




MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

Symposium in Berlin

Biomedical Sciences and Human Experimentation at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes The Auschwitz Connection

Speeches given on the Occasion of the Opening





Cover picture: Meeting the concentration camp survivors of crimes committed in the name of science. In the garden of the Fritz Haber Villa in Berlin Dahlem Hubert Markl, President of the Max Planck Society, welcomes (from right) Eva Mozes Kor, Jona Laks (half hidden), Wanda Poltawska, Andrzej Poltawski, Moshe Offer and Mary Wright.

Above left: Liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp on January 27, 1945. Eva Mozes (front left) and her sister Miriam Mozes (front right).

Eight survivors of experiments on humans in concentration camps joined the Berlin symposium as honorary guests; some were accompanied by friends or by members of their families: Otto Klein with Lydia Gallo (Switzerland), Vera Kriegel with Shmuel Kriegel (Israel), Jona Laks (Israel), Eva Mozes Kor with Mary Wright (USA), Moshe Offer (Israel), Saul Oren with Mady Oren (Israel), Dr. Wanda Poltawska with Prof. Andrzej Poltawski (Poland), Efraim Reichenberg with Jafa Reichenberg (Israel).

Max Planck Society: Admission of Historical Responsibility

**President Hubert Markl apologizes to victims
of Nazi crimes committed in the name of science**

The Max Planck Society's declaration on the occasion of a scientific symposium entitled "Biomedical Sciences and Human Experimentation at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes – The Auschwitz Connection" on June 7– 8, 2001 in Berlin, Germany.

The Max Planck Society was founded in 1948 as a new research organization in a democratic Germany. In a scientific aspect and due to numerous instances of overlapping personnel and ideals, the Max Planck Society became the heir of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, which was founded in 1911.

As an organization at the leading edge of German research, the Max Planck Society will do its utmost to contribute to the scientific elucidation of the history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during Germany's National Socialist regime. Over the past decades, the Max Planck Society has launched

a series of initiatives aimed at clearing up the role its predecessor played in National Socialism. In 1997, Hubert Markl, the President of the Max Planck Society, set up an independent research commission, the task of which has been to scientifically delve into the history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during the Nazi era. Those working for the commission have free access to all the documents and files in the possession of the Max Planck Society.

The historians involved with the "History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during National Socialism" research programme have recently presented findings historically proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that directors and employees of several Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes active in various fields of biomedical science co-masterminded and sometimes even actively participated in the crimes of the Nazi regime. According to the findings, the Kaiser Wilhelm Society's administration either knowingly or unknowingly tolerated scientists at several Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes going beyond every moral boundary and actively taking part in the Nazis' racist politics.

Some scientists at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes made use of the opportunity to conduct morally unrestricted research at Nazi coercive institutions such as psychiatric clinics or the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Among them was Otmar von Verschuer, who, beginning in 1942, headed up projects in so-called twins research at Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm

The survivors of the so-called twins experiments at the Auschwitz Concentration Camp recount their experiences during the symposium held at the Berlin Harnack House.





Questions from the international press (below left) being answered by (above, from left) Eva Mozes Kor, (President of C.A.N.D.L.E.S.), Maika Leffers (translator, half concealed), Jona Laks (chairwoman of the "Organization of Mengele Twins"), Bernd Wirsing (spokesman for the Max Planck Society) and Hubert Markl (President of the Max Planck Society). Below right: Jochen Frowein (Vice President of the Max Planck Society) and Klaus Pinkau (emeritus scientific member, right).

Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics and Eugenics. Concentration camp doctor Josef Mengele was neither employed by nor working on behalf of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society. He was a protégé of Otmar von Verschuer's, under whom he earned his doctorate in 1938 at the University of Frankfurt. Even after that, the two stayed in close contact. Today, it is safe to say that von Verschuer knew of the crimes being committed in Auschwitz and that he – together with some of his employees and colleagues – used them for his purposes.

On the occasion of the symposium entitled "Biomedical Sciences and Human Experimentation at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes – The Auschwitz Connection" on June 7, 2001 in Berlin, Germany, the President of the Max Planck Society, Hubert Markl, acknowledged that the Max Planck Society was historically responsible

for the guilt that could be heaped upon a number of scientists working for Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes at the time. In the Kaiser Wilhelm Society's stead, President Markl asked for forgiveness for the suffering inflicted upon the victims of the crimes in the name of science. He apologized for the fact that for long, the Max Planck Society had done too little to uncover the history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during National Socialism, thereby facing up to its historical responsibility too late.

On behalf of the Max Planck Society, President Markl declared that every area of science needed to have its ethical and legal boundaries. He warned scientists never to forget that there are no scientific goals that can be viewed as so important and of such high priority that they justify a human's dignity and their inalienable rights being disregarded.



“The extreme experiences of the victims surpass even the historian’s powers of imagination”

Welcome address by Wolfgang Schieder,

Presidential Commission to investigate the “History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the National Socialist Era”



As joint chairman of the Presidential Commission, Wolfgang Schieder opens the scientific symposium at the Max Planck Society's Harnack House in Berlin.

The Presidential Commission set up to investigate the “History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the National Socialist Era” and headed by my colleague, Reinhard Rürup, and myself was called into being in 1997 upon the initiative of the President of the Max Planck Society, Hubert Markl. It is a scientifically independent group of researchers who are sure, however, to maintain the particular interest of the Max Planck Society's President. This relationship is reflected in the fact that we have organized this symposium together with the Society's administrative headquarters and that Professor Markl is in attendance in order to give a special address momentarily.

The scope of our research could not begin to examine the entire activities of a total of 45 research institutions belonging to the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during the period of National Socialism in Germany. Instead, we are

focusing on a number of central aspects. First of all, we are conducting research into the organization and central research and personnel policies of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society's administrative headquarters. Second, we are studying the activities that fall into the category of armaments research. Third, we are examining the field of what is called in German Ostforschung and Lebensraumforschung, meaning research on eastern Europe and human habitat in general, which were important to Nazi Germany's plans to become completely self-sufficient. Our work, however, only covers this subject to the extent that it was connected with the National Socialists' war of conquest. Fourth, we are paying particular attention to the complex of life science, medical, and psychiatric research carried out at institutes of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society that contributed to the legitimization and refinement of Nazi policies on race and euthanasia.

