

The Language of the Concentration Camps¹

Vocabulary of the camps: *Lagersprache* in German, *jargon des camps* in French
Saturday, August 29, 2009

This is the language used in concentration camps by the witnesses of the UDA, the Union for Auschwitz Deportees² and other deportees. Each camp has its own vocabulary.

The language is known as “*Lagerdeutsch*” or “*Lagersprache*”, a way of speaking that draws on the prisoners’ various languages, with a touch of *Galgenhumor*, a kind of dark humor.

Definitions were edited during a process which involved interviews and research.

Älteste: Originally in German *älteste* means “oldest”. Here, the word refers to the length of the prisoner’s incarceration in the camp. A prisoner is designated “oldest” by the camp SS.

Appellplatz: The place where roll call is taken in the morning and evening.

Arbeitsfähig: Fit to work

Arbeitsscheu: Work-shy, lazy

Arbeitsdienst: The work one is forced to do.

Arbeitseinsatz: Forced labor assignment

Arbeitsdienstführer: SS labor-service leader

Arbeitskommando: Labor Kommando for a group of prisoners, commanded by an SS officer assisted by *Kapos*³.

Arbeitserziehungslager: Work re-education camp⁴

Arbeitslager: Work camp

Arbeitsstatistik: Labor statistics

Arbeitsstück: Work tool (referring to the prisoner as such)

Asoziale: [Asocial] Vagabonds, thieves, alcoholics, poachers, lazy people, and Roma people

Aufnahme: Entry, registration

Aufstehen: Get up! Roll call at around 3 a.m., at the blow of a whistle⁵.

Aufseherin: Supervisor, female camp guard, employed by the SS, known as *KZ-Aufseherin*.

Contrary to popular belief that there were no women in the SS, they were, in fact, helpers of the *SS-Gefolge*:⁶ “female auxiliary forces” of the SS. Deportees speak of “SS supervisors”. Plural *Aufseherinnen*.

Außenkommando: External labor Kommandos or small camps that responded to a central camp.

Außenlager: A subcamp of a large central camp, a satellite camp, often called *Kommando* in France.

Ausrotten: To exterminate (living beings).

Austausch: Exchange

Berufsverbrecher: “Professional criminals”, a legal category created by Nazis for repeat offenders who had served several sentences. The *Berufsverbrecher* wore green triangles and were wanted as collaborators by Nazis.

Betrieb: Factory

Block: In camp vocabulary, a barrack for prisoners (*Häftlingsbaracke*). In official language, a *Block* is a section of a camp containing various barracks. A barrack at Birkenau could contain 400 to 500 prisoners and could even reach over a thousand.

Blockälteste: Female prisoner and *Block* leader.

Blockältester: *Block* elder, barrack leader.

Blockowa: In Auschwitz/Birkenau, female *Block* leader (*Blockälteste* in German)

Blockführer: SS *Block* leader

Blockführerstube: Office of the SS *Block* leader

Blocksperr: Curfew and closing off of the *Block* when prisoners were not permitted to leave the barrack

Blockschreiber: *Block* clerk and prisoner⁷.

bouteillon: Container that held soup or coffee substitutes, cf. *Suppenkessel*, *marmites*

Brausebad: Shower room⁸.

Buna: Synthetic rubber produced by I.G. Farbenindustrie AG⁹. Synthetic rubber was obtained by polymerizing Butadien (butadiene or vinyl ethylene) and Natrium, (sodium); shortened to Buna. The Buna-Werke factories were built by prisoners at Auschwitz III-Monowitz.

Bunker: Hideout, prison, place of execution, cellar. In the "Aquatic Bunker", one would stay in water for hours.

Buxe: See *coya*, bed frame.

Canada: In camp vocabulary, a place where luggage confiscated from prisoners upon arrival was placed in about thirty barracks in Birkenau. This luggage was sorted before being recovered and used for various kinds of trafficking (*organisieren*). Original name at Birkenau: *Effektenlager*, also known as *Kanada* and *Effektenkammer*.

Coya, coja ou coĩa: Bed frame that had three-level bunk beds for 2 or 3 people. The mattresses were filled with wood shavings, and the blankets were never disinfected. [From the German *Koje* or from the Polish *Koja*, *Schlafkoje* – bunk on a ship, bunk beds (in standard German, *Barackenpritsche*.)]

Dolmetscher: Interpreter

Durchfall: An illness which presented as typhus and dysentery where one's body rejects food and water. This sickness often occurs after exanthematic typhus.

