

DACHAU: A FIRST HAND PERSPECTIVE TO BUILD EMPATHY AND TOLERANCE

Part 2: GOING TO DACHAU

Welcome to Dachau.



The prisoners would have walked from all around the area or they would have been bussed into the camp. ¹



The first prisoner transport arrives at the gates of the newly opened Dachau Concentration Camp on March 22, 1933



Prisoners marching into Dachau concentration camp

At its peak, Dachau actually had over 150 “feeder camps” or sub-camps. ²



**The gate says “Work Will Set You Free.”
This is the gate you would have walked through to enter the camp. ³**



The actual barracks were torn down between 1962 and 1964. However, exact replicas now stand on the original foundations.



Main Administration Building 1930s



Main Administration Building Today

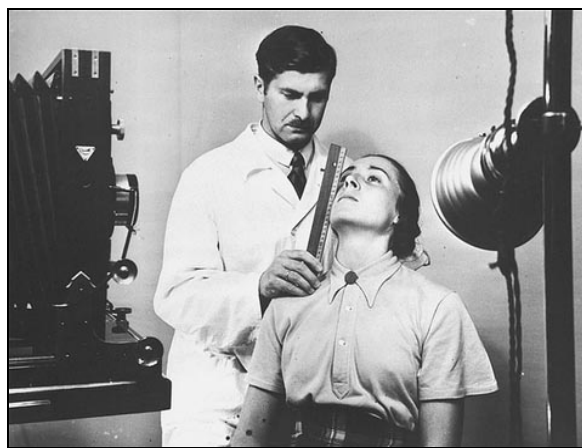
On the original main building, there was a phrase written on the roof. It said:

“There is one path to freedom. Its milestones are obedience, honesty, sobriety, hard work, discipline, truthfulness and love of the fatherland.” ⁴



Communists and Social Democrats Being Taken Into “Protective Custody” April 1, 1933 ⁵

Since Hitler came to power through the political process and not by way of a bloody coup, he had many political enemies to eliminate. This is why the first prisoners sent to Dachau were Hitler’s political opponents. ⁶ This would be the same as if an independent was elected to the U. S. Presidency and the new President rounded up all of the opposing Democrats, Republicans and union leaders and put them into prison.



As the belief in Aryan superiority grew, the desire for “Social Darwinism,” or eugenics, grew. As a result, Hitler’s “racial hygiene” program was born.



Under this program, those suffering from various mental impairments were targeted by the Reich and sent to Dachau. Many were forwarded onto other locations where they were either euthanized or sterilized. Right up until the end of the war, many of these people who were deemed to be “unworthy of life” were regularly killed by injection at Dachau. ⁷



1938 Regensburg, Germany. Jewish men being deported to Dachau concentration camp.

Other prisoners were also sent to Dachau, such as the homeless, homosexuals, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, prostitutes, Poles and many others. ⁸





Catholic priests and ministers who opposed the Nazis were also arrested and sent to Dachau, which imprisoned more members of the clergy than any other concentration camp. At Dachau, they endured the worst persecution of the Christian clergy in modern history. Dachau had a special "priest block" with over 2,700 prisoners from at least 20 different nations. One out of every three would not survive. ⁹



Once the war started, Soviet prisoners were brought to Dachau. Many of the Soviets were simply executed upon their arrival. The Nazis outright shot and murdered at least 4,000 Soviet prisoners of war, all of whom the Nazis considered "sub-human." ¹⁰





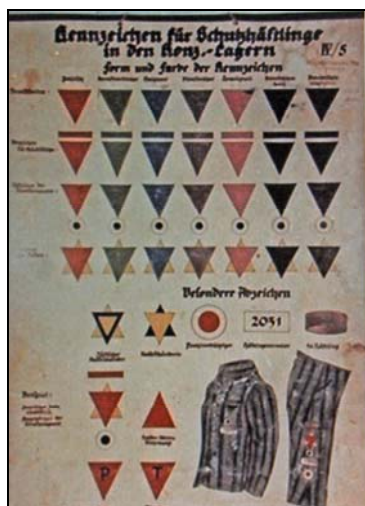
“Camp Road Haircut”



