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EXPERIMENTS ON HUMANS IN DACHAU AND AUSCHWITZ: OBERSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF AN EYEWITNESS

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Translated by Benno Müller-Hill and Henry Friedlander.

This article is written by an eyewitness, not by a scientist. I was imprisoned in the concentration camp of Dachau from May 1941 until August 1942, in Auschwitz from August 1942 until August 1944, and thereafter -- until my flight from an evacuation transport in April 1945 -- in Neuengamme and its subsidiary camps. Like others who had served in the International Brigades, I was imprisoned as an Austrian who had fought on the republican side in the Spanish civil war; to distinguish us from members of the Condor Legion, sent by the Third Reich to support Franco in Spain, the protective custody order listed me as a "red legionnaire" (Rotspanienkämpfer).

In Dachau and Auschwitz I had to witness experiments on humans. Prisoners were used, but they were never informed about the purpose of these experiments. They were called "rabbits." In Nazi concentration camps prisoners were after all cheaper than the rabbits, guinea pigs, or mice usually used as subjects. In the experiments I observed, the physicians easily accepted the death of the "rabbit"; moreover, in some cases death was an intended part of the experiment.

In Dachau I witnessed the malaria experiments, carried out in barracks 1 of the prisoners' infirmary complex, and conducted by Professor Claus Schilling, a tall old man. He was assisted by Dr. Rudolf Brachtel, an SS physician who was born in the

Sudetenland and held the rank of SS Captain. The experiments began in 1942. Healthy prisoners were transferred to the experimental station. In the beginning they liked that, since they did not have to work or appear for roll call. But soon they were infected with Plasmodia. Schilling wanted to test various possible cures. About 1,100 prisoners were probably used as "rabbits" in these experiments, which continued after I had been transferred from Dachau to Auschwitz. Many prisoners died during these experiments. We do not know how many died later, after they had been released from the experimental station as "cured."

Dr. Sigmund Rascher, a staff physician of the Luftwaffe, conducted another set of experiments. They started in Dachau in the beginning of 1942. They were conducted in the enclosed courtyard located between barracks 3 and 5 of the prisoners' infirmary complex. Since I served as clerk in barrack 3, I could observe what happened in this courtyard. Although this was forbidden, and the windows facing the courtyard had been painted with lime, I was able to observe through scratches in the windows of the clinic, where I was occasionally alone and unobserved.

One day a large truck, looking like a furniture van, drove into the courtyard. An acquaintance, the fellow prisoner Walter Neff, who served as senior nurse in barracks 5 and who was forced to assist in the experiments, later told me that the van contained a low pressure chamber where low air pressure could be simulated as it occurs at various heights. Prisoners selected for the experiment were examined, and only those judged healthy were accepted. Those prisoners forced to function as "rabbits" were suspended in a harness simulating a parachutist. An air pressure cycle was initiated which simulated a swift parachute descent

from high altitude to the ground. The reaction of the "rabbits" during the rapid changing air pressure was studied. This research included "terminal experiments," a term used by Rascher, that is, experiments that required the death of the subject.

I remember one case. Once a curfew was imposed, that is, no one was permitted to leave his barrack. I could see through the scratch in the lime covering my window how two prisoners with a stretcher ran into the courtyard. A subject was lifted from the van and put on the stretcher; the stretcher bearers were running with their load, Rascher right behind them. They rushed to the dissecting room located in barracks 8 of the prisoners' infirmary complex. Afterwards I asked a friend of mine, a Swabian who was forced to work there, what had happened after their arrival. He told me that the "rabbit" was placed on the dissection table, and that he was cut open while still alive. Rascher observed for how long his heart continued to beat and for how long the lungs continued to work. Possibly, one could reject the Swabian's report as an exaggeration, but a short time later I got to read one of the reports Rascher sent to Heinrich Himmler, who demanded frequent reports about the progress of the experiments. A lethal experiment is described by Rascher in the following manner: "Breathing ceased after 30 minutes, while in two cases EEG measurements proved that the heart ceased beating 20 minutes after breathing ceased."

This series of experiments ended while I was still in Dachau; the van disappeared from the courtyard. Neff told me that about 200 subjects -- mainly Russians, Poles, Germans, and Jews-- were hung in the pressure chamber by Rascher; according to Naff, about 70 to 80 subjects died during these experiments.

So much about my recollections concerning experiments on humans in Dachau.