Effektenkammer: Used at Buchenwald, the room where prisoners' clothing and belongings are confiscated upon arrival to the camp.

EK: *Einsatzkommando*: Special *Kommando*¹⁰.

Einsatzgruppen: Units charged with killing Jews and Soviets behind the frontlines at the Ulm Trial in 1956¹¹.

Entlausung: Delousing.

Endlösung: Final Solution¹².

Entfernung: Removal, elimination.

Ermorden: To assassinate.

Ersatz: Substitution product¹³.

Erschießen: To shoot.

Erschießung: Shooting.

ESKA: *SK-Häftlinge*, (German for “Prison barrack”). The *ESKA* prisoners were part of the *Sonderkommando*¹⁴. See. *S.K.*

Essenkommando: *Kommando* of food (*essen* and *fressen* are German for “eat and devour”)¹⁵.

Evakuierung: Evacuation of camps, also known as *Räumung* or *Todesmärsche*. These camps had death marches toward trains and boats. Between January and May 1945, the evacuation took prisoners towards a train station or another camp. They were called Death Marches due to the high death toll.

Fremdrassig: Of foreign “race,”. This word was used to describe Jews and the Roma.

Funktionshäftling: Prisoner “official” who occupies a rank in the hierarchy of a camp: *Lagerältester*, *Blockältester*, *Kapo*, *Vorarbeiter*, *Stubendienst*, *Lagerschutz*. Most were Germans, or *Reichsdeutsche*, who held high positions. These privileged, prominent people had advantages.

Geheime Staatspolizei: Gestapo *Schutzhaftlagerführung*¹⁶ responsible for camp “security” for prisoners and politicians.

Genickschuss: A shot at the base of the skull of the victim in front of *Block 11* at Auschwitz I.

Grubenbaukommando: *Kommando* responsible for digging pits near the crematoriums.

Gummi: Rubber truncheon¹⁷.

Häftling: Camp prisoner. (*Ehrenhäftling*, honorable prisoner, *Funktionshäftling*, prisoner official with responsibilities, “*prominenter KZ-Häftling*”, privileged concentration camp prisoner, the “*eminences*”).

Häftlingskrankenbau: (*HKB*) prisoner “infirmary”; at Buna-Monowitz, doctors are able to save prisoners at “the hospital” with professor Weitz¹⁸. (“Hospital” in German is *Krankenhaus*).

Häftlingszwangsarbeit: Forced labor by prisoners.

Hau ab: Go to hell! Go away! (*abhauen*).

Heizer: Forge heater, furnace operator in a crematorium.

Herbata: Polish word for a beverage prepared with boiled water and herbs, bitter and undrinkable. “Tea”, a drink served to prisoners, otherwise known as tea or herbal tea.

Himmelfahrt: At Birkenau, those who will “ascend to heaven”. In German, this is the name of the Christian holiday of the Feast of the Ascension. In the German army, *Himmelfahrtkommando*¹⁹ refers to a punitive *Kommando*.

HJ: *Hitlerjugend*, Hitler Youth²⁰.

Holzpantinen: Wooden “shoes”, clogs.

Holzschuhe: “Shoes” with coarse wooden soles and fabric uppers. (The upper is the uppermost part of the shoe.)

Hundeführer(in): Dog handler²¹.

"Hurra, hurra, wir sind wieder da": Sign hung around the necks of prisoners hanged for attempting to escape, meaning “hurray, hurray, we are back”²².

I.K.L.: *Inspektion der Konzentrationslager*, concentration camp inspections.

Invalidentransport: In *NS-Tarnsprache*, Nazi camouflaged language. Referred to as “disabled transport”, it was, in fact, a means of transporting individuals for the purpose of murder (*Mordtransport*).

Jude: Jew in everyday German speech. Many French translations consider *Jude* an insult, however, there is a different German word used for insults.

Judenrat: Jewish council, made up of Jewish community leaders appointed by the SS who served as intermediaries for Germans, and, of course, acted on orders made by SS leaders.

Jugendlager: Youth camp, such as the concentration camps of Moringen for boys and Uckermark for young girls, both located in Germany. (Uckermark later became an annex of Ravensbrück.)

Judentum: Jewishness, Jewish world, Judaism. (Heidegger²³ uses the pejorative term *Judenschaft*)

Jupo: *Judenpolizei*,²⁴ Jewish Police.

Kalfaktor: Handyman (originally, the heating engineer).