It is our dealings with this research work that have brought us together today. Even though we have yet to find final proof for some links and probably never will, it has been established that, at the very least, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics in Berlin under the administration of Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer had scientific contacts to Auschwitz Concentration Camp and its doctor, Josef Mengele. It is undisputed that, at the institute, preparations from murdered Auschwitz prisoners were used for research purposes. All evidence primarily indicates that the experiments involved



Studying the programme are (from left) Andrzej Poltawski, Wanda Poltawska, Otto Klein, Saul Oren (behind, middle). The pictures below show (from left) Jan Philipp Reemtsma, managing director of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research with Reinhard Rürup and Elmar Zeitler, Peter Hans Hofschneider and Benno Müller-Hill.

the use of blood samples for genetic research. These are samples Dr. Mengele took from Auschwitz prisoners by force.

Thus, we have findings pointing to uninhibited medical research having abandoned all ethical boundaries for the alleged sake of medical progress. In a major speech just recently given by Germany's President, Johannes Rau, which he used to warn against being uninhibitedly concerned with scientific progress, he put it like this: "Science, being devoid of any moral scruples, carried out unbridled research for the sake of its scientific aims." Science was no longer being conducted for people, it was being conducted on people.

The victims of these experiments on humans who survived have had and continue to have a heavy load to bear throughout their lives. They went through an excruciating experience that exceeds the limits of a historian's imagination. Historians, after all, generally have to rely on accounts in written documents. Anyone wishing to grasp in retrospect the moral depravity of which German science was capable must therefore seek contact with the surviving victims of such research. That is why we were more than willing to follow through with the proposal made especially by Professor Benno

Müller-Hill to send out invitations to survivors of the medical experiments conducted in Auschwitz by Dr. Mengele on twin children of Jews. We are extraordinarily grateful to Eva Mozes Kor, who with her organization, C.A.N.D.L.E.S (Children of Auschwitz – Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors), has been the key help we needed to establish contact with the survivors present today.

In her moving memoirs entitled "Echoes from Auschwitz", published in 1995, she powerfully described how in 1944 she and her twin sister, Miriam, who has sadly passed away, as ten-year-olds in Auschwitz lost their parents and their childhood. In her account, she writes, "I am a victim. Yet I am ignored." We would consider ourselves fortunate if, following this symposium, you and your fellow survivors, whom we are delighted to have with us today, no longer felt that you are victims who have been left alone.



“The most honest form of apology is the admission of guilt”

Speech given by Hubert Markl, President of the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science



“We must accept the truth no matter how painful, turn to face our responsibility in order to learn for the present and future from an understanding of the past”: Max Planck President Hubert Markl during his speech.

The role played by science during the Nazi dictatorship is one of the many chapters of Germany’s past that remains insufficiently unveiled up to the present day. This also holds for the Kaiser Wilhelm Society as predecessor of the Max Planck Society. The symposium entitled “Biomedical Sciences and Human Experimentation at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes – The Auschwitz Connection” taking place this afternoon and tomorrow is part of a research programme based on selected instances and scientifically examining the actions of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and its scientists during the period of National Socialism. Therefore, this symposium is part of the Max Planck Society’s efforts to unreservedly reveal all the facts about its history by means of historical research, thereby shedding light upon the dark chapters of its own past. We must be prepared as well – no matter how painful it may be, and even pre-

cisely because it hurts, to accept the truth and face up to our responsibility to learn for the present and the future from insight into the past. We owe that above all to the victims of National Socialist ideology. We owe it to the many who perished as much as we do to the few survivors.

The existence of mere suspicions instead of established facts can easily give rise to distorted historical accounts, allow stubborn denial and glossing over to persist, and all too easily turn an admission of responsibility into pure lip service, whereas the unadulterated, historically documented knowledge of the crimes committed back then cannot be avoided. This is with certainty one area where the Max Planck Society and so many post-World War II organizations, companies, and institutions in Germany have failed. For way too long, many questions were not asked; for way too long, many connections remained uninvestigated or only dealt with by outsiders; and for way too long, many documents lay in the archives, either inaccessible because they remained classified or because people were all too glad to disregard them. For too long, colleagues supported each other by remaining silent and not asking questions instead of opening the door to honest investigation that was needed. Too many had collaborated with the Nazi dictatorship, either actively or passively, to the point where they were happy to hide their own joint responsibility or even complicity, so that, undisturbed and unburdened, they could be a part of the new, democratic, post-war society.

Today's greater willingness to face up to the facts of the past is therefore not an expression of a hypocritically repetitive fault-finding attitude or even moralizing arrogance of the Spätgeborene (those too young at the time to possibly bear any guilt for the events of the day). Instead, it is the fulfillment of a duty which those who were directly involved and affected did not see themselves capable of performing for a long time, or which they, having been directly associated with the events, shunned, while those not involved exercised what they misperceived as consideration for others. Yet, we owe it to ourselves as well as the generations to come to no longer attempt to avoid the necessary investigation into the truth.

As an organization at the leading edge of German research, the Max Planck Society has a tremendous responsibility to do its part to uncover the past, particularly its own. On the one hand, it is true that the Max Planck Society was founded in 1948 at the behest and with the support of the American and British occupying forces quite intentionally as a new institution, a democratic organization for research in a new and democratic Germany. On the other hand, however, the Max Planck Society at the same time in many scientific aspects stood in the tradition of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, for it felt obligated towards the best of scientific heritages that had been passed down to it and which it has sought to preserve to this very day. As far as personnel at the two organizations is concerned, there were also



close ties due to the fact that many of the newly founded Max Planck Society's leading scientists had previously worked at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes.

So, although today's Max Planck Society is not identical to the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, due to a significant number of connections between the two, it has without a doubt taken possession of its predecessor's inheritance in many aspects. Even the simple fact that the Society was named after Max Planck, one of the most outstanding physicists of the 20th century, a man of impeccable character, Nobel Prize laureate in 1918, President of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society from 1930 to 1937 and in 1945/46, was a deliberate expression of ideal continuity, but at the same time also one signifying a new moral beginning. Taking possession of an inheritance, however, means accepting responsibility for everything, both the positive – in particular the great scientific tradition of individuals like Adolf von Harnack, Albert Einstein, Lise Meitner, Max von Laue, or Max Planck – and the negative, which means admitting guilt.