In August 1942, I was transferred to Auschwitz and there assigned to the personnel of the prisoners' infirmary complex. Several weeks later I was assigned to the "Command SS Infirmary," as the clerk of the senior SS garrison physician (SS-Standortarzt). Except for two short periods (a bout with typhus in the fall of 1942 and a period of incarceration in the Bunker in late summer and fall of 1943), I retained this assignment until my transfer to Neuengamme in August 1944. Because I tried in this position to gather as much information as possible about events in the prisoners' infirmary complex and about the behavior of the SS physicians, I also discovered a great deal about experiments on humans carried out in this concentration and extermination camp; I did so both through written records and through reports from fellow prisoners.

Two physicians carried out the largest and most criminal set of experiments (if it is appropriate to use a superlative here); they did not collaborate, but conducted parallel experiments in a kind of competition with each other. Both physicians were looking for a method to sterilize human beings as rapidly and as cheaply as possible. One of them was the gynecologist Professor Carl Clauberg, and the other one was the Luftwaffe physician Dr. Horst Schumann, who had previously headed an "euthanasia" killing center, and had also selected prisoners in Auschwitz for killing in such a center. This research was designed to solve a problem that confronted the SS in Auschwitz: On the one hand all Jews were to be killed as "unworthy of life" (lebensunwert), and on the other Jews sent to the camp for extermination but able to

work were to be selected and registered as camp prisoners for use as forced labor in armament factories. This selection of those able to work should not, however, alter the ultimate fate of the Jews. After all, they were to be assigned to "destruction through labor"; this term actually appeared in the minutes of a discussion between Himmler and Minister of Justice Thierack. That is, they should also be killed as soon as their capacity for work had been exhausted. In the meantime, they should be sterilized to assure the final destruction of the "Jewish race." Himmler was most interested in these experiments, and provided "human material" for both physicians, who applied for the job of carrying on such experiments in Auschwitz. Neither physician was a member of the SS. In the case of Clauberg some documents erroneously list him with an SS rank but this was a mistake.

The experiments carried out by Clauberg and Schumann were even more criminal than were other experiments, not only because they unscrupulously anticipated the death of the subjects, but because the results were after all also designed to serve a crime: the genocide of a whole human group.

An entire barracks (number 10) was placed at the disposal of Professor Clauberg in Auschwitz I, the Stammlager; there the women he had selected for his experiments were housed. He preferred women who had already borne a child, since they were clearly fertile. Infertility was supposed to be obtained through the injection into the uterus of some irritating fluid. Like Schumann he used only Jewish women; indeed, they were to be the subject of genocide. His goal was to sterilize up to one thousand women in one day with only a small staff.

Schumann wanted to achieve sterility by using X-rays to

irradiate the genitalia of his subjects; for his experiments he used women and men, mostly very young ones. To determine the X-ray dosage necessary, he ordered the surgically removal and examination of the ovaries and testes of the "rabbits" after irradiation. These operations were performed in record time, often with unsterilized instruments. His surgical journal, which does not cover the entire period, lists 185 such operations. After the removal of these organs, the "rabbits" were released into the camp and assigned to heavy labor. It is selfevident that their ability to do labor had decreased, and that most of those unable to work were selected for the gas chamber. Barracks 10 housed about 400 subjects, mostly Clauberg's "rabbits"; those who left were simply replaced.

Clauberg was arrested after the war. He received a sentence of 25 years in a summary court procedure in the Soviet Union; like most of the other sentenced prisoners, he was released into the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955. He was received like a martyr in the West German Friedland camp. On November 19, 1955, he advertised in the local newspaper of Kiel, the Kieler Nachrichten, for "several qualified female secretaries who would like to work for me"; they should report to the surgical departent of the university clinic. Through this advertisement Clauberg also came to the attention of Auschwitz survivors. They filed charges, judicial proceedings were initiated, and Clauberg was placed under arrest. In his defense, Clauberg argued that he had always treated the women well, and that their condition had been improved because in barracks 10 they had been released from any labor. Schumann, however, had been a criminal. Clauberg died in pre-trial arrest before his case could come to trial.

Although his crimes had become public knowledge during the Nuremberg Medical Trial, Schumann continued to live openly under his own name in the Federal Republic of Germany. But when the police finally decided to search for him, he was informed about this in time and emigrated to Africa. I located Schumann in Ghana with the help of Jan Pisecki, a Polish survivor of Auschwitz who held a position in the Polish embassy in Ghana. But Schumann could only be extradited to the Federal Republic after the fall of Nkrumah, because the president had been his patient at a hospital Schumann directed. The long lasting judicial proceedings that the office of the state attorney in Frankfurt conducted against Schumann were discontinued when a public health physician certified that Schumann was physically unable to stand trial or to serve a prison sentence. He died many years later.