Kaninchen: Rabbit at Ravensbrück; more accurately *Versuchskaninchen*, the guinea pig; (literally, experiment rabbit)²⁵.

Kapo: Prisoner responsible for a labor *Kommando* (*Funktionshäftlinge*). He was most often a *Berufsverbrecher*²⁶ with a green triangle badge, or sometimes a political prisoner with a red triangle badge. It was rare to see a Jew, with a yellow triangle badge, as a *Kapo* with the power of life and death over prisoners. He enjoys privileges. The term *Kapo* was used even before the Nazis began using it. It means “work group leader” in everyday German.

Kartoffelbunker: Potato cellar.

Kartoffelschäler: Potato peeling group.

Kennnummer: Prisoner ID number.

Klinkerwerke: Brickworks²⁷.

Kolbassa: Sausage, word of Polish origin, kielbasa, smoked sausage.

Kommando: Detachment of prisoners divided into labor *Kommandos*. (Spelled with a K to distinguish it from the military term commando.)

Konzentrationslager: Abbreviated as *KL* or later *KZ*, concentration camp. See *Lager*.

Krankenbau, KB: In camp language, “infirmary”, rarely translated as “hospital” in the camps. (In German, *Krankenhaus*, hospital). See also *Häftlingskrankenbau*.

Krätzeblock: Scabies *Block*. Scabies was a very common and painful skin disease– the body is covered in sores and abscesses.

Krematorium: Crematory oven. Often refers to the combination of gas chamber and crematory oven.

Kriminelle: Common criminals²⁸.

Kübel, Kibble: Container, cauldron, bucket, chamber pot.

Lager: Cam. See *Arbeitslager* (work camp); *Arbeitserziehungslager* (reeducation work camp (AEL); *Außenlager* (outdoor camp); *Jugendschutzlager* (protection camp = administrative internment for youth); *Konzentrationslager* KL ou KZ (concentration camp), *Zigeunerlager* (Roma camp); *Sonderlager für ungarische Juden* (special camp for Hungarian Jews; *Zwangslager* (labor camp); *Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden* (forced Jewish labor camp).

Lagerältester: Prisoner, camp “elder”. (*Lagerälteste* for a female), responsible for the internal management of the camp.

Lagerarzt: SS camp doctor.

Lagerkommandant: SS camp commander.

Lagerführer(in): SS camp leader, female camp leader.

Lagergestapo: Section of the *Politische Abteilung*²⁹ responsible for stopping any resistance and maintaining terror in the camps.

Lagerpolizei: Camp police.

Lagerruhe: Lights out, camp silence required.

Lagersprache: Language of the camp.

Lagerstraße: Street of the camp, main pathway of the camp.

Lagerschreiber: Secretary of the camp (prisoner).

Lagerschutz: Camp guards.

Lagerunfähig: Person unfit to work in the camp, to be in the camp.

Lappen: *Fußlappen*, pieces of fabric or footwraps, worn when prisoners had no shoes or when their shoes were in disrepair.

Latrinen: Latrines, a room in a Block where prisoners were required to relieve themselves collectively.

Latrinenparolen: Rumors, “toilet radio”³⁰.

Läufer: Runner³¹.

Lausappell: Roll call for lice. Prisoners were ordered to remove their shirts and give them up, even in sub-zero temperatures.

Lazarett: Military hospital.

Lederfabrik: Leather workshop.

Leichenkeller: The cadaver “cellar”.

Leichenträgerkommando: *Kommando* tasked with carrying cadavers collected in the camp

Liquidation: “Eradication” of the Roma or family camp of Theresienstadt³² in Birkenau.

Los, Los: Go! Go!

LTI: *Lingua tertii imperii*, language of the Third Reich. For example: *BluBo*= *Blut und Boden* (German for blood and sun), all words with *Volk* (people), *Weltanschauung* (worldview).

Malaria: Disease contracted in the mud and swamps of *Oswiecim*³³.

Marschunfähig: Unable to walk (weak prisoner).

Massenerschiessungen: Mass shootings.

Maurerschule: Bricklayer School for young prisoners³⁴.

Meister: Factory foreman (a civilian, not a prisoner).

Mensch: Man, “*Zwei Jahre lang war ich kein Mensch, nur eine Nummer*,”³⁵ said Finkelstein.

Mittwerda: Code word for “gas” in Nazi correspondence. *Mittwerda* was the “clandestine transportation” of women unfit for work from Ravensbrück. They were sent to the (*Schonungslager Mittwerda*, Mittwerda “recovery” camp) which does not exist.