Over the past few decades, the Max Planck Society has launched a series of initiatives aimed at actively coming

to grips with its past. For example, as early as the 1950s, we signed long-term cooperation agreements with Israel's Weizmann Institute, long before the Federal Republic of Germany was able to establish diplomatic relations with the nation of Israel. In 1973, we set up our own archive with the task of securing, examining, and making the files of the Kaiser Wilhelm and Max Planck Societies accessible to the public and, in particular, researchers, provided they meet certain legal requirements. In 1983, President Reimar Lüst gave inspiration to a festschrift in celebration of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society's 75th anniversary. It was edited by Rudolf Vierhaus and Bernhard vom Brocke who used it to lay the foundation for further investigation. When it became known that tissue samples from victims of Nazi crimes were still in the possession of some Max Planck Institutes, the Max Planck Society, then under the leadership of Heinz Staab, did everything conceivable to establish the facts and to pay due respect to the victims. In 1990, their remains were ceremoniously laid to rest in a Munich cemetery, and a memorial was set up in their remembrance. On October 14, of last year, together with the Hermann von Helmholtz Association and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft,

Max Planck President Hubert Markl welcomes Otto Klein, one of the survivors of concentration camp human experimentation (next to him from left) Shmuel Kriegel and Efraim Reichenberg (right). Picture below: the opening ceremony in Berlin, right are the two chairmen of the Presidential Commission Wolfgang Schieder and Reinhard Rürup (right).

we unveiled a memorial to the victims of “euthanasia” murders, and with that of blinded science, in the Berlin suburb of Buch.

Following preparations by my predecessor, Hans Zacher, in 1997 I received permission from the Senate of the Max Planck Society to set up a research commission whose task would be to delve scientifically into the history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during the Nazi era and draw the most precise picture possible of the events of those days and their consequences. The commission’s co-chairmen are Professors Reinhard Rürup of the Technical University of Berlin and Wolfgang Schieder of the University of Cologne. Both of these men are internationally respected historians, and neither of them – and this was of particular importance to us – is a member of the Max Planck Society. The remaining members of the commission are Professors Doris Kaufmann (of the University of Bremen), Hartmut Lehmann (MPI for History in Göttingen), Jürgen Renn (MPI for the History of Science in Berlin), Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (MPI for the History of Science in Berlin), Michael Stolleis (MPI for European Legal History, Frankfurt), Paul Weindling (Oxford

Brookes University, Oxford), and Fritz Stern (Columbia University, New York). Jochen Frowein (MPI for International Law, Heidelberg, and Vice President of the Humanities Section of the Max Planck Society) is also a member of the commission. He takes the place of Franz Emanuel Weinert (MPI for Psychological Research, Munich, and former Vice President of the Max Planck Society), who passed away much too soon in March of this year. Without any outside influence from the administration of the Max Planck Society and having to answer only to the commission, guest scientists and doctoral candidates from Germany and abroad work together on the research programme. Historian Dr. Carola Sachse is in charge of project management.

The commission and its workers have free access to all the files the Max Planck Society possesses. The commission puts out its own series of publications and holds public lectures, symposiums, and workshops in order to generate discussion of the results of its work among not just the scientific community but the general public as well. Its members are aware that the task of scientifically elucidating the Kaiser Wilhelm Society’s role in the

Third Reich can never be accomplished on its own. It reviews and evaluates the status of research on specific fields of related topics, it compiles its own reports, it brings initiatives for further research work and sees to it that they are carried out or that the work is performed by a separate body. No matter how costly and ambitious a research programme may be, it could hardly evaluate all the sources and illuminate all the aspects on its own with limited time and limited resources. Confronting the history of Nazism is primarily a permanent task for the science of history and the whole of German society, a task with which they see themselves faced over and over again.

Bit by bit, the commission’s fact-finding mission will, however, be able to bring confirmation to the areas where previously there was often no more than suspicion. It can lay a strong foundation based on fact, one that will enable assessments to go beyond the general expression of dismay at the crimes committed during the Nazi era. It can contribute to uncovering the names of victims and perpetrators. Most of all, it can attempt to expose their motives and the reasons for their moral failure. It will be able to provide concrete documentation of guilt, thereby fulfilling the prerequisite for an honest confrontation with the past. However, it should also make it clear to see those areas where moral character and scientific ethos caused people to resist the temptation of research opportunities that we describe in German as *entgrenzt*, an adjective



At the table (from left) Wanda Poltawska, Bernd Gausemeier, doctoral candidate within the research programme, Vera Kriegel and Paul Weindling, Brookes University, Oxford. Behind Wolfgang Preller, Shmuel Kriegel (half concealed), Mary Wright, Annette Vogt, MPI for the History of Science, Helga Satzinger, guest scientist, TU Berlin, Andrzej Poltawski and Axel Cäsar Hüntelmann. Pictures below (from left) Vera Kriegel, Eva Mozes Kor, Hubert Markl, Saul Oren and Shmuel Kriegel (sitting).

literally meaning “with its borders removed” but indicating something morally unrestricted, in particular the research and experiments conducted by the Nazis.

The Kaiser Wilhelm Society and its administration were a part of the times back then. Therefore, the diverse facets of political and social reality in those days were also reflected in the reality of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society. Yet, one cannot judge or condemn the people of Germany as a whole any more than one can view the Kaiser Wilhelm Society without making any distinctions, for that would not do it or its key players justice. It was deeply imbedded in the National Socialist thinking and prejudices of its time – even those which it claimed to be studying and justifying through science – just as they were widespread in other countries. It is for that very reason we are left with the task of explaining why, of all places, it was in Germany – in those days at the peak of scientific civilization—that opinions turned into incendiary slogans, preconceived notions into condemnation, more or less abstruse theories into actions, and chauvinistic literature into bloody crimes.

Dealing with historical responsibility requires from us Germans a high degree of sensitivity. Even though most of us today cannot be held personally responsible since we were born later, it remains the task of today’s and all future generations to look the historical truth in the eye. When doing so, we must insure that guilt and respon-

sibility do not degenerate into empty words of politically correct rhetoric by either demanding or giving confessions in an abstract manner so lacking in specific reference to deeds and perpetrators that, to make up for it, they are given even stronger moral impetus. That is why I have always placed great importance on investigating and examining past events with all due diligence of historical science first, before carrying out an evaluation on the scientifically secure foundation of historical fact.

