

THE AUSCHWITZ ALBUM



THE ALBUM

***The Auschwitz Album* is the only surviving visual evidence of the process of mass murder at Auschwitz-Birkenau.**

It depicts the entire process from the victims' arrival to the disposal of their belongings, omitting only their murder.

The people in the photos were Jews, deported to the camp in the latter part of May, 1944.

Many were from Subcarpathian Rus a region which, today, is in the Ukraine.

Before 1939, Subcarpathian Rus was part of the Czechoslovakian Republic.

In 1939, it was taken over by Hungary, then a German ally.

In March 1944, the Germans occupied Hungary and in April, they forced the Jews into ghettos.

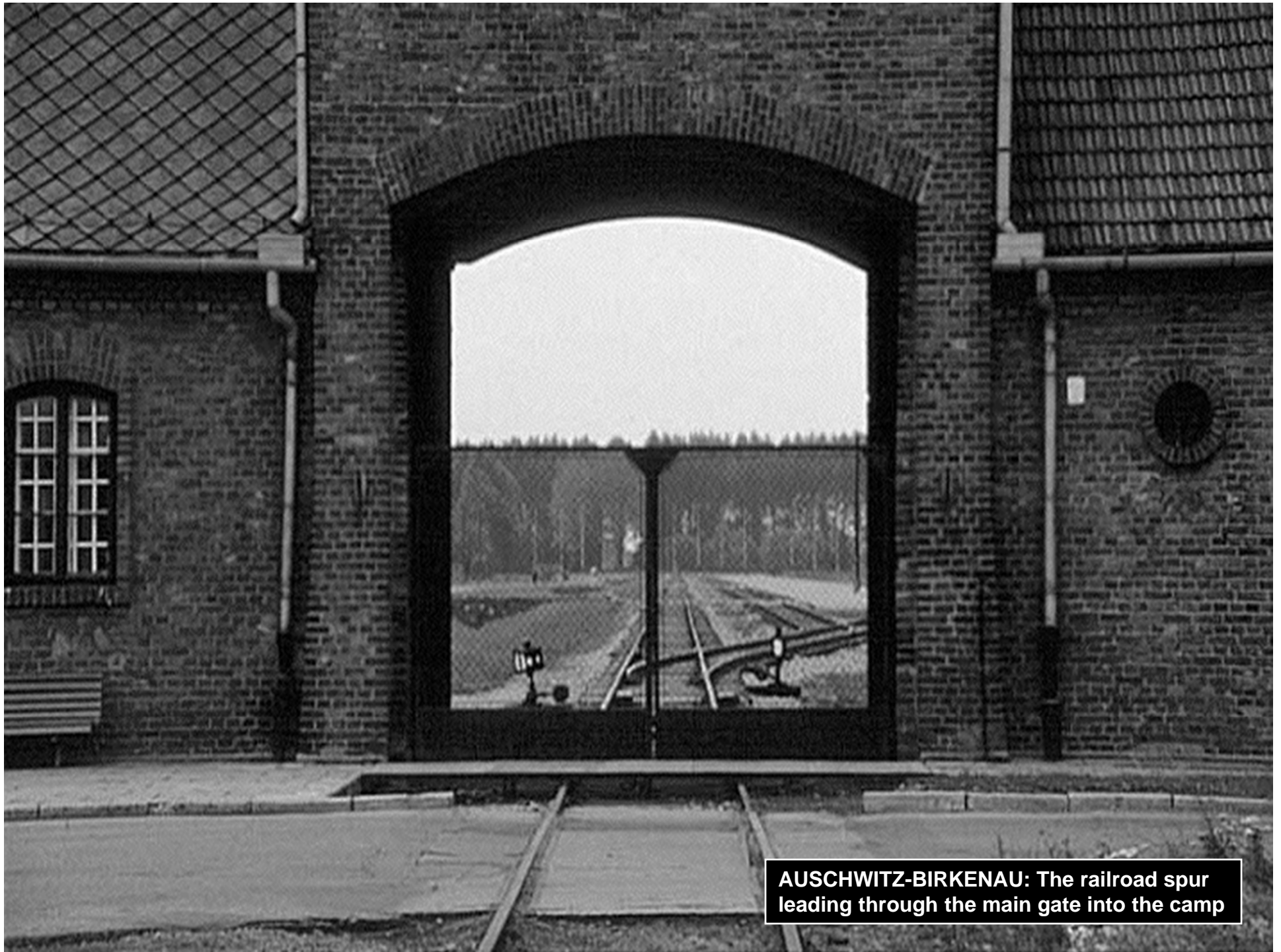
Between May and July, they deported most of Hungarian Jewry to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Originally, the trains stopped at a siding a half a mile away from Auschwitz-Birkenau and the victims had to walk the remaining distance.