Muselmann: In camp language, by way of mockery, this word designates the hopeless Jew—exhausted by work and who has used up all their reserves (fat and muscle). It is an old word for Muslim, spelled with an e in German. Today, the German word *Muslim* refers to a person who practices Islam.

Mütze: Beret, cap.

Mützen ab: Remove your caps!

Nachschlag: Extra food distribution, seconds.

Nacht und Nebel ou NN: Night and Fog Decree, signed on December 7, 1941. This Decree from the General Staff of the Wehrmacht, signed by Marshal Keitel, ordered the deportation—without trial and in the greatest secrecy—of all enemies (saboteurs, resistance fighters) or opponents of the Third Reich who represented “a danger to the security of the German army”. The decree ordered the disappearance of any adversary of the National Socialist State in absolute secrecy, hiding this news from the public.

Noma: Mouth ulcer due to malnutrition; tumor.

Nummer: In each concentration camp, prisoners had a number that replaced their name. The number was sewn onto the prisoner's clothing, or, in Auschwitz, tattooed. The number began with A-1 or B-1 in Auschwitz, Z-1 for Roma and RKG-1 for Soviet Prisoners of War. “*Zwei Jahre lang war ich kein Mensch, nur eine Nummer*”³⁶ said Finkelstein.

Organisieren: To organize, but in camp language, to steal, to smuggle something in, to swipe. "To organize is to steal legally." –Haïm Vidal Sephiha

Pfleger: Nurse.

Pikolo: Young inmate in charge of a Kapo's personal service.

Politische Abteilung: Political department of the camp (*Lagergestapo*). The *Politische Abteilung* practiced terror tactics to stop any sort of resistance in the camp.

Polizeirevier: *Revier*, police station.

Pomalo: Slower, in Russian.

Posten: Guard, sentry. Wehrmacht soldiers were also assigned to guard the camp and outside work sites.

Prominent: Privileged, important person, *doyen*, *Block* leader, barrack leader, *Kapo* and Vice *Kapo*; VIP.

Quarantaine: (*Quarantäne*) isolation; in the camps, meaning a “learning” period imposed on the prisoners upon their arrival to the *Quarantänelager*, the quarantine camp. This was done to break them psychologically. In Birkenau, the *Quarantänelager* was in section BIIa, from August 1943 to October 1944.

Rampe: The place where “selection” is carried out for new arrivals. *Alte Rampe* or *Judenrampe*, which were along the railroad tracks, were the selection points for Jews deported from European countries, between spring 1942 and May 1944. The *Neue Rampe* was a platform in the Birkenau camp. SS doctors selected Jews upon arrival, right next to the crematoriums.

Rapportführer SS: The person responsible for counting prisoners in the camp.

Raus, raus: Outside, outside.

Revier: In camp language, infirmary, “hospital”. Prisoners referred to “quarters”, which were best avoided for fear of selection happening there. (In everyday German, *revier* means an enclosed area, e.g. *Polizeirevier*: police station, a defined space, a hunting reserve. This word is written with a v, not a w).

RSHA: *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, Reich central safety office, led by Heydrich,³⁷ then in May 1942, by Kaltenbrunner,³⁸ under Himmler’s³⁹ control.

RU: *Rückkehr unerwünscht*, return not desired (at Mauthausen)⁴⁰.

Sauna: Room for disinfection and registration.

Scheißkommando: *Kommando* responsible for cleaning the “latrines”.

Scheißmeister: Latrine “employee”.

Schlepper: A cadaver-puller (using tongs) in the *Sonderkommando*.

Schlosserei: Locksmith’s shop.

Schmatten: Term referring to those that work with clothing manufacturing (in Yiddish, *rag*).

Schmuckstücke: Jewelry, precious objects. Word used to describe women at Ravensbrück. Play on words with *Schmutzstücke* (“garbage”).

Schnell: Quick!

Schonung: Rest voucher⁴¹.

Schnorrer: Beggar.

Schreiber(in): Inmate secretary.

Schreibstube: Secretary office, registration office.

Schutzhaft: Administrative internment, "protective" imprisonment against the anger of the people (*Volkszorn*).

Schutzhaftlagerführer: Head of protective custody camp⁴².

Schutzhäftling: Prisoner in "protective" custody.

Schwarze Wand: *Todeswand*, the "black wall" or "death wall" between *Block* 10 and 11 at Auschwitz I.