The research programme, set up to be carried out over a period of five years, was opened in March 1999 with a four-day conference taking place to review current research and give interpretive perspectives on the history of science under National Socialism. Numerous internationally renowned historians from Germany and abroad carried out a survey based on the level of research up to that point of what had been discovered and documented about the role played by the Kaiser Wilhelm Society and other organizations in National Socialism. The results of the conference were published in an anthology and thus documented and made accessible for anyone. The title of this German volume

is “Geschichte der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus. Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven der Forschung”, which means “History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during National Socialism. Portrait and perspectives in research“, edited by Doris Kaufmann (Göttingen, 2000).

The commission chose to first focus its work on the field of biomedicine and the research into and practical application of racial biology. They made a correct and obvious choice, because this is where one can most clearly see in what way and to what extent German researchers at the time were involved with the Nazi regime. Furthermore, the field of biomedicine is where the largest number of people fell victim to science in the most horrible ways and where the rejection of science’s moral boundaries due to the Nazis’ racial mania becomes most directly obvious. For certain, there are many faces – and not just German ones – and deep roots – and by no means just German ones – to inhumane racism. There has been exploitation and enslavement, oppression and rape, as well as torture and mass murder to the point of genocide for reasons of racial arrogance and hatred. There were self-proclaimed





“master races” who subjected their “slave races” to agony and atrocities with a clear conscience and afterwards went unpunished. These are neither merely German nor modern depravities of a godlessly rootless society, and they are unfortunately also not ones that ceased to exist along with the Third Reich. We scientists, however, should consider one particular form of such malignant racism even worse than all the other atrocities in the catalogue of humanity’s sins. Because we think of science as one of mankind’s greatest achievements – and rightfully so – we ought to shudder at the thought of scientifically justified racism and the allegedly scientifically justified practice of human extermination even more than at all other forms of torturous degradation and deprivation of a fellow human being’s rights. For there is no crime worse than highly intelligent people with sound minds, cold hearts, and dead consciences with absolutely no compassion mistreating other people and killing them while professing to be contributing to the search for scientific knowledge. Criminal acts of this kind are an inextinguishable shame, not only for those who perpetrated them, but also for all those who tolerated them, and in fact, for the life sciences themselves, in the name of

which they were committed, and shame of this kind will continue to live as long as one remembers it.

Building upon the already weighty level of research, the commission has managed to collect extensive information during its work. First of all, it has been able to confirm some of what was suspected up to this point. Secondly, additional knowledge has been gained in some important areas. After two years now, there is scientific evidence historically proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that directors and employees at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes co-masterminded and sometimes even actively participated in the crimes of the Nazi regime, thus allowing – indeed demanding – clear recognition of these facts. The Max Planck Society as the Kaiser Wilhelm Society’s “heir” must face up to these historical facts and, together with them, its moral responsibility. As President of the Max Planck Society, I would therefore like to make an assessment and publicly substantiate it here today.

As far as we know, the Kaiser Wilhelm Society as a whole did not pass any resolutions via its board of directors or other bodies to take an active part in criminal research work. Nevertheless, it did either knowingly or unknowingly

tolerate directors and leading scientists at several Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes as they, by their own endeavor, promoted and took an active role in the racist policies of those in power at the time. The activities revolved especially (but not exclusively) around the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics in Berlin, the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Brain Research in the Berlin suburb of Buch, and the German Research Institute for Psychiatry in Munich. As far as we have been able to determine with a high degree of assurance, the activities transpired in three fields in particular.

Nazi racial legislation, including the revolting 1935 Nuremberg Laws, and its practical application for purposes of “racial hygiene” was supported and sometimes even initiated by a number of directors and employees at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, such as Ernst Rüdin or Eugen Fischer.

Involvement in criminal euthanasia based on eugenics and “racial hygiene” or even the mere use of killed victims for scientific experiments by Kaiser Wilhelm scientists such as Hugo Spatz or Julius Hallervorden was a clear and indubitable violation of the boundaries of ethically responsible research.

This also holds for knowingly and willingly using without permission the allegedly scientific research facilities at Nazi coercive institutions, be they psychiatric clinics or concentration camps like Auschwitz. These especial-

ly included certain projects involving studies conducted on twins at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology under the administration of Otmar von Verschuer, beginning in 1942. Although concentration camp doctor Josef Mengele was not working as an employee or on behalf of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, he was a protégé of Otmar von Verschuer's, under whom he had earned his doctorate in 1938 at the University of Frankfurt. Even after that, they maintained close contact with one another, as various documents clearly show. We may never be able to find out about all the details of their relationship, but today it is safe to say that Verschuer knew that crimes were being committed at Auschwitz, that he and his employees used the victims for scientific purposes, and that he probably had an active influence on how these crimes were carried out. The results of the Presidential Commission's research on this topic have been recorded and published. One title in particular by Doctors Carola Sachse and Benoit Massin would be in English "Life Science Research at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes and the Crimes of the Nazi Regime. Information on the Current Level of Knowledge" (Berlin 2000). Among other things, the symposium taking place this afternoon and tomorrow will also be dealing with how these details are connected.

Verschuer and others attempted to justify actions violating every known human right by offering the excuse that they were serving the best interests of science. Leading German sci-



entists – from within the Kaiser Wilhelm Society as well – cooperated in the preparation of Nazi crimes, and they used them to pursue their scientific goals beyond every moral boundary of humanity. They contributed to innocent people, many of them children, being torn away from their families, humiliated, tortured, and even murdered. The assessment of their guilt in legal terms is the responsibility of the courts in a society governed by the rule of law. Historians can only determine collaboration and responsibility. When viewing the past with human compassion, one shudders at the thought of such inhumanity taking on the guise of scientific research.

What lessons and consequences can we draw from all this today?

For one thing, we have to be aware that every realm of science has to have its moral bounds. We need to understand that scientists can become guilty of crimes and how that happens. The history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society during the period of National Socialism in Germany demonstrates how science can become involved in devising, preparing, and even actively participating in the most abominable crimes and the brutaliza-

tion of scientific research that degrades human beings to mere objects of experimentation. For us scientists this is a warning to never forget that there is no goal of research that can be viewed as so important and high-ranking that it justifies seriously restricting or completely disregarding another person's dignity or human rights against their will. The boundaries of freedom in science are delineated by the inalienable rights and inviolable dignity of human beings.