Prisoner Hair Packaged For Sale To Be Made Into Felt

Upon entering Dachau, prisoners were stripped of their possessions and they had their heads shaved. Beginning in 1942, in order to better identify them as prisoners, inmates were given the “camp road” haircut. This meant that a 5cm swath was cut down the center of their heads down to their scalp.¹¹ Since the Nazis used anything they could from the prisoners for profit, the hair that had been cut off from the prisoners was then packaged and sent off to be manufactured into felt.¹²

The typical uniforms worn by all prisoners were pajama-like outfits with blue stripes and matching hats, which removed all semblance of class structure these prisoners had previously enjoyed in the outside world.¹³



Prisoner Insignias and Uniforms Used In German Concentration Camps.

The “proper” insignias were then sewn onto each prisoner’s uniform in order to identify the person’s “classification.” In other words, you were “branded” from day one ... just like cattle.¹⁴

Some newly arriving prisoners were beaten as a “welcome.” It was customary to give a new prisoner 25 lashes, but the guards would often “lose count” of how many lashes they had given the new prisoner, so they would start all over again from the beginning. Many died as a result of this initiation. These beatings were meant to send a clear message to the other inmates:

“Stay in line ... work hard ... or we will beat you to death.” ¹⁵



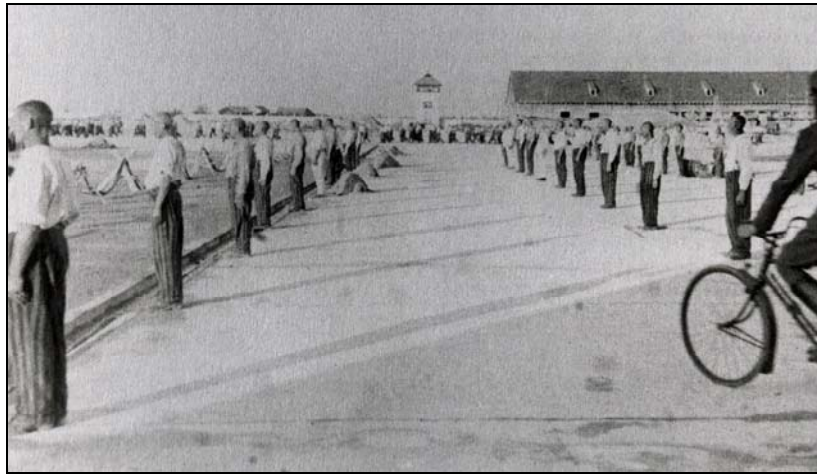
Prisoner sketches of Germans “whipping” prisoners and the “Whipping Bench”



One of the most frequent forms of punishment used by the Nazis was “pole hanging.” Your hands were tied behind your back and then you would be hoisted into the air and hung up by your hands, which would most likely tear your rotator cuffs and possibly pull your arms out of their sockets. Of course, while all this was happening, the guards would push you and pull on you to increase the strain on your shoulders. ¹⁶

Guards were taught that tolerance was a weakness. ¹⁷ Warning shots were prohibited. ¹⁸ Guards were expected to inflict the most severe punishment against prisoners for even the smallest infractions. ¹⁹

Failing to tip your cap to a guard could result in being hung up on a pole and beaten. You could also be punished for having a poorly made bed, for having a chipped or unfastened button, or for having your hands in your pockets. Writing was also forbidden. *Anyone* who authored *anything* could face torture or death. You could also be beaten or hung from a pole if you made a disparaging remark or showed any type of disrespect at all towards a guard or the fatherland. ²⁰



Roll Call: June 28, 1933

Standing at attention at roll call in all kinds of weather was also a popular form of abuse inflicted on the prisoners. Prisoners would sometimes be required to stand at attention for hours as their German guards rode bicycles down the lines and taunted the inmates.²¹

The guards deliberately made roll-call in the mornings and evenings go on as long as possible. The inmates had to stand at attention in all kind of weather, often for 90 minutes or longer while the guards were, of course, allowed to walk around.²²

Weather conditions at the camp swung from below freezing in the winter months to above 90 degrees Fahrenheit in the summertime.