Selektion: *Aussonderung*, to send to death. The action of selecting (*Selekcja*). Prisoners who were unfit to work, weak, "useless," sick, or old were set apart by the Nazis. Those who were selected were killed or sent to the gas chambers. (*Aussortierung, Ausmusterung*).

shtetl: Yiddish for "small city", a town that is only populated by Jews. *shtetl* refers to an area populated by Jews. There were Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe, in Galicia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania, before World War II.

Sicherungsverwahrte: Imprisoned for safety reasons (*SV*).

Sklavenarbeit: Slave labor.

S.K., Strafkommando: Disciplinary *Kommando*, from which one usually exits dead. See. *ESKA*.

Sonderbehandlung: *SB*, "special treatment", meaning to put to death, extermination.

Sonderkommando: Special *Kommando*. The term refers to those who the SS ordered to remove bodies from gas chambers and incinerate them in the crematorium ovens. They were known as the "crows of the crematorium".

Sonderlager: special camp.

Sport: a whole *Kommando* could be sentenced to two hours of "*sport*," which resulted in high mortality rates.

SS: *Schutzstaffel*, originally a protective squadron of the *NSDAP* (Nazi Party). The SS became a state within a state, directing the administration of the camps and implementing the extermination of Jews and Roma. They economically exploited the Jewish workforce.

SS-Gefolge: SS assistants, "women's auxiliary forces" for example, SS nurses, SS guards, SS women.

SS-Totenkopf: ("Death head"), camp guard.

Stalag: Main camp, camps for prisoners of war, non-commissioned officers and soldiers. The *Stalags* were divided into military regions in Germany, into *Stalag* I, II, III, each with a letter, A, B. (*Oflag* for officers).

Stammlager: Main camp, camp headquarters. *Stammlager* also refers to Auschwitz I and all the large camps.

Stehbunker: Very narrow cells (*Stehzelle*) measuring 90 square centimeters,⁴³ without air or light. Located in Auschwitz I's *Block* 11 prison, where the inmates, standing and unable to move, starved to death.

Sterbelager: Death camp. *Sterbezonen, Sterbeorte, Bergen-Belsen (Zeltlager or Kleine Frauenlager* tented camp), Ravensbrück (*Zelt*), Buchenwald (*Kleine Lager*), Boelke-Kaserne for Mittelbau-Dora.

Strafarbeit: Work punishment.

Strafblock: Disciplinary *Block*.

Strafkolonne: Punitive group in which inmates were subjected to very hard work, beatings and a reduced diet.

Stube: A room in a *Block*, barracks.

Stubenältester: Prisoner *Block* barrack leader.

Stubendienst: The person responsible for maintaining order in a *Block's* barrack room, assistant to the *Block* leader.

Stubowa: At Auschwitz/Birkenau, female prisoner barrack leader, equivalent to *Stubenälteste*.

Stück: Piece, unit, counting term used in the camps to count prisoners when they arrive in a camp (*Zugänge* new). In the camps, the *Stücke* become prisoners (*Häftlinge*), their name is replaced by a number (and tattooed only at Auschwitz). (The word *Stück* is used in everyday German and can refer to people, denoting, for example, the number of children, soldiers... The first prisoner witnesses said they were “numbers”).

Suppenkessel: Cauldron (of soup).

Tarnsprache: (*NS-Tarnsprache*) a secret, coded Nazi language, e.g. *Endlösung*.

Todesmärsche: *Evakuierungsmarsch, Räumung, Rückführung, Umquartierung, Transport*: death marches. The prisoner that is *Marschunfähig* is not capable of walking further, and is shot by the guards, often by *Volksdeutsche* (descendants of Germans living outside of the Reich) who supervise the march.

Tor: Camp entrance gate.

Trage: German for stretcher. A wooden crate with handles for transporting all sorts of heavy things.

Transport: Transport or transfer of prisoners, deportation.

Typhoide: Intestinal infection manifested by fever and diarrhea.

Typhus épidémique: A very severe contagious disease transmitted to humans by body lice. *Flecktyphus* is characterized by pimples and reddish spots, *Bauchtyphus* by dysentery, and *Kopftyphus*, presents with a very high fever.

Überstellung: Transfer.

Umschlagplatz: Sorting place (Warsaw Ghetto).

Unmensch: A “barbaric”, non-verbal person.

Verfolgung: Persecution.