For another, I am forced by the findings of the research into the history of involvement and guilt of a number of scientists working at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes at the time to both personally and as President of the Max Planck Society state my position on the events that took place. I consider it a moral obligation that has been placed upon the Max Planck Society in accordance with its responsibility as the Kaiser Wilhelm Society's "heir", and I feel it as a German scientist – especially as a biologist – in the presence of victims of those inhumane experiments carried out at the time by German life scientists or on their orders.

A sincere admission of our historical responsibility must be expressed clearly, but it must equally include

Vera Kriegel and Eva Mozes Kor express their appreciation to Carola Sachse (left), research director, for the invitation extended to the concentration camp victims to participate in a personal dialogue. Acknowledgement of the expression of reparation, conveyed by Efraim Reichenberg (below, together with the interpreters Adina Stern, left, and Maika Leffers) and Vera Kriegel (right) to Hubert Markl.

clear differentiation. In retrospect, I see three levels of guilt.

1. *The guilt of German scientists:*

At the time, Germany was in the global forefront of many fields of science. The work done by the commission has made evident that even leading-edge research is not invulnerable to moral abysses. What took place then in the name of science for the purpose of promoting racism and allegedly “eugenic” human expurgation were crimes that will forever weigh heavily on German science.

2. *The guilt of life scientists:*

National Socialism’s entire body of racist thought is an expression of a materialistic, Social Darwinist, dehumanized form of biology, for which Charles Darwin himself, however, in contrast to his racist disciples, cannot be held responsible. For certain, the roots of this body of ideas were planted before 1933 and were even international and not just confined to Germany. But, here in Germany, doctors and biologists, having accepted that man descended from animals, went one step further: to treating human beings like animals. The guilt for utilizing human beings as laboratory animals can be specifically placed on bio-

medical science that was robbed of every moral boundary, a science whose racist theories do indeed not deserve to be called “scientific”, but which cannot deny that it is also to blame for the terrible consequences to which they led.

3. *The guilt of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society:*

As I already outlined at the beginning, the Max Planck Society was intentionally founded after the war to be a new organization in order to enable science to have a fresh start in a new, democratic Germany. However, due to the fact that the Max Planck Society sees itself as the Kaiser Wilhelm Society’s “heir”, it has the obligation to admit its guilt as well. The Kaiser Wilhelm Society tolerated or even promoted within its ranks research which was not to be justified for any ethical or moral reasons. Thus, it placed itself – at least in a number of areas – in the service of a criminal regime, thereby taking upon itself the moral guilt for assisting in such crimes.

By confessing this three-fold historical responsibility, I, as a German scientist, life scientist, and President of the Max Planck Society, am fulfilling the obligation that has been placed upon

us by the past. Therefore, I wish to apologize for the suffering inflicted upon the victims of these crimes in the name of science – to those who perished and have since passed away and to the ones who have survived.

I do not make such an apology lightly. Though many people today are quite quick to think of demanding an apology and then give immediate expression to their thoughts, if one is to truly mean what is expressed by the English phrase “excuse me,” namely the “removal of guilt”, then one cannot remain silent concerning one’s doubts. Most people apologize by saying, “Excuse me,” or “I’m sorry,” when they offend someone, say something wrong, or – either literally or figuratively – step on someone’s toes. But can a perpetrator of heinous crimes against humanity really make an apology? Certainly, he can if he feels sincere remorse for his deeds. However, can another person feel that remorse in the offender’s place, especially if the one who committed the crime perhaps felt none at all? Is there no such thing as an injustice so inexcusable that any apology seems to be shedding responsibility? As I stand here and apologize both personally and on behalf of the Max Planck Society in proxy for the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, I am referring to the sincere expression of deepest regret, compassion, and shame at the fact that crimes of this sort were committed, promoted, and not prevented within the ranks of German scientists.

There is something else I must add. The members of later generations may





As a German scientist, life scientist and President of the Max Planck Society, Hubert Markl (middle) apologizes to the survivors of criminal human experimentation which took place in the concentration camps (first row sitting, from right) Eva Mozes Kor, Vera and Shmuel Kriegel, Otto Klein, Mary Wright; behind from left: Lydia Gallo, Reinhard Rürup, Sabine Feiner, Bernd Ebersold and Carola Sachse.

not be able to be held personally responsible for the events that took place back then, but they carry the responsibility for exposing and shedding light on the historical truth as a precondition for honest remembrance and learning. The fact that, for a long time, this did not take place to the desired extent within the Max Planck Society, is for certain only partially due to classified documents having remained in the archives. It is certainly due to a lack of willingness on the part of some accessories or even accomplices inside and outside the Max Planck Society to face up to their historical responsibility. The Max Planck Society must also admit its fault in this area, for which I offer a very special apology, for it did not happen under the constraints of dictatorship, but in a free society which expressly guarantees and encourages freedom of research.

An admission of guilt is only concrete and complete once it has been spoken directly to those who have been injured, the ill-treated victims who suffered all these unimaginable atrocities with their very own minds and bodies. Therefore, both personally and on behalf of the Max Planck Society, allow me to express my deepest regrets to you, Mrs. Kor; to you, Mrs. Laks; and

to the other victims in attendance, for today you are representing, in a sense, the victims in their entirety. I am very sorry.

It is a painful way to meet the past when one personally stands face to face with the victims of those crimes. At the same time, we feel growing in us a most enduring dedication to continue making every effort to unreservedly elucidate what happened back then, and it serves as a most permanent admonition to preserve the memory of it and, by teaching from what we remember, to learn together with others. Though truth does not set one free from guilt and shame, it releases one from repression and lying, and opens the door to a future that can learn from the past.

The most honest form of apology is therefore exposing guilt; for scientists, this ought to be perhaps the most appropriate form of apology. In actuality, the perpetrator is the only one who can ask for forgiveness. Nevertheless, I beg you, the surviving victims, from the bottom of my heart to forgive those who, no matter what their reasons, failed to ask you themselves.

“To remember is the warning we have been given against forgetting”

Speech given by Jona Laks, Chairwoman of the “Organization of Mengele Twins”, Tel Aviv



Jona Laks from Tel Aviv warns against the “interpretation of memory” in her speech at the Max Planck Society’s Harnack House in Berlin.

Professors, Doctors, Researchers,
esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will begin by thanking the Max Planck Society and Dr. Carola Sachse, director of the research programme “History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the National Socialist Era” for the very fact that you invited us to participate at this symposium. Since, to our regret, we have long become accustomed to other people appearing in the name of victims of the Holocaust, on the authority of their professional specialization of that period – and then what appears is not the memory, but “the interpretation of the memory”.