But in spring 1944, a railroad spur was built leading directly into the camp.

This allowed selections to take place very soon after the trains pulled in, right alongside the tracks – an area known as the “ramp.”

Many of these photographs were taken on the ramp.



AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU: The railroad spur leading through the main gate into the camp



AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU: The tracks just inside the main gate and the “ramp” on either side of the tracks

ARRIVAL

Arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau was chaotic and confusing.

No matter how old or infirm people were or how weak and dazed from the terrible trip, they were rushed off the trains.

Once off the train, they were rushed along the arrival ramp and forced to leave all of their meager belongings.



ARRIVAL



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ARRIVAL



ARRIVAL

SORTING

Families and friends were separated as the Germans forced them to divide into groups: men and boys, women and children, and those who were too elderly or too infirm to walk.

Those who could not walk waited at the side of the ramp for trucks to come and pick them up.

Everyone else was lined up on the ramp, five abreast: men and boys in one line, women and children in another.



**SORTING
MEN AND BOYS**



SORTING
MEN AND BOYS



SORTING
MEN AND BOYS



SORTING
MEN AND BOYS



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MEN AND BOYS**



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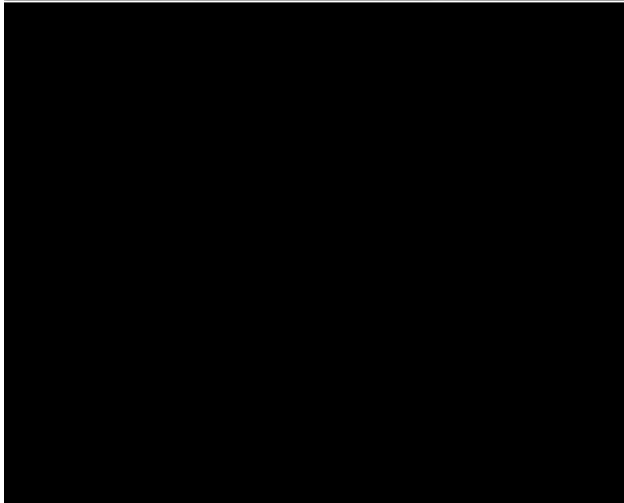
**SORTING
MEN AND BOYS**



**SORTING
MEN AND BOYS**



**SORTING
MEN AND BOYS**



**SORTING
MEN AND BOYS**



**SORTING
WOMEN AND CHILDREN**



SORTING
WOMEN AND CHILDREN



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SORTING
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SORTING
ELDERLY AND INFIRM