Verfügbar: Available. In camp language, a common epithet, referring to someone not assigned to a work Kommando, but available for the worst chores.

Vergiften: To poison.

Verhungern: To starve.

Verlegung / Überstellung: Prisoner who is moved or transferred, which often means death.

Vernichtung: Destruction or annihilation.

Vernichtung durch Arbeit: Extermination by work.

Vernichtungslager: Extermination camp.

Versuchskaninchen: Guinea pigs, laboratory rabbits.

Verswinden: Disappearance.

Volksdeutsche: Descendants of Germans, born and living outside the Reich, not real Germans of the Reich. Nationalist term used by the Nazis. (“*Volksdeutsche sind alle Deutschen, die nicht Reichsdeutsch sind, die sich deutsch national fühlen, bekennen, aber nicht reichsdeutsch.*”)⁴⁴

Völkermord: Genocide, Holocaust, Shoah.

Volksgemeinschaft: National community.

Volksgenossen: Impossible to translate, comrades of the people's community, a term used by the Nazis to mean (Nazi) fellow citizens. (*Genossen*, German for comrades, is a word with communist connotations, reappropriated by the Nazis).

Volkssturm: Militia, often made up of old men, under the authority of the *Gauleiter*; a sort of sub-prefect. (All able-bodied men aged 16 to 60 in the Greater Reich were drafted to support the army).

Volljude: A "real " Jew who has 3 Jewish grandparents.

Waschraum: Sinks. Common washroom with central sink and faucets.

Weberei: Weaving and sewing shop.

Werkschutz: Security guard.

Winkel: Using colored triangles, prisoners were ranked as follows: yellow triangle for Jews (*gelber Winkel*), green triangle for *droits communs*,⁴⁵ *Berufsverbrecher* sentenced by the court, red triangle for politicians *Politische Häftlinge*, black triangle (*Schwarzer Winkel*) for "asocials" *Asoziale*, purple triangle for the *Bibelforscher* (Jehovah's Witnesses).

Wstawać: A command, meaning "on your feet" (Polish).

WVHA: *Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt der SS*, SS Central Office for Administration and Economic Management. Created in 1942 and located in Oranienburg, it was led by Oswald Pohl.

yiddish: Germanic language spoken by Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe.

Yiddish is written with Hebrew characters and does not use uppercase letters. Texts are randomly transliterated to Latin script.

Z. A. L.: See infra *Zwangsarbeitslager*.

Zellenbau: *Bunker* or prison with a small number of cells.

Zerstörung: Destruction.

Zigeunerlager: *Familienlager* in Block B II e; camp for Roma families. The first convoy arrived on February 26, 1943. Some arrived in Wehrmacht uniforms. 20,000 Roma were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and 3,000 of them died on August 2, 1944, in gas chambers.

Zu fünft: Group of five.

Zugänge: Newcomers (reinforcements). They isolated them from the others and put them in the quarantine *Block*.

Zulage: Food bonus.

Zwangsarbeiter: Forced laborer.

Zwangsarbeitslager Z. A. L.: Forced labor camp (more than 1,000 in Berlin, 30,000 in the Reich) This may also be a single barrack that serves the *KZ-Baracke* camp.

Zwangsarbeitslager für Juden Z. A. L. für Juden: From 1942-1944, the Schmelt Organization operated a forced labor camp for at Cosel (Upper Silesia)⁴⁶ where it was authorized to recruit laborers from deportation trains.

"ZW" (Zwilling): Tattoo for twins used in Dr. Josef Mengele's medical "experiments".

Zyklon B: A disinfectant from Degesch, then from IG-Farben. Crystals releasing a lethal gas were used to kill people.

Sources for the Original French-Language Document

Nicole Mullier. See "*Petit cahier*" n°4, June 2008, completed through readings of various sources. Thanks to the deportees and to Henning Fauser, Ulrich Hermann, and Uli Schmoll for their contributions.

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Learn More About This Subject

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http://www.presses.ulg.ac.be/jcms/c_17049/la-langue-allemande-sous-la-croix-gammee

Dictionnaire of Jewish Communities: <http://www.jüdische-gemeinden.de/index.php/glossar>

Nazi Language: https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/neues-buch-ueber-ns-vokabeln-wann-wir-wie-die-nazis-sprechen.1008.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=443904

<https://www.cercleshoah.org/spip.php?article72>

Notes

¹ All annotations are the original work of the translator.