And I also thank you for the very fact that you are conducting an investigation of the connection between Dr. Mengele’s deeds and German medical institutions, and that you feel responsible for, though you are not “heirs”,

particularly if your connections with the institutions are new, years after the things happened. Your sense of responsibility certainly assists in preventing their being forgotten. And everyone who assists in it merits our appreciation and blessing. So: be blessed!

Dr. Mengele, a doctor and an S.S. officer, named “The Angel of Death of Auschwitz”, served there from 1943 until the liberation of Auschwitz in January 1945. The connection between Dr. Mengele and the “Kaiser Wilhelm Institute” is a fact. The connection involved necessarily people, correspondence and documents. Obviously, Dr. Mengele was involved and active in the Institute itself. The people working there could not be mistaken about his activities. He corresponded with them in the language of medicine, and this language aspires to precision and realism.

Dr. Mengele was not outside of history, not outside of time, and not outside of the networks that activate a society: organizations, law, communications systems, archives and culture. Dr. Mengele was not outside of Germany. I would like to quote from an official Soviet report of January 1945, saying: “In the camp of Auschwitz special hospitals were set up with operating histological laboratories and other institutions, in which German professors and doctors performed extensive experiments on absolutely healthy people: men, women and children. Experiments were conducted in making women sterile, castrating men,

Carola Sachse, Vera Kriegel, Wolfgang Schieder, Eva Mozes Kor, Hubert Markl and Jürgen Kocka, President of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (behind), follow the speech made by Jona Laks (picture below left) in which she thanked the President of the Max Planck Society for his goodwill in „offering us an apology“.

experiments on children, experiments in infecting masses of people with the diseases of cancer, typhus, fever etc. In investigating the effects of various chemical compounds on commissions from German commercial companies, on one occasion representatives of the German chemical industry, the doctor and gynecologist Grauber from Königshütte, and the chemist Goebbel, purchased from the camp administration 150 women from among detainees there for such experiments.” (End of Quotation.)

Ladies and gentlemen, to speak about Auschwitz is difficult for me, but necessary for me. I am not a historian, not a philosopher, not an author or an artist. I do not have the ability to produce a new discourse about Auschwitz, a discourse that would sweep away clichés that have accumulated over the years, to the point where they have dulled it and made it into a subject for philosophy or cinema, or a discourse that would block metaphysical commentaries, such as that Auschwitz was altogether outside of this planet etc. It was inside our planet and a part of it, perpetrated by human beings against the lives of other human beings. It was here, amongst us. There is no guarantee that it will not return again.

Ladies and gentlemen, human beings made Auschwitz. Dr. Mengele was born to human beings. He and his wife were parents of human beings. (I personally met Mr. Rolf Yenkel – the son of Dr. Mengele. He left the impression also of a human being.)

Who am I? I am Jona Laks from “there” marked no. A-27725. Now an Israeli citizen who does not cease admiring Israel for gathering in the survivors of the Holocaust, at a time when Israel itself was fighting a war for its independence. I have no part in the position of the “new historians” who insinuate that the state of Israel was interested in refugees from the Holocaust mainly for its army. But this position totally shocks me emotionally and mentally.

I am Jona Laks from Tel Aviv, a human being. As I see it, a human being is a person who remembers. Memory requires cultivating, nourishing partners. We are the last witnesses who remember. After we die, the memory will be in documents, court verdicts, in cinema, in video, in the various kinds of literature and no longer by means of the living voice. All cultures prefer the living voice as a witness over the above mentioned substitutes and reservoirs.

I remember Dr. Mengele. I have come here to affirm it once again. I am a private individual alive. Not a representative of a state and not a means of arranging the balance of monetary agreements between Germany and the victims of the Nazis.

I am a representative of Mengele’s victims. In other words, I am an emissary in the elementary sense of the word – an emissary of those of Mengele’s victims who are still alive. An emissary, not a proprietor. And according to the law regarding emissaries in the Jewish code of observances (Halakha) – if I forgive in the name of the dead, I will be going beyond the bounds of the mission that I have taken upon myself to the point of distorting and destroying it. As for those of Mengele’s victims who are still alive, those who are members of our organization, I have received no permission from them to forgive on their behalf. Nor do I as an individual have the right to forgive. Hence, I have no one’s power of attorney to forgive, but to remind that forgiveness erases memory.

Let us adhere to Auschwitz as a physical fact. Let us not collaborate in the “cultural game”, in which Auschwitz is a metaphor, or a subject, or a “religious discussion”, or an embodiment of the “evil” striving against the “good”. We were there. Someone who was not there and does research on Auschwitz from a distance in time and from an psychological distance, is tempted by the metaphor. We were there, which means that it is never-





theless fitting to hear our testimony and to relate to our words, at least equal to one of the documents from the period.

Even I myself, who was there, am no longer sure of “language”. Am I not inevitably recycling banal and quasi-religious images of Auschwitz? Are the Auschwitzian facts capable of transmitting themselves as they are? Is my addressee able, and in the present case able – not merely willing, – to experience my language in its plain sense?

Has the “discourse” about Auschwitz not narrowed extremely the possibility of “plain speech” about Auschwitz and Dr. Mengele? Does not Mengele as the “symbol of evil” push Mengele into the category of a symbol and reduce the possibility of speaking about Mengele himself as a part of the German medical system of the time? I ask God to restore the power of plain speech. Auschwitz was in Poland to the west of Cracow. Before the war, it had 12,000 inhabitants, 4,000 of them Jews. Auschwitz was beside the Sola river, not outside the planet. Not in hell. Not outside of culture, not outside of history, like Treblinka, Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibor, Chelmno and all of them together.

Was Mengele “the embodiment of evil”? Certainly, he was an embodiment of evil in the reality itself, but to turn him into the concept “the embodiment of evil” casts a certain aura around him, as though he were a representative of the “evil” in its ongoing historical struggle with the “good”. Mengele, in my eyes, was not a representative, he was he himself. All this discourse transforms Auschwitz and Mengele into images, severs them from reality.

I was there, and Dr. Mengele was there. From there Dr. Mengele transmitted his findings to the Kaiser Wilhelm medical institute. My friends, the twins, then children, and I were his objects. And that is how we arrived at the above mentioned medical institute.

