

# Experimental Block No. 10 in Auschwitz

Maria Ciesielska

**W**hen the SS set up Auschwitz concentration camp in 1940, they modelled its administrative structure on the scheme applied in the concentration camps they had already established. The chief physician of the on-site SS garrison was head of the camp's sanitary authority. He also performed advisory duties in the camp for hygiene and sanitary and medical matters, compiled regular reports for the camp's commandant, and administered its medical service. The camp's medical staff comprised SS physicians, and SS orderlies who had no medical qualifications yet nonetheless supervised the work of prisoners who were qualified physicians, nurses, and auxiliary medics. The SS doctors were officially responsible for looking after prisoners' health, but in practice the only medical duty they performed was to conduct the daily rounds. A general atmosphere of terror and anxiety set in whenever they appeared in the camp hos-

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pital, because usually they came only to conduct a selection of hospitalised prisoners for death. One of their duties was to sign vast numbers of prisoners' death certificates which gave bogus causes of death (in fact most of these prisoners died in the gas chambers or were killed with a phenol injection into the heart). Some of the SS doctors conducted criminal pseudo-medical experiments for their own research projects, or on commission from German pharmaceutical companies or the military. The aim of the experiments they carried out on orders issued by SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler was to develop a cheap and generally applicable method to sterilise Russians, Poles, and Jews in order to exploit them as a labour force while at the same time curbing their reproductive potential.<sup>1</sup>

Himmler appointed Carl Clauberg<sup>2</sup> and Horst Schumann<sup>3</sup> to design a cheap and efficient method of sterilisation which could be applied on a mass scale. In 1941 Clauberg was awarded a grant from the Deutsche Gemeinschaft zur Erhaltung und Förderung der Forschung (German Association for the Support and Advancement of Scientific Research) generally known by the acronym DFG, for research on "population policy and the eastern problem." At a conference on "new methods for the sterilisation of undervalue women" in May 1941 Ernst Grawitz, head of the SS and police medical service, proposed that Clauberg's research centre be located near Königshütte (viz. the city of Chorzów) adjoining a women's concentration camp.<sup>4</sup>

Horst Schumann, formerly head of the Grafeneck and Sonnenstein euthanasia centres, and a member of the Aktion 14f13 medical committee (running a campaign to select concentration camp prisoners no longer able to work and send them to their deaths in the gas chambers), started his criminal experiments somewhat later, in the autumn of 1942. His task was to design and develop a sterilisa-

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1 Records of the Nuremberg doctors' trial; quoted after Sehn, 1971: 300.

2 Carl Clauberg, b. 18 Sept. 1898 at Wupperhof, Germany. Gynaecologist and professor of medicine at Königsberg University. During the War director of the women's clinic in Chorzów (renamed Königshütte under German occupation) Hospital. Lasik, 268.

3 Horst Schumann, b. 1 May 1906 in Halle, Germany. Doctor of medicine; member of the Nazi Party, lieutenant in the Luftwaffe, member of the SS in the rank of Sturmbannführer; head of the euthanasia centres at Grafeneck (Württemberg, Germany) and Sonnenstein near Dresden (Germany). Lasik, 268.

4 Letter of 29 May 1941 from Ernst Grawitz to Heinrich Himmler. Schnabel, 266. Polish translation quoted after the 2005 Polish edition of Klee.

tion method using X-rays. Initially he was head of an “X-ray sterilisation station” in Block 30 at Birkenau, which had special facilities equipped with two Siemens *Röntgenbombe* X-ray machines.<sup>5</sup> Like Clauberg, Schumann was “provided with” an appropriate number of male and female prisoners to serve as human guinea pigs for his experiments. Opposite the X-ray machines in Schumann’s “laboratory” there was a leaded control booth with a viewing window.<sup>6</sup> Naked prisoners were brought in from a waiting room and made to sit on special seats connected up to the X-ray machines or stand between them. On average about 30 persons were irradiated at a session, which usually lasted up to twenty minutes. Women vomited after being irradiated, but they were escorted back to the camp on foot.<sup>7</sup> After a few days victims developed symptoms caused by the massive doses of radiation – burns on the lower abdomen and buttocks, as well as internal injuries, for instance intestinal injuries. Secondary inflammations of the wounds were frequent. A few weeks after the irradiation terrified male and female victims were subjected to brutal surgery for the removal of their irradiated testicles or ovaries, which were then sent for a histopathological examination to determine the results of the experiment and establish the best dose of radiation to be applied. From 15 September to 15 December 1943 106 men were irradiated and castrated.<sup>8</sup> They had either one or both testicles removed. Those who had one testicle removed had the other testicle removed one or two months later. There was an analogous procedure with the women. The “specimens” were sent for testing to the Pathologisch-anatomisches Institut in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland). Sick and debilitated victims, no longer of any use to the experimenters, were sent to Birkenau, where they died of exhaustion, starvation, various diseases, or were killed in the gas chambers.