² Established in 2004, the UDA is a coalition of Holocaust survivor associations formed around the 1945 “Amicale d'Auschwitz.” It focuses on raising awareness about the genocide through educational initiatives and amplifying survivor testimonies. *L'Union des Déportés d'Auschwitz (UDA) - Union des Déportés d'Auschwitz*. 30 July 2020, <http://uda-france.fr/uda-france.fr/>.

³ See *Kapo*.

⁴ For non-Jews with the goal of reintegration into Nazi society and the formation of a “good Nazi citizen”. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

⁵ This wakeup call was for roll call, which could take place at 4:45am in the summer, and 5:45am in the winter. However, prisoners were called as early as 3am as a form of torture. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 22 Apr. 2024.

⁶ SS-Gefolge was the female SS group responsible for overseeing women's concentration camps. Mailänder, Elissa. “The Violence of Female Guards in Nazi Concentration Camps (1939-1945): Reflections on the Dynamics and Logics of Power | Sciences Po Mass Violence and Resistance - Research Network.” *Mass Violence and Resistance - Research Network*, Sciences Po, 5 Feb. 2015, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/violence-female-guards-nazi-concentration-camps-1939-1945-reflections-dynamics-and-logics-p.html>.

⁷ Block elders were responsible for reporting at roll call as well as reporting food and deaths. “Prisoner Functionaries—Positions.” *Prisoner Functionaries—Positions*, Wollheim Memorial, http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/funktionshaeftlinge_en. Accessed 25 Feb. 2024.

⁸ The *Brausebad* could also be marked as gas chambers to trick prisoners into thinking they would be showering. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

⁹ Also known as IG Farben, the conglomerate of all of Germany's major chemical and pharmaceutical companies. IG Farben produced synthetic rubber and gasoline in factories using camp prisoners' labor. Pelt, R. J. van, et al., editors. *Auschwitz: Not Long Ago. Not Far Away*. First edition, Abbeville Press Publishers, 2019.

¹⁰ Mobile killing squads employed by the Nazis to systematically execute millions of Jews and other targeted groups in German-occupied territories. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

¹¹ During the summer of 1941, ten former members of Einsatzkommando Tilsit were prosecuted and found guilty in the Ulm trial for their involvement in mass executions of Jews and Soviets. Tobin, Patrick. “No Time for ‘Old Fighters’: Postwar West Germany and the Origins of the 1958 Ulm ‘Einsatzkommando’ Trial.” *Central European History*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2011, pp. 684–710. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41411644>.

¹² The Nazi plan to exterminate all forms of Jewish life in Nazi territories. “The ‘Final Solution.’” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-final-solution>. Accessed 16 Feb. 2024.

¹³ *Ersatz* referred to substitute or replacement products used due to shortages, such as ersatz coffee made from chicory and burnt grains. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

¹⁴ Special kommando composed of camp prisoners ordered to do specific duties, such as moving cadavers. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

¹⁵ Kommando of prisoners who were responsible for food preparation of distribution. Barac, Terezina. Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

¹⁶ Secret police organization that used terrorist methods against those suspected of disloyalty to the Third Reich. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

¹⁷ These truncheons were baton-like and were used by the SS guards. CRRL. “Lexique système concentrationnaire.” *Lexiques : Lexique Système concentrationnaire*, 1 Jan. 2007, <https://www.crrl.fr/module-Contenus-viewpub-tid-2-pid-177.html>.

¹⁸ Professor Robert Weitz (also spelled “Weitz”) was a hematologist who was deported to Auschwitz. During his time at

the camp, he worked as a doctor. “Robert Waitz Collection.” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn43579>. Accessed 29 Feb. 2024.

¹⁹ *Himmelfahrtskommando* was a suicide squad for soldiers that were sent on missions which they would likely not survive. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

²⁰ Hitler Youth was created to indoctrinate children and adolescents into Nazi ideology and militarize Germany's young population. “Hitler Youth.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/hitler-youth-2>. Accessed 15 Feb. 2024.

²¹ Dog handlers trained and used German shepherds to guard the camp and bite prisoners to death. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

²² Terezina Barac, Conversation. 22 Apr. 2024.

²³ Martin Heidegger was a German philosopher recognized for his contributions to existentialism and phenomenology. He joined the Nazi party in 1933. *Martin Heidegger - Existentialism, Phenomenology, Ontology* | *Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Heidegger-German-philosopher/Later-philosophy>.