SORTING
ELDERLY AND INFIRM



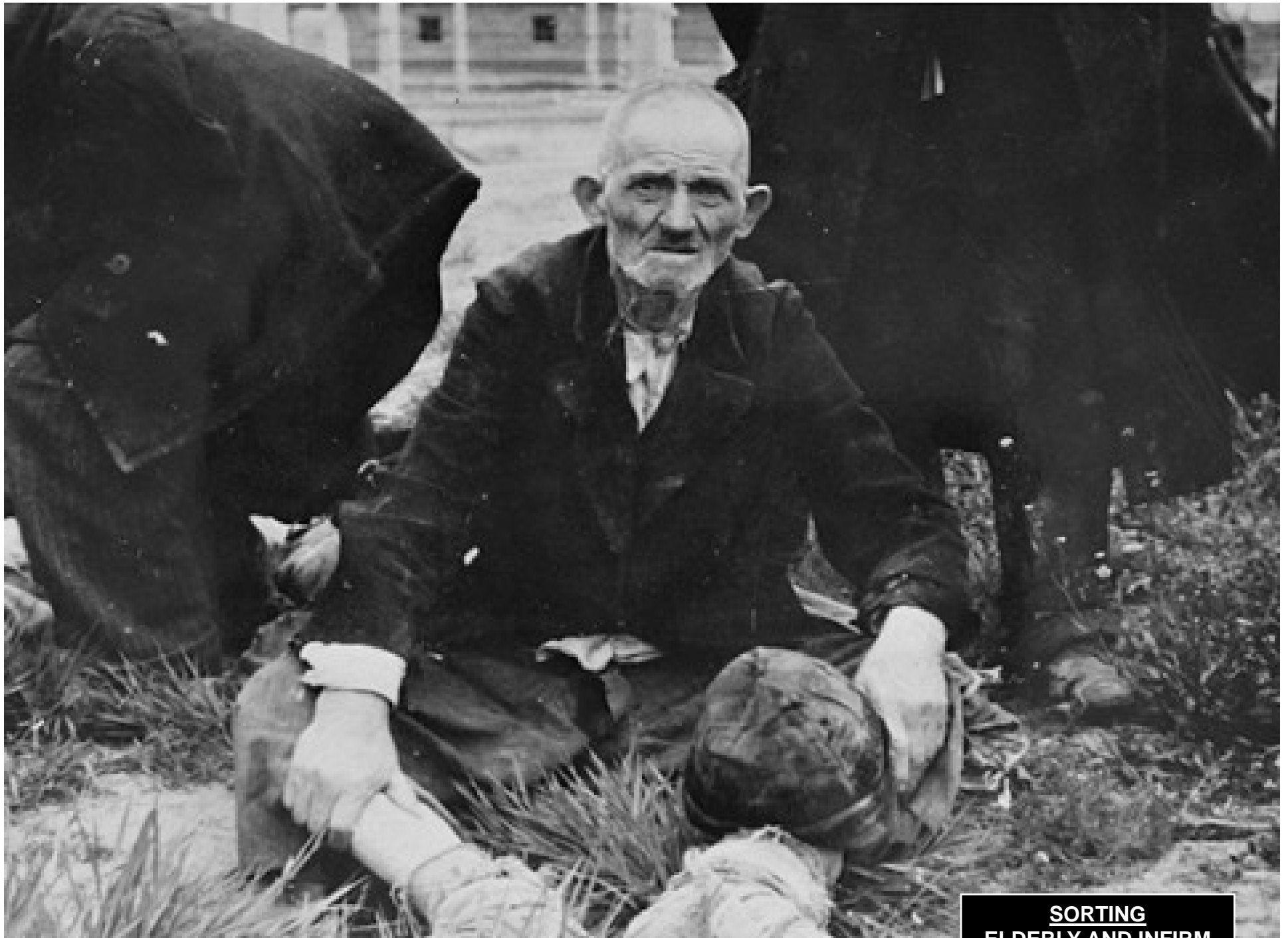
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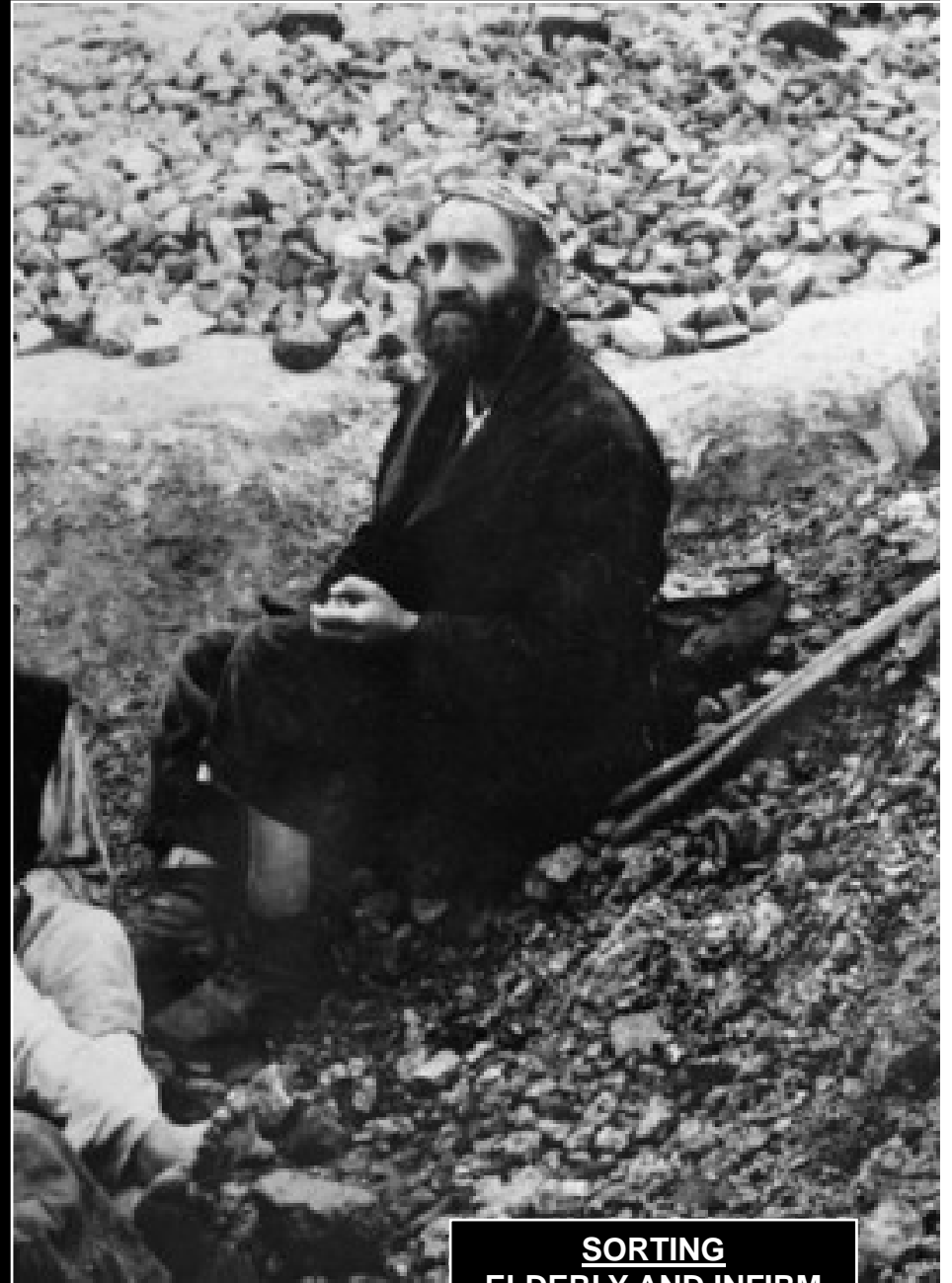
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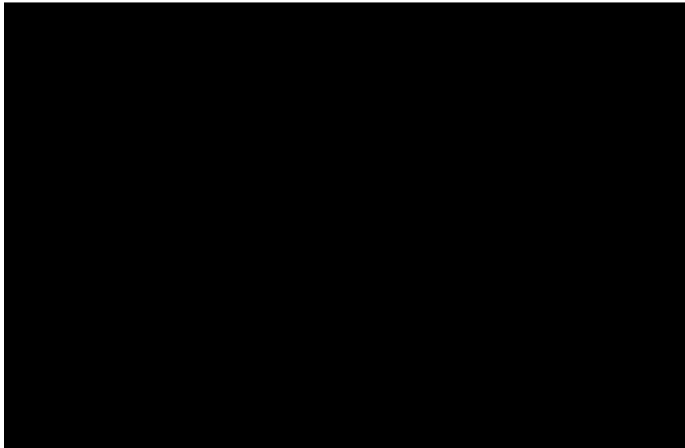
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ELDERLY AND INFIRM



