

HEALTHCARE IN AUSCHWITZ

Carlo Mattogno

Healthcare in Auschwitz

**Medical Care and
Special Treatment
of Registered Inmates**



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Healthcare in Auschwitz: Medical Care and Special Treatment of Registered Inmates.

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Cover: Left: Warning poster for inmates in German concentration camps, urging cleanliness; right: drawing by an inmate, gift to Garrison Physician of Auschwitz Dr. Eduard Wirths as a thank-you for his struggle against typhus-transmitting lice (see p. 267); bottom: map of the troop hospital at Auschwitz, built on the initiative and under the supervision of Dr. E. Wirths, and opened in 1944.

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Introduction

Selection in hospitals of the Auschwitz complex and the subsequent gassing of sick inmates who had become unfit for work is notoriously one of the cornerstones of Holocaust historiography relating to this camp.

Although the German term “*Selektion*” is not part of the terminology used by the SS, who employed the terms “*Auswahl*” or “*Ausmusterung*,” for practical reasons I will continue to use the term “selection.”

Such selections form part of the program of extermination of “useless mouths,” *i.e.* inmates so worn out that they were no longer able to work profitably for the SS and were therefore, economically, dead weight, first among these the invalids and the inpatients.

The sentencing grounds of the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, in the section “The Auschwitz Concentration Camp as an extermination center of sick and debilitated inmates,” states in this regard (Rüter 1981, pp. 416f.):

“In the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, sick inmates of the camp who were considered unfit for work, especially Jews, were also murdered in large numbers.

a) In the HKB,^[1] among inmates who reported sick and, following an examination, were presented by an inmate physician (the so-called physician presenter^[2]) to the camp medical officer, those whom the camp medical officer judged unable to work were selected almost every day. Then they were killed with phenol injections. The number of inmates murdered in this way could not be ascertained. However, there were several thousand. More precise details on the selection process and the methods of killing will be discussed further in relation to the offences of the SDGs^[3] Klehr, Scherpe, Hantl.

b) Every now and then the camp doctor, in the company of an SDG, went into the wards of the HKB to check on orderliness and cleanliness and to assess whether the HKB was overcrowded. In this case, he selected a series of inmates who later were also killed with phenol injections. Particularly threatened were inmates who had already been in the HKB for a long time. The number of inmates chosen during these so-called small selections and then killed with phenol could also not be ascertained. We will also return later to these small selections.

¹ *Häftlingskrankenbau*: infirmary for inmates (HKB)

² *Arztvorsteller*

³ *Sanitätsdienstgehilfen*: SS corpsmen.

c) In addition to these minor selections, there took place in the HKB at certain time intervals so-called major selections. In these major selections, all sick inmates who were in the HKB were to be presented naked to the camp medical officer. Then with a look the camp medical officer decided whether a patient could still remain in the HKB or whether he should be killed. Often during these major selections 200-300 inmates were destined to die. Their temperature charts^[4] were brought into the clerks' office, where a list with numbers of inmates destined to die was compiled. One or two days later, inmates selected were called, loaded onto trucks and taken to the gas chambers, where they were killed with Zyklon B. The number of inmates murdered in this way also could no longer be ascertained.

d) Finally, there were from time to time so-called camp selections. In the course of these, camp inmates, except those who held a responsibility and others who were employed in special activities, were reviewed to verify their fitness for work. These so-called camp selections took place both in the Stammlager^[5] and in the various sectors of the Birkenau camp. The inmates in these selections had to line up naked. Their fitness for work was assessed by the camp doctors at a glance. Any inmates who did not appear fit for work – to this category belonged especially the so-called Muslims^[6] – were separated from the other inmates and allocated to a particular block isolated from other inmates. After a few days, the men selected were taken by truck to the gas chambers and killed there with gas.

As cause of death on death certificates of all inmates killed in this way, natural causes (e.g. cardiac weakness) were given.

It has not been possible to ascertain whether and to what extent these selections took place on the orders of the RSHA^[7] or WVHA.^[8]

They were probably based on the action, already mentioned, implemented in concentration camps with the secret code 14 f 13.

The Assize Court has, based on the presumption in favor of the accused, assumed that the SS doctors received from higher up (probably from Amt III^[9] of the WVHA) a general directive to select and unobtrusively kill sick and completely debilitated inmates whose labor could no longer be relied on. However, in addition to selections by the doctors, these selections were also carried out by SS officers, NCOs and nurses, at times without orders, on their own initiative. We will return later to specific cases in connection with discussions of the crimes of the defendants.”

The historical framework sketched out here was evidently built on the basis not of documents, but of simple testimonies. However, there is considera-

⁴ The medical records of inmates, which also contained a daily temperature graph.

⁵ The Auschwitz Main Camp.

⁶ Emaciated inmates.

⁷ Reichssicherheitshauptamt: Reich Security Main Office.

⁸ SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt: SS Economic and Administrative Main Office.

⁹ Office D III of the SS WVHA “Sanitätswesen und Lagerhygiene” (Camp Health and Hygiene) commanded by SS Obersturmbannführer Enno Lolling.

ble documentation that categorically refutes this historical framework, as I will show in the present study. Precisely for this reason, orthodox Holocaust historiography has so far been unable to produce a scientific work on the fate of those registered inmates who became unfit for work and were admitted to hospitals in the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex.

The study here presented seeks to overcome this serious historiographical lacuna by outlining on the one hand, on the basis of documentary evidence largely unknown or ignored, the real picture of events, in particular the medical treatment of sick inmates, which went as far as to surgical operations, and by refuting on the other hand, by means of a well-documented critical analysis, the Holocaust narrative as created by orthodox Holocaust historian. In this second part of the present book, I address the issue of the “special treatment” of registered inmates. As such, this study is a supplement to my earlier work *Special Treatment in Auschwitz: Origin and Meaning of a Term* (Mattogno 2016c).

Nota Bene

This book contains many quotations, translated into the English language, from original German wartime documents. The original German text of them can be found in the German edition of this book, which is available as a free PDF download at holocausthandbuecher.com/index.php?page_id=33