In late 1942 Block 10 in Auschwitz was designated as the new premises for the experimental station. The prisoners living in this two-storey building were moved to another block and a conversion scheme was carried out. A serological

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5 Strzelecka, 10.

6 Kłodziński, 45.

7 From the testimony given by witness Michał Kula during the trial of Rudolf Höss, camp commandant of Auschwitz. *Proces Hössa* [The Höss Trial], Vol. 2, sheets 81–83. Quoted after Strzelecka, 55.

8 Czech, 582.



Photo 1. | Block 10, current state. Photograph by Maria Ciesielska

laboratory was set up on the ground floor, to be used by SS physician Dr Bruno Weber for his research project.<sup>9</sup> The adjacent room was to serve as a histopathological laboratory and was equipped with a microscope, dryer, and microtome. Both laboratories were to be administered by the Hygiene Institut der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O/S (Waffen-SS and Police Institute of Hygiene at Auschwitz, Upper Silesia), which in turn was under the authority of the SS-Hauptsanitätsamt (SS Chief Sanitary Office) in Berlin.

The women prisoners working in Block 10 and the women selected to be the guinea pigs in the experiments were put under the administrative authorities of the Birkenau women's hospital. Every day the data for the number of people in the block were sent to the office of the women's hospital. Officially the staff and inmates in the Block were managed by the camp's Abteilung V – Sanitätswe-

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9 SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr Bruno Weber, head of the Auschwitz branch of the Hygiene Institut der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O/S; camp physician of the Birkenau men's quarantine camp.

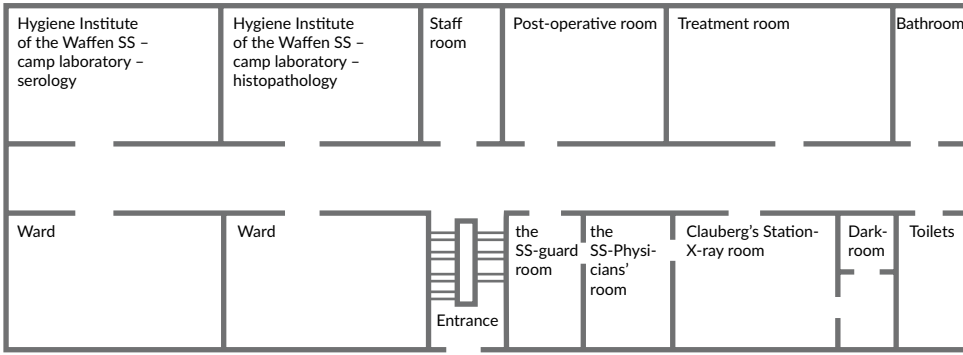


Figure 1. | Plan of Block 10 after its conversion to serve as an experimental station and for the Hygienisches Institut (Institute of Hygiene) laboratories (ground floor). Partly based on scheme no. 2 in Sehn: 1959, 13

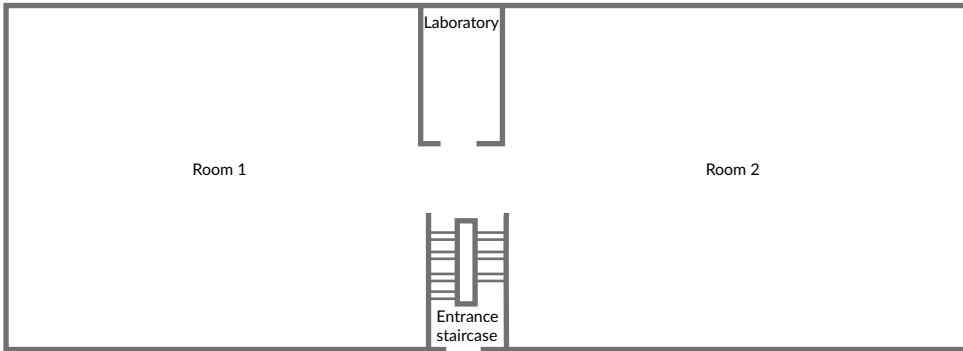


Figure 2. | Plan of Block 10 after its conversion to serve as an experimental station and for the Hygienisches Institut (Institute of Hygiene) laboratories (top floor). Rooms 1 and 2 accommodated the Jewish women prisoners who were the human guinea pigs for the pseudo-medical experiments. This scheme was drafted on the basis of a site inspection