Dr. Hellmuth Vetter was another SS physician who used his service in Auschwitz to conduct experiments. He had previously been employed at Bayer-Leverkusen and he maintained contacts with his former employer while serving in Auschwitz. They sent him new drugs with the expectation that he would test their effects on prisoners. He fulfilled their request, and continued to do so even after he was transferred from Auschwitz to Mauthausen. Several cases of death caused by these tests became known, particularly in Mauthausen. A United States Military Tribunal sentenced him to death for his crime, and he was executed.

Josef Mengele was the most notorious SS physician who performed experiments in addition to the jobs assigned to all of them; the prisoners called them "diligent extra work" (Fleißaufgaben). Mengele had obtained two advanced degrees: a doctorate in anthropology from the Department of Philosophy and

Sciences at the University of Munich and a doctorate in Medicine from Frankfurt University; these two degrees were rescinded after the war due to my intervention. Mengele was more intelligent than most ofthe other SS physicians I was forced to know. He was clearly consumed by burning ambition. He had first served as physician with an SS unit at the front. Only after he was classified as incapable of further service at the front did he apply for a transfer to Auschwitz because he hoped to find there "sufficient human material" for his scientific work. In May 1943 he was transferred to Auschwitz as an SS Captain decorated with the iron cross.

He maintained constant contact with Professor Dr. Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, who had directed his doctoral work, and who had in the meantime become director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics in Berlin-Dahlem. Mengele did research on twins for him in Auschwitz, at the time a highly regarded field that apparently served to expedite professional advancement. Mengele selected twins from the arriving transports of Jews and Gypsies. These selected twins were housed in a special barracks in the Birkenau Gypsy camp (Zigeunerlager) under conditions far better than those provided for other prisoners.

Using the most advanced medical techniques, prisoner physicians had to test the twins under his strict supervision. The Polish roll call clerk of this part of the camp remembered years later that more than 60 pairs of twins, "between two and 14 years old," were held there for Mengele. Mengele often visited this barrack, and because he distributed candy the children were happy to see him. Dr. Lucie Adelsberger, a Berlin physician

deported to Auschwitz as a Jew and assigned to supervise medical treatment in the Gypsy camp, later wrote that "the children were delighted as soon as the camp physician appeared; a piece of candy and they forgot their suffering." As soon as the scientific tests had been completed, Mengele invited one pair of twins after the other for a drive in his car. Mengele had installed a pathological-anatomical laboratory in one of the four crematoria. To run this laboratory he had appointed Dr. Miklos Nyiszli, a well-known pathologist whom he had selected from an Hungarian Jewish transport (Nyiszli was actually from Siebenbürgen, which at that time was part of Hungary). Together with the corpses of such a twin pair, Mengele delivered to Nyiszli all the data that had been collected about these twins through various medical examinations and X-rays. Only an autopsy remained to be done, and thus Nyiszli had to prepare the section report. Nyiszli later wrote that "analyzing the heart I saw at the outside of the left heart chamber a small round red spot that had been caused by an injection needle." Mengele worked for hours next to Nyiszli, "working and experimenting like one possessed." Nyiszli had to pack up the interesting material, which was then sent to the Institute of Anthropology in Berlin-Dahlem. The packages were stamped "Urgent -- Important War Material."

Would Mengele have done this "diligent extra work" without Verschuer? Was Mengele alone responsible? I once talked with Verschuer; this happened while visiting in Münster to observe the trial of Professor Johann Paul Kremer. Professor Rengsdorf invited both myself and Verschuer, after I had assured him that I had nothing against meeting him. In reply to my question, Verschuer stated that he remembered Mengele as one of his

brightest students. He also remembered that Mengele had been in Auschwitz. I remembered (I no longer recall my source) that Mengele had once found a Gypsy [in fact it was a family of six (BMH)] who had eyes of different color. He had him killed [in fact the whole family(BMH)], and had the eyes prepared and sent to Berlin. I asked Verschuer whether he remembered these eyes. He replied in the affirmative, adding that they were most interesting. I then asked Verschuer: "And did you discover how Mengele obtained these eyes"? Dumbfounded, the old man looked at me and replied: "I presume the Gypsy died."

