was provided by accumulators confiscated to fishing vessels, which before the war used to fish accompanied by night-fishing boats.

The entrance to the antiaircraft shelter was forbidden to any non-German staff. No Italian was allowed to enter it, exception made for an electrician working for the Luigi Presel company, in charge of replacing burnt out lamps, and for some other people working for the Germans. The Germans' main concern as for the management of the shelter was the high amount of humidity stagnating in the tunnels. Therefore, they decided to resort to braziers burning coke coal in order to dry up the rooms. Burnt gas was conveyed through an expelling fan to the "municipal" tunnel, causing serious problems of asphyxia for the people sheltered. Documents at the Municipality of Trieste General Archives witness the fact that Mayor Cesare Pagnini asked the Deutscher Berater (intermediate German counsellor between the Municipality and the Gauleiter Rainer) to forbid braziers in the German shelter.

In the night of April 29, 1945, Gauleiter Rainer and general Globocnik abandoned Trieste and left for Austria. Here they were arrested by the Allies. On April 30, 1945 an insurrection burst out in Trieste led by the National Liberation Committee.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> the partisan Yugoslav troops entered the city, surrounding the last German strongholds and forcing German soldiers to surrender. The Court, connected to the antiaircraft shelter, was among these strongholds. No trace of a Yugoslav attempt to penetrate the corridor of the Court has been found. Probably, nobody knew about this passage. The city fight did not last long, German soldiers surrendered to New Zealand troops, that in the meantime had entered the city. After twenty months, the German occupation of Trieste territory came to an end.



The so called "Globocnik well".



## CLUB ALPINISTICO TRIESTINO - CAVES GROUP -

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## THE COMPLEX OF ANTIAIRCRAFT TUNNELS NEMED

## «KLEINE BERLIN»

Informazione available at:

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## Brief description of the rooms

The visit of the "Kleine Berlin" complex begins at the entrance reserved for German soldiers (IV entrance).

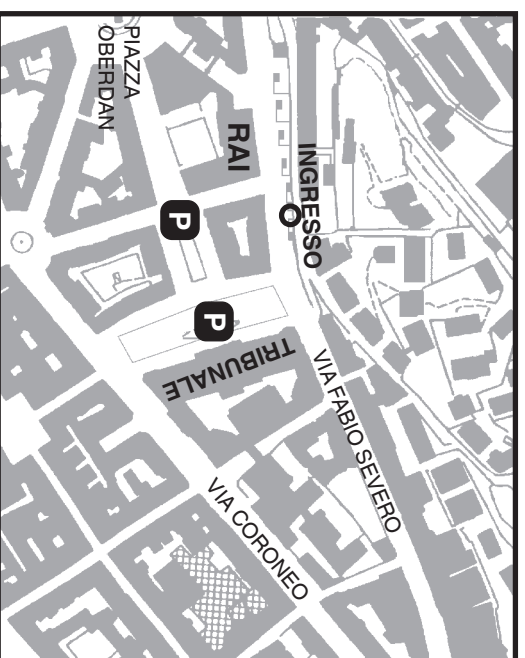
Walking down the first section of the tunnel you arrive at a crossing (1); going straight forward you arrive at a room where a cement basement for a current generator was collocated (2). Before entering the room, a little passage on the right leads to a door.

After the door, a slightly descending passage leads to the former main entrance of the German antiaircraft shelter (3). Then you turn left, walk on and turn right until you get to the barrage obstructing the access to the hypogeal rooms of Trieste Court (Palazzo di Giustizia) (4). During visits, groups are rarely allowed to visit this section of the tunnel because it is full of water.