sen (Department V: Health Service), viz. the chief physician for the SS garrison (at this time the office was held by Dr Eduard Wirths).<sup>10</sup> During the day the block was guarded by two German female sentries, who left the premises at night. Like the main hospital at Auschwitz, the women's hospital had a group of functionary prisoners running its everyday affairs. Its members were the *Revierlagerälteste* (the hospital block functionary), the hospital secretary, and the functionaries in charge of its diverse rooms. The office of *Revierlagerälteste* was held by Magda

10 Eduard Wirths, SS-Sturmbannführer, chief physician of the Auschwitz SS garrison.



Photo 2. | Auschwitz survivor Dr Janina Kowalczykowska. Prewar photo. Archives of Poznań University

Hellinger,<sup>11</sup> whose successor was Margarethe Neumann.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the women selected as guinea pigs were sent to Block 10 as soon as they arrived in the camp and were registered. Almost all the survivors recall how they had their entire body (including eyebrows) brutally shaved. They then had their camp number tattooed, after which they took a bath in ice-cold water. Block 10 was isolated off completely from the rest of the camp, which only added to their shock. The only people allowed to be on its premises were the guinea pigs, the prisoners employed and living in the hospital, those who

came in to work in its laboratories but lived out (viz. in the camp), and the SS-men appointed for duty in the hospital. The windows on the first-floor laboratory and the rooms which accommodated the guinea pigs looked out on the yard between Blocks 10 and 11, but they were covered up with wooden boards to prevent people from watching the executions which were conducted at Death Wall in the yard.

After the War Professor Janina Kowalczykowska, who was head of the histopathological laboratory from March 1943, wrote in her memoirs, “Even though the gaps between the boards of the blackouts on the windows were sealed up very tightly, that cold and windy May of 1943 a chilly breeze wafted into the laboratory from the yard between Blocks 10 and 11. That day there were even tiny white catkins of poplar blossom drifting in through the top window which was ajar. [Ludwik] Fleck, who was plucking them apart, remarked that you could probably weave their gos-

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11 Magda (Malka) Hellinger, post-war surname Blau (1916–2006), a Slovak Jewish woman who was the first *Blockälteste* of Block 10.

12 Margarethe (Margit) Neumann (1909-?), a Dutch Jewish woman, one of the first victims of Clauberg’s experiments, initially room functionary of Room 1, later *Blockälteste*, earned a very bad reputation with fellow-prisoners for using violence against them and stealing their food. Lang (Polish edition), 107.





Photo 3. | The yard between Blocks 10 and 11, with Death Wall, the place where executions were conducted. The windows on Block 10 have blackouts. Photograph by Maria Ciesielska

samer fibres to make a textile. But along with the poplar blossom came the sound of young people’s voices talking and singing a song. Someone in Block 11 was playing a guitar. There were prisoners different from us living in quarantine on the first floor of that block. ... For the whole of my first week in Block 10 the yard had been quiet and empty. But this morning I heard a strange noise from the yard, a sort of slap, whack, or knock, and a moment later there was a weird yell like an animal bellowing. Somehow I couldn’t hold myself back from asking a stupid question, ‘What, a cow...?’ But the bellowing had already turned into a rattle and a wheeze. You could hear the staccato words of an order almost barked out in German, and then a muffled bang, followed by another bang, and another, and an umpteenth... I couldn’t see anything under the microscope, I just automatically marked the bangs down on a piece of paper, there were 71 of them today.”<sup>13</sup>

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13 Kowalczykowa, 83.