I would like to quote from the Bible Joel 1, verse 3, about memory in German: “Sagt euren Kindern davon und lasst es eure Kinder ihren Kindern sagen und diese wiederum ihren Nachkommen.”

Yes, I remember. I was there. I then am both a soldier and a witness in the long Jewish journey of memory.

And here, ladies and gentlemen, we come to a cruel and exclusive thing:

the victims’ sincerity. We are the victims. You are the present heads of the Max Planck Society. You want “to clear up the Nazi crimes”. We want to remember, but we ask not only ourselves to remember, but you as well. In other words, we are asking you to remember what you want to “clear up” and then perhaps forget. We will remember in any case. Will you forget in any case?

After we die, Auschwitz and Mengele will be remembered by means of video films, written literature, archives, remembrance days and Spielberg-style cinema. Will you see all these as a kind of “cultural solution” to past questions which were troublesome and have now stopped being troublesome, and are now summed up in a monument or a video?

Now to “the victims’ sincerity”. Each day that passes intensifies our need to prove that our memory is sincere and honest. But every day that passes covers more and more the surface of the memory.

As “findings of research” as a message in medical language, German doctors and researchers made use of Dr. Mengele’s reports from Auschwitz.

To remember, we have already grown weary from the vast quantity of automatic and official utterances about the Holocaust and memory. We have taken well the few precious and valuable things that have been written, such as those by Primo Levi. I will only note here, ladies and gentlemen,

that, as far as I know, only in Judaism is the instruction “to remember” a religious precept. Judaism commands its adherents: “Remember the days of the world, remember that you were a slave, remember what Amalek did to you.” Maimonides, one of the greatest Jews in history, a philosopher, a doctor of medicine, a statesman and codifier of precepts who lived in the 12th century, explains in his “Book of Precepts” that the precept “to remember” is “the warning we have been given against forgetting”.

According to Judaism, everyone has to see himself as though he himself had come out from the slavery in Egypt. Everyone has to see himself as though he himself had been in Auschwitz and come out, or not come out of it. Everyone has to see himself as though he himself had been marked by Dr. Mengele.

According to Judaism, everyone of us at a certain moment represents all of humanity. The victim of Auschwitz represented it, and opposite him or her Dr. Mengele represented it. Auschwitz was inside humanity, not in a play about humanity.

Memory assures continuity and has sustained the Jewish tradition throughout all its generations. I mean actual



the horrific: Jona Laks brought with her from Israel a document from the year 1944 signed by Mengele, detailing the dispatch of the head of a twelve-year-old child from the concentration camp.

court verdicts against the deniers of the Holocaust do not operate in a single and clear linear manner. True, they refute the deniers, but as they do so, they recycle the denial and its arguments. And somehow, they do not banish it from the minds of the young generation. Absurd? No, not absurd – a well known deceptive mechanism.

Here too, today at this assembly, with its aspirations for purification, beneath the skin of this assembly, there is the feeling, though not expressed in words, that the sincerity of the victims is no longer outside of the discussion. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank again the Max Planck Society for conducting these discussions on the matter of the medical “Kaiser Wilhelm Institute” and Dr. Mengele.

Moreover, I feel obliged to thank Prof. Hubert Markl, the President of the Max Planck Society, for his goodwill to offer us an apology.

Many thanks for your attention.

“Healing from Auschwitz and Mengele’s Experiments”

Speech given by Eva Mozes Kor, President and Founder of C.A.N.D.L.E.S.
(Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors)



„Finally free, no longer a prisoner of my tragic past”, was how Eva Mozes Kor said she feels after she had mustered the strength to forgive.

Dear Fellow Survivors,
Dr. Markl, Dr. Sachse,
Doctors, Scientists,
Researchers and Guests.

Fifty-seven years ago I was a human guinea pig in Auschwitz. Much progress has been made in order for us to be here at the KWI/MPS, the institute that was in charge of our experiments. I thank you for holding this symposium. I hope we can all learn from the past and begin to heal our pain.

Twenty years ago, I began thinking about the other Mengele Twins and actively started searching for them.

From the time I began to the time that we made our historic trip to Auschwitz and held the Mock Trial in Jerusalem in 1985, I have mailed out nearly 12,000 letters looking for my fellow survivors. With the help of my late twin sister, Miriam Mozes Zeiger, in 1984 we succeeded in locating 122 individuals/survivors of the twins’ experiments.

I care deeply for the Mengele Twins. Even though I am the founder and the President of C.A.N.D.L.E.S., I am not a spokesperson for all the twins. I am speaking today only for myself. I know that some of my fellow survivors do not share my ideas. But, we are all here to be honest, learn the truth and learn from this most tragic chapter of human history.

My speech is divided into two parts: (1) how I survived Auschwitz, and how it felt to be a child guinea pig in Mengele’s lab; (2) the lessons that I have learned from this tragedy.

It was the dawn of an early spring day in 1944 when I arrived in Auschwitz. Our cattle car train came to a sudden stop. I could hear lots of German voices yelling orders outside. We were packed like sardines in the cattle car, and, above the press of bodies, I could see nothing but a small patch of gray

sky through the barbed wires on the window.

Our family consisted of my father, age 44, my mother, age 38, my oldest sister, Edit, age 14, my middle sister Aliz, age 12, and Miriam and I, who were only ten years old.

As soon as we stepped down onto the cement platform, my mother grabbed my twin sister and me by the hand, hoping somehow to protect us. Everything was moving very fast; as I looked around, I suddenly realized that my father and two older sisters were gone – I never saw any of them ever again.

As Miriam and I were clutching my mother's hand, an SS hurried by, shouting, "Zwillinge! Zwillinge! Twins – twins?" He stopped to look at my twin sister and me because we were dressed alike and looked very much alike. "Are they twins?" he asked. "Is it good?" asked my mother. "Yes", nodded the SS. "Yes, they are twins", said my mother.

Without any warning or explanation, he grabbed Miriam and me away from Mother. Our screaming and pleading fell on deaf ears. I remember looking back and seeing my mother's arms stretched out in despair as she was pulled in the opposite direction by an



The last picture of the Mozes family together from the year 1943, showing both the nine year-old-twin sisters Eva and Miriam – they were the only ones of the family to survive Auschwitz.

SS soldier. I never got to say "Good-bye" to her, and I never got to do so because that was the last time we saw her. All that took 30 minutes. Miriam and I no longer had a family. We were all alone. We did not know what would happen to us. All that was done to us because we were born Jewish. We did not understand why this was a crime.