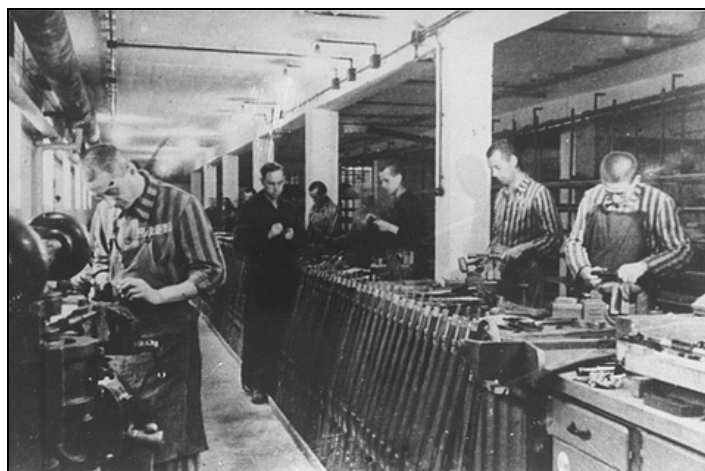


The prisoners daily routine at Dachau was very regimented. Well before sunrise, you would have reveille, which was time to get up. You would then have roll call for about an hour. You would then work from about six in the morning to about seven at night. You would then have another hour of roll call and then everyone in bed. Lights out.²³

Prisoners lived under the constant threat of not only being tortured for no apparent reason, but summary executions were also common. Random murder for no reason at all was a daily occurrence.²⁴



Dachau was actually used to serve the Reich as a work camp. Extermination through work was to be the goal. In other words, just work them until they drop over dead, then get another one.²⁵



Prisoners working on a rifle production line in an SS munitions factory at Dachau: (1943-1944)

Prisoners were “rented out” by the Reich to many large and prominent companies. Dachau prisoners were sent to over 190 outside camps as “slave labor.”²⁶

The Nazis soon discovered that forcing prisoners into slave labor was profitable. However, as they ran out of prisoners, new labor was needed. So, in order to capture as many prisoners as possible to work at Dachau, churches and cinemas were simply surrounded by the Nazis and everyone inside was arrested and taken off to the camp.²⁷



Prisoners arrested



Dachau Prisoners

In other words, no one was safe from Dachau.

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- ¹ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 61.
- ² “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 37; “Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site Website,” <http://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/memorial/subsidiary-camps.html>.
- ³ “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 93.
- ⁴ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 66.
- ⁵ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 57.
- ⁶ “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, pp. 19, 26.
- ⁷ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 19, 186; “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, pp. 289-290. “Forgotten Crimes, The Holocaust and People With Disabilities,” Suzanne E. Evans, 2004 Disability Rights Advocates, pp. 24-26, 74, 97-99, 106-108, 109, 112-113, 151, 156; “The World Must Know,” Michael Berenbaum, 1993, 2006 The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, pp. 27-28.
- ⁸ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 19, 37.
- ⁹ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 127; “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 167-68, 173; “Holocaust: Dachau and Sachsenhausen,” Artsmagic Ltd, Chronos Productions, 2006, 13:24.
- ¹⁰ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 21, 156, 188.
- ¹¹ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 147.
- ¹² “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 142; The World Must Know,” Michael Berenbaum, 1993, 2006 The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, pp. 151.
- ¹³ “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 83.
- ¹⁴ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 72; “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 83; “Holocaust: Dachau and Sachsenhausen,” Artsmagic Ltd, Chronos Productions, 2006, 7:00.
- ¹⁵ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 17; “Holocaust: Dachau and Sachsenhausen,” Artsmagic Ltd, Chronos Productions, 2006, 6:38.
- ¹⁶ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 20-21, 118; That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 123.

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- ¹⁷ “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 39.
- ¹⁸ “That Was Dachau 1933-1944,” Dr. Stanislav Zamecnik, le cherche midi, 2004, p. 41.
- ¹⁹ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 90-91.
- ²⁰ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 21.
- ²¹ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 100, 107.
- ²² “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, pp. 100, 107.
- ²³ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 100.
- ²⁴ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 116.
- ²⁵ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 22.
- ²⁶ “Holocaust: Dachau and Sachsenhausen,” Artsmagic Ltd, Chronos Productions, 2006, 27:00.
- ²⁷ “The Dachau Concentration Camp. 1933 to 1945,” Barbara Disel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Comite International de Dachau, 2005, p. 142.