Survivor Marta Malik described the situation of the women in much the same way: “It’s hard to imagine the atmosphere in which the women prisoners of Block 10 lived. It was the only women’s block in the men’s camp and it was separated off completely from the rest of the camp. The women were not allowed to go out, and no-one was allowed to come into our block. The windows were boarded up with wooden planks, and we had the electric lights on all day. Being next to Block 11 and hence hearing what went on there only made us even more apprehensive of what the future had in store for each of us.”<sup>14</sup>

Officially work in the new labs started on 8 April 1943. At the time construction jobs were still in progress on the ground floor to adapt the building and install gynaecological equipment in the X-ray room. Apart from the “research” premises, the building also accommodated toilets, an apothecary, and rooms for the doctors and nurses. On the first floor there was a small clinical analytics lab to conduct blood, urine, and stool tests. The women prisoners who worked in this lab were Dr Dorota Lorska, pharmacist Malka Guterman, and Hadassa Lerner. They were supervised by Dr Hans Münch.<sup>15</sup> In late April a group of Jewish women was put up on the first floor “for the research” (viz. they were to be the guinea pigs). Most of them were young girls who had not lost their periods in the camp. They were hand-picked by Clauberg, usually from among young mothers. Professor Kowalczykowa wrote in her memoirs that this SS doctor selected them from the new arrivals, since “neither hunger nor disease had wiped the pink off their cheeks yet.”<sup>16</sup>

Clauberg conducted the sterilisations personally. He interviewed the woman prisoner and then, pretending that he would examine her, had her put on a gynaecological chair; then he used vaginal specula, forceps, and a catheter or a Schultze instrument to inject an irritant into the uterus. The irritant was a 5–10% solution of formalin. The “patient” also had a contrast known as “Göbbl’s liquid” applied,

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14 Statement made by Marta Malik (aka Guterman) on 5 Sept. 1997. Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau [Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum], sheet 7. I received a copy of Marta’s statement from her son, Mikołaj Grynberg.

15 Hans Münch, a physician employed in the camp by the Waffen-SS; one of the few German doctors who refused to participate in death selections. The authorities in Berlin issued an official exemption allowing him not to take part in them. Acquitted by the Polish Supreme Court in a verdict of not guilty passed on 22 Dec. 1947.

16 Kowalczykowa, 86.





Photo 4. | Clauberg's X-ray station where the criminal pseudo-medical experiments were carried out. Photograph by Maria Ciesielska

to check the passability of her Fallopian tubes and to monitor the X-ray experiment. A gynaecologist who scrutinised the surviving medical records after the War observed that “the contrast was an oily, life-threatening substance, very dangerous especially if it got into the blood circulation or body cavities.”<sup>17</sup> After the liquid had been injected into the patients, they got an acute burning pain in the lower abdomen. It was so bad “that the (prisoner) nurses had to sit on the victims’ arms.”<sup>18</sup> The aim of the experiment was to induce chronic inflammation blocking the Fallopian tubes and thereby causing infertility. However, the substances administered got into the victims’ blood circulation, bringing about severe disorders in the entire body and eventually leading to death. Guinea pigs who survived stayed under observation in Block 10 for 5–6 weeks. If the experiment did not result in the full

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17 More on this in an article by Auschwitz survivor and gynaecologist Czesław Głowacki, 85–90.

18 Testimony given by witness Rosaline de Leon on 26 Jul. 1956 in proceedings Js 18/67 GStA Ffm. Quoted after Klee (Polish edition), 423.

blockage of the ovarian tubes it was repeated using a more concentrated solution. “These experiments were repeated at intervals of three to four weeks, three to six times on the same women.”<sup>19</sup>

The first women doctors held in the camp as prisoners to be admitted to work in Block 10 were Dr Adélaïde Hautval, a French psychiatrist arrested and deported to the camp for helping Jews, and Dr Janina Kowalczykowa, at the time of her arrest a *docent* (senior academic) in anatomopathology at the Jagiellonian University (Kraków, Poland). She was arrested for engaging in secret university teaching (on invading Poland the Germans closed down all the schools of secondary and tertiary education) and in the clandestine distribution of the underground press.<sup>20</sup> She was first imprisoned in the Montelupich jail in Kraków, and transferred to Auschwitz. After her quarantine she was sent to Block 24, the “diarrhoea block,” where she worked as an incarcerated physician. Even though she was pregnant at the time and had survived typhus which she had contracted in the camp, she worked indefatigably, trying to save as many lives as she could. After three months of work in the camp hospital she was transferred to the Hygienisches Institut lab, where she conducted histopathological tests. After the War she wrote in her memoirs, “In my first week in Auschwitz, when we were being taken to the men’s camp to be photographed for the ‘album of criminals,’ Alfred Wóycicki managed to whisper to me, ‘Beware of Block 10. If they want to send you there, do all you can to stop them. That’s where they conduct experiments on humans. Beware!’ ... Dr Weber, the head of the Hygienisches Institut, learned that I was a histopathologist and got me transferred to his laboratory, which was located in the notorious Block 10 in the main men’s camp. Never mind that by this time I had learned that the less you saw and the less you heard in the camp the better for you, and that I realised that if I was going to live and work in Block 10 I would learn of many a thing, and that this knowledge would cost me a lot.”<sup>21</sup>