²⁴ *Judenpolizei*, German for Jewish Ghetto police. Their responsibilities included enforcing Nazi orders within the ghettos, maintaining order, and assisting in the deportation of fellow Jews to concentration camps. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

²⁵ Prisoners who were experimented on were called test rabbits or guinea pigs. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

²⁶ Professional criminal. “Berufsverbrecher.” *Collins*, Collins Dictionary | German to English, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/german-english/berufsverbrecher>.

²⁷ The *Klinkerwerke* was a brickworks factory located outside of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp as a satellite camp. “‘Klinkerwerk’ Satellite Camp.” *Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum*, Brandenburg Memorials Foundation, <https://www.sachsenhausen-sbg.de/en/exhibitions/klinkerwerk-satellite-camp/>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2024.

²⁸ The French term *droit commun* refers to individuals arrested for legal infractions before deportation. The category has proven problematic, as a *droit commun* might have been arrested for stealing, for violent crimes or for participating in the black market but may also have been incarcerated for associating with the Resistance or for attempting to escape from a pre-deportation concentration camp. Currently, French law does not recognize *droit commun* as political deportees. Their names are generally excluded from memorials of the deportation, and their families do not receive the compensation given to the families of those officially recognized as deportees. See Lucie Hebert. “Les droit commun déportés par les Allemands depuis la France occupée: répression, représentations et exclusions.” Thesis. 2021 <https://theses.fr>.

²⁹ See *Politische Abteilung*.

³⁰ Prisoners freely used latrines in groups of four, creating a hub of communication between different Blocks known as “Toilet Radio.” Rumors spread, igniting hopes for liberation among other things. Laffitte, Michel. “The Drancy Camp.” *Mass Violence and Resistance - Research Network*, Sciences Po, 27 Nov. 2007, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/drancy-camp.html>.

³¹ Prisoners who were tasked with various duties such as delivering messages, running errands, or performing other tasks assigned by the camp authorities. Barac, Terezina. Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

³² Theresienstadt was a concentration camp in the Czech Republic used for transit and propaganda purposes during World War II. “Theresienstadt.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2024.

³³ Polish name for Auschwitz. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 22 Apr. 2024.

³⁴ The Bricklayer School in Auschwitz was established for young prisoners to learn bricklaying and subsequently utilized the prisoners for labor. *Maurerschule - Auschwitz I*. Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum,

<https://www.auschwitz.org/en/museum/about-the-available-data/registration-documents/maurerschule-auschwitz-i/>.

³⁵ Translation: “For two years, I have not been a human, but a number”. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 28 Feb. 2024.

³⁶ See *Mensch*.

³⁷ Reinhard Heydrich was a high-ranking Nazi official known for his central role in orchestrating the Holocaust and implementing Nazi security policies. “Reinhard Heydrich: In Depth.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/reinhard-heydrich-in-depth>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2024.

³⁸ Ernst Kaltenbrunner was an Austrian Nazi official and SS leader who headed the Reich Security Main Office during World War. “Ernst Kaltenbrunner.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ernst-kaltenbrunner>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2024.

³⁹ Heinrich Himmler was the chief architect of Nazi Germany's genocidal policies, serving as the leader of the SS, the Gestapo, and overseeing the implementation of the Holocaust. “Heinrich Himmler.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/heinrich-himmler>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2024.

⁴⁰ Some prisoners were given a note which was added to their record with this message, so SS guards knew that the prisoner should not be freed. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 22 Apr. 2024.

⁴¹ Prisoners working as doctors or nurses in the camp infirmary tried to protect fellow prisoners by granting rest vouchers to exempt them from work. « Résister Dans Les Camps Nazis ». Musée départemental de la Résistance et de la Déportation, https://www.france-libre.net/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/pdf_cg31_concours_20121.pdf.

⁴² Protective custody was a term used by the Gestapo as an excuse to imprison, without trial, anyone seen as a threat to national security. “Protective Custody Order” for Herbert Fröhlich. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, <https://perspectives.ushmm.org/item/protective-custody-order-for-herbert-froehlich>. Accessed 25 Apr. 2024.

⁴³ Ninety square centimeters is roughly equivalent to 3 square feet.

⁴⁴ Translation from the German: Ethnic Germans are all German, but they are not Germans of the Reich, they are those who feel and profess that they are German nationals but who are not citizens of the Reich.

⁴⁵ See *Kriminelle*.

⁴⁶ Upper Silesia is in modern-day Poland and the Czech Republic. Terezina Barac, Conversation. 22 Apr. 2024.