Mengele also experimented with other persons who had abnormalities; for example, dwarfs and hunchbacks. He had them killed and their skeletons prepared. He looked for a method to change the color of the eyes of newly born infants; he wanted them to have blue eyes. These latter experiments failed. He did all these experiments as an associate of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, one may assume at the request of Verschuer. Due to these scientific connections, Mengele's standing in Auschwitz was noticeably higher than that of the other physicians assigned to the office of the SS garrison physician.

The case of Mengele demonstrates with greater clarity and precision than does any other the fallacy of the widely accepted thesis that while evil persons in SS uniform did populate the concentration and extermination camps, the general population had no contact with them, had no knowledge of their deeds, and did not share the basic ideology that made the crimes in the concentration camps possible. Without Verschuer, Mengele would not have become the type of person now generally associated with the name Mengele. The members of the SS would not have been able

to act the way they did, if they had not constantly perceived that the vast majority of Germans accepted and approved of their actions. The statement that an unbridgeable wall separated the guards in the concentration camps from the general population is a pious and often repeated lie.

Johann Paul Kremer served as SS physician in Auschwitz. As far as I know, he was the only university professor to serve in a concentration camp. A member of the SS since 1932, he was assigned to Auschwitz for the period of his university vacation, from 29 August to 18 November 1942, as replacement for an ill SS physician. We welcomed his arrival with a certain amount of optimism, because not only his position at the university of Münster (known to us), but also his age (he was then 59 years old) and his general behavior, differed from that of all other SS physicians. He was polite to us and used the polite form to address prisoners.

Kremer kept a diary that reveals both his deeds and his thoughts. He describes not only the meals in the SS officers club, but also enumerates his participation in 14 selections of deported Jews from newly arrived transports. These selections impressed him deeply. On 2 September, after his first selection at the railroad siding, the Rampe, of those immediately dispatched to the gas chambers because they were unfit for labor, he recorded in his diary: "Compared to this, Dante's inferno looks like a comedy." He records a later selection in the women's camp as "the most horrible of all horrors."

In Münster, Kremer had long been interested in the changes of the human organism as a consequence of starvation. In Auschwitz he now saw vast numbers of human beings in a

deteriorated physical state unimaginable outside the camp. And he also saw that these Muselmänner -- as they were called in camp jargon -- were killed with injections of phenol into the heart because they were no longer fit for labor. He told the senior SS post physician about his interest in such "cases." The result of this conversation is recorded in his diary on 3 October 1942: "Fixed today fresh (lebendfrisch) material of human liver and spleen." Such entries can be found also for 10 and 17 October and 13 November 1942. Kremer sent these specimens, together with items like razor blades and soap from the possessions of deported Jews, to his home in Münster.

Kremer returned to Münster at the end of the university vacations and there continued to keep his diary. Imprisoned by the British in August 1945, he learned in jail that his diary had been found; he rejoiced because one entry showed that he had been passed over for one promotion, and others contained his recording of jokes which he had heard about leading Nazis. He had apparently repressed knowledge about the fact that he had also recorded his activities in Auschwitz.

Kremer was extradited to Poland, and there had to justify himself as a defendant in the big Auschwitz trial held in Cracow in November-December 1947. Questioned about his diary entries at the trial, he testified as follows:

> Whenever a prisoner was of interest to me because he suffered from a syndrome of advanced starvation, I gave orders to an inmate orderly to reserve the patient for me and to inform me when he was scheduled to be killed by injection .... The patient was then put on the section table prior to his death. I approached the

table and asked the patient about details that were of interest for my investigation. For example, I asked about his weight prior to his imprisonment, the loss of weight after imprisonment, whether he had recently taken drugs, and similar matters. After I had obtained this information, the medical orderly approached and killed the patient with an injection into the region of the heart. I never personally gave a deadly injection. I waited with prepared vessels at a certain distance from the section table. Immediately after death from the injection had occurred, inmate physicians removed pieces of the liver and pancreas, and these were placed in vessels containing conservation fluid. In some cases I ordered photographs of patients who were to be killed in order to provide me with specimens. I took the specimens and the photographs home with me to Münster.

In Cracow, Kremer was sentenced to death, then pardoned, and finally released in 1958. Back in Münster, he permitted his university to receive him as a martyr. Due to this, a complaint was lodged against him with the German judicial authorities, and he was again placed on trial in Münster. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison, which he did not have to serve because he received credit for time served in Poland.

These are my observations on medical experiments by SS physicians active in Dachau and Auschwitz. In Neuengamme and its subsidiary camps, where I was forced to spend the last period of my concentration camp incarceration, I did not witness this kind of experiments. I have supplemented my personal observations with facts I learned and reports I received after the war.