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19 Testimony given by Dr Eduard de Wind in proceedings Js 18/67 GStA Ffm (no date). Quoted after Klee (Polish edition), 424.

20 Thanks to the efforts of her husband, who was in the local resistance movement in Kraków, Janina Kowalczykowa was transferred from Auschwitz to Kraków. She was discharged from the concentration camp on condition that she would continue to work for the Hygienisches Institut. Ciesielska, 120.

21 Kowalczykowa, 81.

Drs Janina Kowalczykowa and Adélaïde Hautval were the first women doctors sent to work in Block 10. Dr Hautval was to take part in Wirths' research on the diagnosis of cervical cancer. The work was to involve colposcopy and collecting samples for a histopathological test. The samples were sent to the municipal gynaecological clinic in the Altona district of Hamburg, whose head at the time was Professor Hans Hinselmann, and Dr Helmut Wirths, Eduard's brother, was one of the researchers there. Like Clauberg, Eduard Wirths personally selected his guinea pigs from among the newly arrived Jewish women. Initially he conducted the colposcopies

himself, but after a time he was replaced by Dr Hautval, who had been trained to perform the examination. However, after a fortnight she refused to continue participating in this task. Dr Kowalczykowa described the incident in the following way: "Adélaïde had no idea of what was going on in Block 10. She was so unaware that I was worried she might be an informer. One day I lost control and blurted it all out to her. Adélaïde closed her eyes and went absolutely pale. Then she went to the camp physician and calmly told him what she thought of it, and that she would no longer work in Block 10. I had become accustomed to many things, but my heart stood still when I thought of Adélaïde. I forgot I was in Auschwitz, and that life and the rules here were inhuman. How could the camp authorities punish Adélaïde? They knew all too well to imagine that any sort of physical ordeal would be a good punishment for her, or that physical violence would humiliate her; they knew that death would be a blessing liberating her. So they sent her to Birkenau."<sup>22</sup>

Dr Hautval was sent to the women's camp at Birkenau and put to work in the women's hospital. When her fellow-prisoners learned that the on-site Gestapo



Photo 5. | Dr Alina Brewda, a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz who worked in Block 10 as a physician and *Blockälteste*. Photo from the Archives of the University of Warsaw

22 Kowalczykowa, 90.

was looking for her to execute her, they gave her a strong sleeping medication and hid her, thereby saving her life.

In the autumn of 1943 Dr Alina Brewda, a gynaecologist, was sent to work in Block 10 on a recommendation from Wirths. The Germans were looking in other camps as well for more specialist physicians to perform orchiectomies (removal of the testicles) and oophorectomies (removal of the ovaries), and it was for this reason that Dr Brewda was transferred to Auschwitz-Birkenau from Majdanek concentration camp. Wirths knew she was highly qualified professionally, so he made her chief physician of the block. Thanks to this she had access to the surgery room and its equipment. She was called in to assist in several surgical procedures when the patient lost consciousness.<sup>23</sup> The surgical removal of an ovary lasted just 10 minutes, and it was carried out with no regard for the basic operating techniques. The instruments used in an operation were not washed or sterilised before the next surgery, so postoperative infections occurred quite often.

After the War Dr Brewda said,

The few hundred Jewish patients on the first floor were, I knew, divided up among the various doctors. There were Dr Wirths' 'specimens,' Clauberg's women who had a caustic fluid injected into their uterus, Dr Weber's sputum and blood guinea-pigs, and the Greek girls who belonged to Dr Schumann. I made a practice of going upstairs at least once a day. The Greek girls seemed to be terribly afraid to say anything – they were extremely scared. I got the impression that they had been subjected to very rough treatment.