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SORTING
ELDERLY AND INFIRM

SELECTION

SS officers – often medical personnel – decided who was to be murdered immediately and who was to be processed into the camp for slave labor and other purposes.

Usually, more than three-fourths of each transport was selected for immediate murder.

This included all children, all women with children, all the elderly, and anyone else the SS considered “unfit for work.”

The number of people sent into the camp was always a very small proportion of the actual number of fit and healthy people who arrived on the transports.



SELECTION



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SELECTION

IMMEDIATE MURDER

Those selected for immediate murder were directed to one of the four gas chamber-crematorium “combinations” at the north end of the camp.

***Krematorium II* and *III*, the largest murder facilities in the entire death camp system, were mirror images of each other.**

***Krematorium IV* and *V* were located in a grove of birch trees, where victims would often wait before entering the gas chambers.**



**IMMEDIATE MURDER
WAITING TO BE TAKEN
TO THE GAS CHAMBER**



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**IMMEDIATE MURDER
WALKING TO THE GAS
CHAMBER**



**IMMEDIATE MURDER
WALKING TO THE GAS
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**IMMEDIATE MURDER
WALKING TO THE
GAS CHAMBER**



IMMEDIATE MURDER
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IMMEDIATE MURDER
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**IMMEDIATE MURDER
OUTSIDE THE GAS CHAMBER**



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**IMMEDIATE MURDER
OUTSIDE THE GAS CHAMBER**

PROTRACTED MURDER

Those designated “fit for work” went through a “registration process”:

- They were deloused and their head and body hair was shaved.**
- They were tattooed with a prisoner identification number – a practice unique to Auschwitz.**
- They were issued camp clothing and some sort of footwear, but no underwear, socks, or coats.**
- They were assigned to a barracks in Auschwitz-Birkenau and to work details.**

Camp inmates spent long hours at back-breaking labor, inadequately clothed, in all kinds of weather, with little or no food.

They were also subjected to periodic selections. Those the SS deemed no longer “fit for work” were sent to the gas chambers.

Given all of this, the Germans did not expect them to live more than two to three months.

They called this “annihilation through work.”



PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



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INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



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INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



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INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



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INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: MEN AND BOYS



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



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INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



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INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
INTO THE CAMP: WOMEN AND GIRLS**





**PROTRACTED MURDER
PROCESSING: MEN AND BOYS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
PROCESSING: MEN AND BOYS**



**PROTRACTED MURDER
PROCESSING: MEN AND BOYS**



PROTRACTED MURDER
PROCESSING: WOMEN AND GIRLS



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PROTRACTED MURDER
PROCESSING: WOMEN AND GIRLS

DISPOSAL

Even before a “selection” was completed, the victims’ belongings were loaded onto trucks by groups of prisoners and taken to an area near *Krematorium IV*.

There, other prisoners sorted, organized and stored the belongings for eventual transport to Germany.

Camp inmates nicknamed this area “*Kanada*” because they considered Canada a rich country and the warehouses contained an abundance of goods.

Within a few hours of one transport’s arrival, the ramp was cleared and being prepared for the arrival of the next one.



DISPOSAL
TO KANADA



DISPOSAL
TO KANADA



**DISPOSAL
TO KANADA**



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DISPOSAL
A CLEARED RAMP

Between 1940 and 1945, about 1.1 million people were murdered at Auschwitz.

Nearly 90 percent – including some 200,000 children – were Jews.

**Photos organized and text written by
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Midwest Center for Holocaust Education**

**All photos available via the photo archives fo the United
States Holocaust Memorial Museum:**

http://digitalassets.ushmm.org/photoarchives/result.aspx?max_docs=1000&search=Auschwitz+Album&Submit=Search&query_append=

Date: May 1944

Locale: Auschwitz, [Upper Silesia] Poland

Credit: Yad Vashem (Public Domain)

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