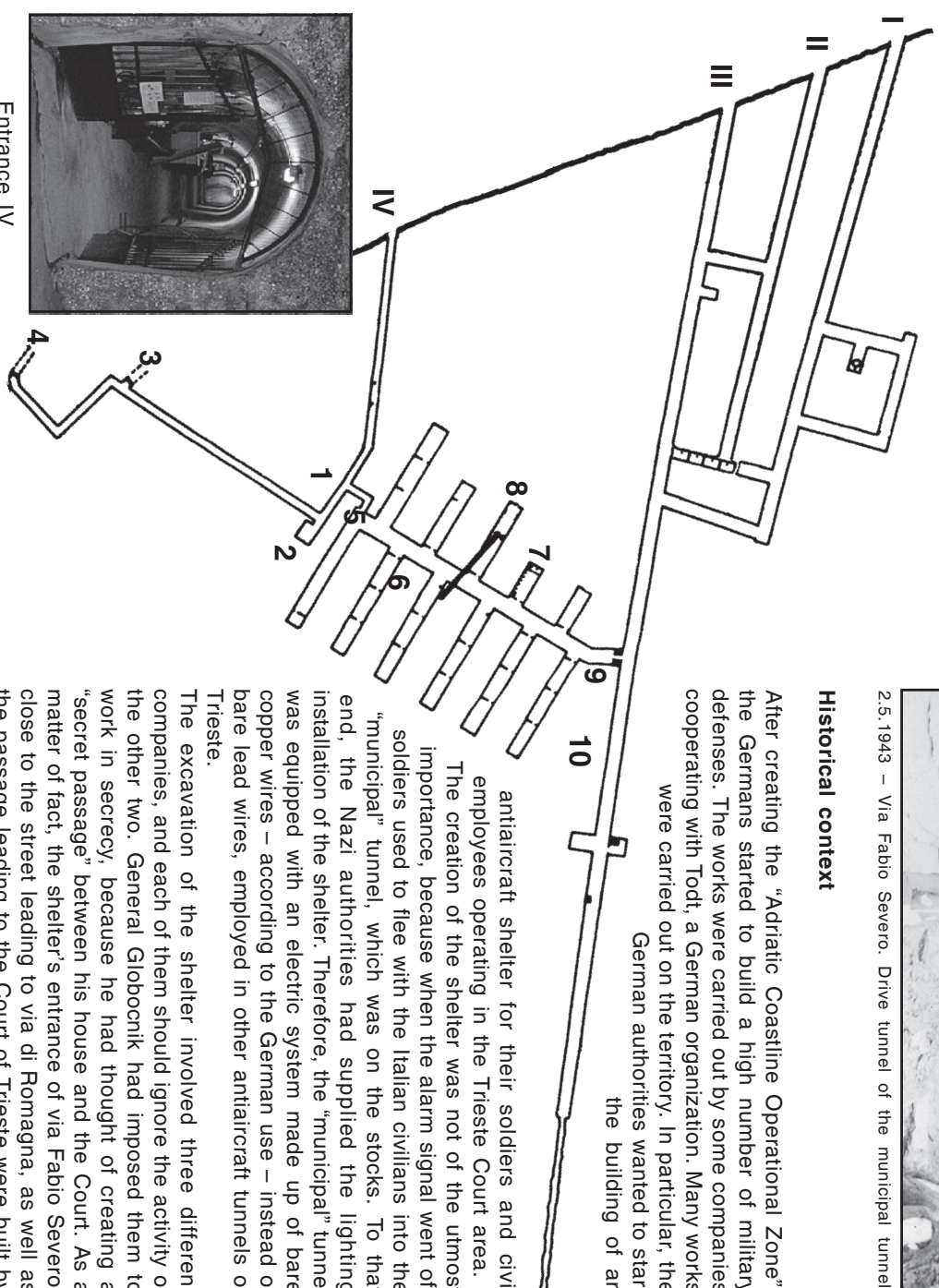
Back to position 1, you walk down the left corridor until you come across the main tunnel (5), from which eleven lateral ramifications branch off. The ramifications on the right side are all about 26 metres long (6), while the ones on the left side are between 12 and 25 metres long, exception made for the passage employed for sanitation services (7), which is about 10 metres long.

Among these tunnels, one is equipped with a well on its vault. Such well was then equipped with a winding staircase (8), used by general Globocnik to reach the Court from his house of Villa Ara.

At the end of the long "German" tunnel, a door (9) leads into the municipal antiaircraft shelter (10), consisting of a 250 metres tunnel, built by the Emilio Colombo company on behalf of the Municipality of Trieste.



Here you can realize to what extent nature is slowly, though inexorably, taking possession of the hypogeum again. A fascinating scenario comes into sight, thriving with stalactites, stalagmites and concrete cups, veiled by ceaselessly flowing water. This phenomenon is not so visible in the German section and is due to the fact that the last part of the Italian tunnel was never cemented. The final result is extremely pleasant, giving the impression of being in a natural karst cave, instead of an artificial hypogeum. And what's more, the site is located in the very city centre of Trieste.



2.5.1943 – Via Fabio Severo. Drive tunnel of the municipal tunnel.

## Historical context

After creating the "Adriatic Coastline Operational Zone", the Germans started to build a high number of military defenses. The works were carried out by some companies cooperating with Todt, a German organization. Many works were carried out on the territory. In particular, the

German authorities wanted to start the building of an

antiaircraft shelter for their soldiers and civil employees operating in the Trieste Court area.

The creation of the shelter was not of the utmost importance, because when the alarm signal went off soldiers used to flee with the Italian civilians into the "municipal" tunnel, which was on the stocks. To that end, the Nazi authorities had supplied the lighting installation of the shelter. Therefore, the "municipal" tunnel was equipped with an electric system made up of bare copper wires – according to the German use – instead of bare lead wires, employed in other antiaircraft tunnels of Trieste.

The excavation of the shelter involved three different companies, and each of them should ignore the activity of the other two. General Globocnik had imposed them to work in secrecy, because he had thought of creating a "secret passage" between his house and the Court. As a matter of fact, the shelter's entrance of via Fabio Severo, close to the street leading to via di Romagna, as well as the passage leading to the Court of Trieste were built by