After some days some of them told me in their Judeo-Spanish dialect, which contained a smattering of French, that they were suffering from burns. I examined them and found that these were due to deep X-ray radiation. There were three really bad cases. The burns were raw. I asked the girls about them and they told me that they had been taken into a dark room and had come out with these burns. They said other young Greek girls from Salonika had also been given the same treatment earlier, what had become of them they didn't know.

Two of the girls had operation scars on the abdomen. After examining the scars and the burns closely I realised that the girls had probably had irradiation of the ovaries and that a pretty

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23 Like all the other inmates of Block 10, Dr Brewda became a *Geheimnisträgerin* (viz. "privy to the secret") against her will, and as such knew too much to be permitted to survive. Ciesielska, 36.



Photo 6. | One of the rooms where the “human guinea pigs” were accommodated, current state.  
Photograph by Maria Ciesielska

strong dose of radiation had been given them without proper care and skill. Their skin was covered with suppurating blisters and ulcers. It was awful. I did what I could for them.<sup>24</sup>

On the same floor as the operated and irradiated women there was a small analytics lab. It was run by Dr Sława Klein, a slender brunette aged thirty who had been arrested in July 1943 for her activity in the French resistance movement.<sup>25</sup> Out of the transport of a thousand persons who arrived from the transit camp at Drancy in August of that year, 218 men and 55 women were selected; the rest were killed in the gas chamber. One of the 55 women who were selected was Dr Klein, and another was Marta Malik, who recalled the events: “There were about a thousand persons in the transport. We travelled in cattle cars. There was a large group of women, about

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24 Minney, 122–123.

25 Sława Klein – her real given name was Dobra, and her maiden surname was Goldszajder. She was also known as Dora and Dorota. After the War she married a second time and used the surname Lorska. She was known in the camp as Sława owing to a confusion during registration. She said her given name was Dobrosława. Ciesielska, 107.



Photo 7. | Auschwitz survivors Sława Klein (Dorota Lorksa), Malka Guterman, and Hadassa Lerner, who worked in Block 10. Postwar photo. Family archive of Józef Lorksi

a few hundred, many of whom had been involved in the resistance movement. There were also men in the transport. A few of my friends were in the transport, including Dr Dorota Lorksa, but in the camp she was known as Sławka Kleinowa. We met in the camp at Drancy. On arrival at Auschwitz there was a selection on the ramp of the train station. The Germans picked out a few dozen young women who had had a child. Later pseudo-medical experiments were done on them. Once this group was picked out we were asked if there were any doctors among us. Sławka put her hand up. A moment later she snatched me by the hand and raised it up with hers. Those who stood next to me were sent to the gas.”<sup>26</sup>

The two women were saved from sharing the fate of the guinea pigs thanks to their medical qualifications. They were given a small lab to run for the Hygienisches Institut. Hadassa Lerner, another prisoner who arrived on the same transport, was also sent to work in this lab.

During the day Dr Klein analysed blood samples for Dr Weber, and in the night hours she helped Dr Brewda look after the sick women prisoners. Thanks to Dr Klein’s contacts with the resistance movement in the camp, Block 10 started receiving medications stolen from the apothecary and from the “Canada” warehouses.<sup>27</sup> Soon she was also asked by Rudi Göbl, an old friend who was a Spanish communist

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26 Statement made by Marta Malik (aka Guterman) on 5 Sept. 1997. Archiwum Państwowego Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau [Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum], sheet 6. I received a copy of Marta’s statement from her son, Mikołaj Grynberg.

27 “Canada” was the sobriquet for the warehouses where the belongings left by those who were sent to the gas chambers were sorted and stored.



activist, to draw up a report on the experiments done in Block 10. One of the copies of her report was smuggled out of the camp, clandestinely sent to London, and published in the Polish underground press. Sława Klein's report says, "Block 10 has been in use as an experimental block for almost a year. There are about 450 women in it; they are patients of Professor Schumann, Professor Glansberg,<sup>28</sup> and Drs Wirths and Weber. The first experiments were carried out by Professor Schumann, mostly on young Greek girls (aged 15 to 18). The experiments involved sterilisation by irradiation followed by the removal of both of the ovaries (oophorectomy). ... The last operations were carried out by Dr Dehring three months ago, on 10 girls who had been irradiated some time earlier. One of them died straight after the operation (probably due to an internal haemorrhage in outcome of surgical error). Of the remaining 9, so far two have become seriously ill; the rest have to stay in bed. ... The used 'objects' were sent to Birkenau on the next transport."<sup>29</sup>