These deeds -- only a portion of the human experiments in the Nazi concentration camps -- raise this question, which people who did not themselves experienced the years of the Nazi regime could and should not evade. How was it possible that such a large number of persons, who had chosen a profession dedicated to the service of the sick and the weak, could exploit defenseless human beings under their care by at best inflicting on them pain, anxiety, and horror and at worst cause their death? Apparently they were not motivated by sadism. It is equally apparent that they did not even realize their own guilt in retrospect.

An answer to this painful question, or at least an attempt at such an answer, can only be found when one reflects on the underlying ideology. This ideology was not developed by the Nazis, it had already existed for quite some time; however, the Nazis continued to evolve it and -- this is the evil -- consistently implemented it. This ideology, the "ideology of race," held that there are higher races and therefore also lower races; that these differences are "based on blood" -- that is, they are not subject to change and are thus not governed by historical laws of development. The Germanic people, the "Nordic race," the "Aryans" were elevated above others as "supermen." Although one may search in vain for a definition of these concepts that can withstand scientific analysis, many were obviously corrupted by the belief that they belonged to this "superior race." And it was tempting to look down on others -- for example, on the Slavs -- who were inferior on the "basis of their blood," and not because of their historic development. It was so easy to scorn as "unworthy of life" those "races" which for centuries had been excluded as outsiders: The Jews and the

Gypsies. One could trust age old prejudices. To become conscious of belonging to the master race one needed an opposite mirror image. These human groups had to serve in this role.

This is not an abstract or theoretical explanation of how humans could be converted into "rabbits" in the concentration camps. A drastic example from Auschwitz can illustrate my thesis:

In the spring of 1942 Auschwitz was expanded into an extermination camp. But unlike the procedures in the four pure extermination camps Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Kulmhof (also known as Chelmno), those applied in Auschwitz included a selection among the deported Jews so that those capable to do labor were admitted to the camp for use as slave labor in the armament industries. For this purpose a women's camp had to be created, because there were also women able to do work among the Jews deported to Auschwitz. In August a women's camp was opened in Birkenau. The period of construction was as always the worst. At that time only one water faucet, located near the kitchen, existed in the Birkenau women's camp. At that time there were thousands in this camp, and only a few privileged inmates were able to wash themselves. No change of clothes was provided during the initial months. The floors consisted of stomped soil in the barracks, actually stables, housing the female inmates. Thus, sanitary conditions were such that it stank whenever a group of women marched to work. This made it easy to convince the SS men who guarded these women: Look at them, are they human beings? Do they resemble you? Surely they are vermin! Indeed, the SS men trained to drop Zyklon B into the gas chambers were officially designated decontaminators (Disinfectors), that is, annihilators of vermin. A system with the power and brutality to degrade a

group of humans to a level unthinkable in normal life can then use them to illustrate the concept "unworthy of life" in such convincing manner that people will accept it. Why then should a physician not use such creatures as "rabbits" for his scientific work; he did not perceive them as human beings, and they were destined in any event for annihilation.

This race ideology was not a peculiarity of those who wore an SS uniform. In Dachau I had to observe that this murderous ideology invaded even those who were incarcerated in the concentration camps as enemies of the Nazis.

Inmates who had been incarcerated for many years, that is, senior prisoners with certain camp experience occupying a higher position, knew about the experiments of Rascher described above. Rascher once also placed a German inmate, a Barracks Elder named Wagner, into the pressure chamber. He had been a patient in barracks 3, where I served as clerk. He observed the experiments by looking into the courtyard through the window covered with lime. Rascher noticed this and called to him: "If you are curious, come out and you will be able to observe everything." Wagner was suspended in a harness in the chamber and died as a result of the experiment. This became known among the senior prisoners, that is, the German political prisoners. I then noticed that these German inmate functionaries were shocked only then, although they had always known that fellow prisoners were murdered in these experiments. The killing of a senior German prisoner incensed them much more than the death of many others, who were after all "just" Russians, Poles, or Jews.

The leadership principle (Führerprinzip) is one consequence of the racial ideology. Once one accepts that "based on blood"

there are nobler, more valued human beings, it then follows that even among the "master race" some individuals are elevated to be leaders who must be obeyed. Such leaders are again selected on the basis of their blood or, as Hitler preferred to put it, chosen by providence. Democracy is reprehensible, aristocracy is desirable. The leader must command; obedience is the highest virtue of the follower. These slogans were not invented by the Nazis; they simply evolved them and imposed them on society. As a result, followers are relieved of responsibility; only their leader is accountable for their actions. Once the Führer has ordered the destruction of Jews and Gypsies, the followers no longer need to worry about it.