Straight after the War many of the SS doctors went into hiding and avoided prosecution. Those who were convicted and given prison sentences were released after a fairly short time. Most went back to work as doctors, as they were not deprived of the right to practise in medicine. Carl Clauberg was deported to the Soviet Union and tried by a Moscow court for his role in "the mass killing of Soviet citizens." A sentence of 25 years in prison was handed down on him, but it was reduced to 10 years on the grounds of an amnesty, and he returned home to Kiel on the grounds of a repatriation agreement. But he never expressed any remorse, and even boasted of his "scientific achievements." In October 1955 the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland) brought court proceedings against him for "causing serious injuries on many occasions" to Jewish women prisoners subjected to sterilisation experiments in Auschwitz. In November 1955 he was re-arrested. He died on 9 August 1957 in a hospital in Kiel, shortly before his trial was due to start.

After the War Horst Schumann and his family settled in Halle, where he practised in sports medicine under his own name. A warrant for his arrest was issued in 1947 in connection with the euthanasia trial in which he was involved because of his

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28 Clauberg's surname is misspelled in the document.

29 Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw], sign.no. 209/72/3. These operations were done by the SS doctors and some of the doctors who were prisoners, including Dr Władysław Dering.

work at Grafeneck. But he was not discovered until a few years later, when he applied for a gun licence. To evade justice he fled Germany, probably to Japan first, and subsequently to Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana. In this last country he worked for the Ministry of Health right until 1966, when he was extradited to Germany. Unfortunately, the proceedings against him were suspended owing to his bad state of health. He was released from prison and kept under police surveillance until his death.

After Germany's surrender Eduard Wirths lived in his brother's house in Hamburg. He was discovered and apprehended by the British military authorities, and imprisoned in Neuengamme. After being transferred to Staumühle near Padebron he tried to hang himself. He was cut down still alive, but never regained consciousness. In a letter he wrote earlier to his wife he showed no signs of a guilty conscience: "How long will it be before I see you and our dear children again? Ah, what an unimaginably hard time this is, this terrible war is still going on, but we must persevere bravely, because we can stand before God and men with a clean conscience."<sup>30</sup>

Block 10 served as an experimental station until the end of May 1944. On 22 May the nursing staff and guinea pigs were moved to new premises, Block 1 in the "camp extension" (*Lagererweiterung*) area.<sup>31</sup> The aim of the first research conducted by Clauberg in the new station was to examine the results of the sterilisations and to train Dr Johannes Paul Göbbl, a pharmacist employed by Schering AG, to perform sterilisations on his own. This was a necessary development, because Clauberg was busy making the arrangements for a new project at Bad Königsdorf, a place near Auschwitz known as "the town of mothers," and he was seldom on site at Auschwitz.<sup>32</sup> He was setting up a maternity centre for 800 expectant mothers for their delivery and confinement. The centre was officially opened in late October, and at this time the number of women guinea pigs in Block 10 again went up. Today it is hard to estimate how many women lost their lives due to the criminal experiments conducted by Clauberg, Schumann, and Wirths. On the basis of the still extant but sparse records for daily numbers in Block 10, we can arrive at an estimate how the number of prisoners went down month by month. For example, there was a fall of 49 for May 1943, and of another 95 for June, 8 for October, 16 for November,

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30 Klee (Polish edition), 429.

31 Czech, 668. The date is 13 June in Lang (Polish edition), 212.

32 Lang (Polish edition), 214.

and 3 for December. Some of these women must have died, others were killed with a phenol injection or in the gas chambers, or they died due to the injuries they had sustained or the hard work they were put to.<sup>33</sup> It is harder still to estimate how many men and women were made infertile for the rest of their lives. The victims suffered additional anguish due to the fact that initially Clauberg's criminal experiments were not recognised as pseudo-medical. The "doctors' trial" at Nuremberg handled and ruled on the brutal sterilisations committed in concentration camps, but there was a delay over the paying out of compensation. In 1952 victims staged a series of strong protests. It was not until Ernest Weiner, an expert from New York, intervened, backed up by a set of opinions issued by Dutch specialists, that the inter-ministerial committee recognised Clauberg's experiments as criminal, but still delayed for a long time over criminalising all the sterilisations done with the use of X-rays.

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33 These figures come from an estimate in Czech, 429.

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