In Auschwitz I met individuals, including physicians, wearing the uniform of the SS, who were not at all happy or even indifferent about their daily collaboration with mass annihilation. Here and there they might have helped a prisoner because they saw in him a fellow human being. I observed this primarily when there existed a direct personal contact, when they recognized the prisoner as an individual. But I could not observe a changed attitude towards the anonymous multitudes, towards the "vermin."

Sometimes it is argued that those who were ordered to serve in an extermination camp had no alternative; that had they refused, their lives would have been in danger. Those who advance this argument underestimate the potency of the murderous "race ideology," or they want to exonerate the Nazi regime, the champions of this ideology.

Cases have become known where individuals in SS uniform avoided serving the machinery of extermination. Once an SS

physician was transferred to Auschwitz. In one of the Birkenau camps he saw Epstein, who had been deported to Auschwitz as a Jew and who worked there as an inmate physician. Epstein was a well known specialist in pediatrics. This SS physician had attended his lectures at the University of Prague. He recognized him, talked to him, asked for details, and finally commented: "This is no business for my mother's son." Thereafter he disappeared from the camp; he volunteered for duty at the front. We did not discover how he accomplished this. We believe that his name must have been Dr. Bartzel.

Individuals indicted for crimes committed in Auschwitz usually argued in their own defense that while they wanted to get away from there, they were unable to do so. It is true that service in Auschwitz was considered wartime military service. The example of the German Hans Bauernschmidt is however proof that it was possible to get away. In October 1942, Bauernschmidt was transferred to Auschwitz as an SS non-commissioned officer. He did not want to remain where the mass extermination of human beings was a matter of routine, and therefore arranged to be transferred to the front. Since so many others have consistently argued that their request for a transfer was refused, I visited Bauernschmidt and asked him how he was able to obtain a transfer. He told me that at that time a notice had been posted in all SS barracks inviting applications for an officers' training course. Those who passed were transferred to the front as SS officers. He had applied, passed the course, and was sent to the front. I asked how many had applied. He replied that only two had done so. And at that time several thousand members of the SS served in Auschwitz and its subsidiary camps.

It would be too simple to stop all further discussion by postulating that those SS physicians -- as well as all others willing to serve in an extermination camp -- were deviants or devils. The experiences of those who met such individuals in the exterminations camps -- without personally facing a situation that excluded thought or rational analysis -- contradict this interpretation. Further, this interpretation is also refuted by the fact that those not put on trial immediately after the destruction of Nazi rule were to rejoin society and live a completely normal life.

If a Mengele had not been transferred to Auschwitz as someone no longer able to fight, he would probably be one of those today who protest energetically against any attempt to equate the SS that fought at the front with the SS that served in an extermination camp. An examination of SS careers shows that it was pure chance that many SS men were posted to Auschwitz. For how many was it mere accident that they avoided such transfer? And would they have behaved differently if they had become servants of the machinery of annihilation in an extermination camp? My experiences have led me to believe that many of these individuals could have exchanged roles.

A murderous "race ideology," elevated to be the governing ideology, made it possible that ultimately human beings could be equated with vermin, not because they were guilty, but because of their race. This ideology differentiated Nazism from all other fascist systems. All of them were -- or are -- murderous. Like other fascist regimes, Nazism also persecuted its enemies and ravaged nations whose space it wanted to seize. But the vast majority of the victims of Nazism were people killed for "racial"

reasons. No other fascist "leader" -- not a Mussolini, not a Franco, nor a Pinochet -- used such reasons to organize mass murder.

This ideology was not invented by the Nazis. They simply were more consistent in unfolding it. This ideology did not loose its attraction when Hitler committed suicide. I believe that those born after these events must recognize this evil; they must also guard against the corruption associated -- then and now -- with membership in a "master race."

Poisoned by "race" ideology, our generation failed and made Auschwitz possible. Genocide previously unimaginable was implemented there. Our failure made it possible that physicians abandoned healing to open gas valves in "Euthanasia" Centers, to select for death in gas chambers in Auschwitz, and to treat humans as "rabbits." Our failure has placed a burden on later generations. The generations that follow us must not only know what was possible in central Europe a few decades ago, but they must also learn how the unimaginable could became possible, so that they will able to prevent a repetition. The "Grace of a Late Birth" does not exist. To be born afterwards is a burden that later generations must bear.

NAZI GERMANY