We joined a group of about eight sets of twins and waited at the edge of the railway tracks under SS supervision. Eight more sets of twins and one mother joined our group.

We were taken to a huge building and were ordered to sit on bleachers naked while our clothes were taken away. It was late in the afternoon when our clothes were returned with a big red cross painted on the back. Then our processing began.

When my turn came, I decided that I would not allow them to do to me

whatever they wanted and fought back. When they grabbed my arm to tattoo it, I began to scream, kick, and struggle.

Four people – two SS and two women prisoners – restrained me with all their strength, while they heated a pen-like gadget to red hot, then dipped it in ink and burned into my flesh, dot by dot, the number capital letter A-7063.

We were taken to a barrack filled with girls, all twins, ages 1 to 13 years old. Shortly after our arrival, everybody rushed to the front of the barrack where the evening meal was being distributed. The food consisted of a very dark, 2 1/2 inch slice of bread and a brownish liquid they called coffee. Miriam and I looked at each other, and although we had not had anything to eat or drink in 4 days, there was no doubt in our minds that we could not eat that bread because it wasn't kosher.

Then we offered our portions to the two girls who were showing us around. They grabbed it before we changed our minds, and, laughing at our innocence, said, "Miriam and Eva, you cannot be fussy here. You have to learn to eat everything if you want to survive."

After the evening meal, the two girls briefed us about everything in the camp. It was then that we learned about the huge, smoking chimneys and the glowing flames rising high

The speeches given by the researchers at the symposium in Berlin are followed by Gerhard Baader and his wife Lilly (from left, left photo below) and Wolfgang Schieder, Jona Laks and Marianne Ufer (right photo below).

above them. We learned about the two groups of people we had seen on the selection platform and what had happened to them. We learned we were alive only because Dr. Mengele wanted to use us in his experiments.

It was late in the evening when Miriam and I lay down on the bottom bunk-bed to sleep. I could not sleep, even though I was physically tired and mentally drained. As I was tossing and turning, I noticed something big and dark moving on the floor. I began counting – one-two-three – four ... five ... I jumped up from my bunk-bed screaming, "Mice. Mice." I was always scared of mice when I encountered them on our farm in Transylvania.

"Those are not mice, they are rats. You will have to get used to them because they are everywhere", yelled out a voice from the top bunk-bed.

Before trying to sleep again, Miriam and I went to the latrine at the end of the barrack. There on that filthy floor were the scattered corpses of three children. Their bodies were naked and shriveled and their wide-open eyes were looking at me. Then and there, I realized, that could happen to Miriam and me unless I did something to pre-

vent it. So I made a silent pledge: "I WILL DO WHATEVER IS WITHIN MY POWER TO MAKE SURE THAT MIRIAM AND I SHALL NOT END UP ON THAT FILTHY LATRINE FLOOR."

From that moment on, I concentrated all my efforts, all my talents and all my being on one thing: SURVIVAL.

In our barrack, we, the children, huddled in our filthy beds crawling with lice and rats. We were starved for food, starved for human kindness and starved for the love of the mothers we once had. We had no rights, but we had a fierce determination to live one more day – to survive one more experiment. No one explained anything to us, nor did anyone try to minimize the risks to our lives. On the contrary, we knew we were there to be subjects of experiments and were totally at the mercy of the Nazi doctors. Our lives depended entirely on the doctors' whims.

Nothing on the face of the earth can prepare a person for a place like Auschwitz. At age 10, I became part of a special group of children who were used as human guinea pigs by Dr. Josef Mengele. Some 1,500 sets of multiples were used by Mengele in his deadly

experiments. It is estimated that fewer than 200 individuals survived.

In Auschwitz, we lived an emotionally isolated existence. During the whole time I was in Auschwitz, Miriam and I talked very little. All we could say to one another was "Make sure you don't get sick" and "Do you have another piece of bread?". It took every ounce of my energy to survive one more day, to live through one more experiment. We did not cry because we knew there was no help. We had learned that within the first few days.

I remember being hungry all the time. I had a big decision to make every night when we received our daily ration of bread, approximately 2 1/2 inches. It was an agonizing decision each night when I would ask myself, "Should I eat the bread tonight? If I do, then I will have a whole day tomorrow without any food." The days seemed to be very long and without any food, they were even longer. While I was awake, I could feel the hunger – a pang in my stomach that sent pain through my skinny body. It was logical that I should save the bread for the next day. But if I put it under my head, by the next morning, it was gone – stolen or eaten by the rats.



An American television team made a documentary of the Berlin event, including a talk given by Wolfgang Schieder, Eva Mozes Kor with Benno Müller-Hill (right photo, from left), Eva Mozes Kor's speech (picture left below) and Moshe Offer in the audience next to the translator Adina Stern.

I became very ill after an injection in Mengele's lab. I tried to hide the fact that I was ill because the rumor was that anyone taken to the hospital never came back. The next visit to the lab, they measured my fever, and I was taken to the hospital.

The next day a team of Dr. Mengele and four other doctors looked at my fever chart and then declared, "Too bad, she is so young. She has only two weeks to live."

I was all alone. The doctors I had did not want to heal me. They wanted me dead. Miriam was not with me. I missed her so very much. She was the only kind and loving person I could cuddle up with when I was hungry, cold and scared. I refused to accept their verdict. I refused to die!!

I made a second silent pledge, "I will do anything in my power to get well and be reunited with my sister, Miriam." In the hospital barrack, we received no food and no medication. People were brought to this barrack to die or to wait for a place in the gas chamber. I was very ill, burning up with fever, between life and death. I remember waking up on the barrack floor. I was crawling because I no

longer could walk. I wanted to reach a faucet at the other end of the barrack. As I was crawling, I faded in and out of consciousness. I kept telling myself, "I must survive. I must survive."

After two weeks, my fever broke, and I began to feel stronger. I decided to devise a plan that would show a gradual improvement in my condition. So, when the so-called nurse would come in and place the thermometer under my arm and leave the room, I would take it out, read it and if it was too high, I would shake it down a little. Then I would stick it back under my arm with the end sticking out. After three weeks my fever chart showed normal and I was reunited with Miriam. What a happy day that was!

Would I have died, Mengele would have killed Miriam with an injection to the heart and would have done comparative autopsies on our bodies. This is the way most of the twins died. Three times a week we walked to the main Auschwitz camp for experiments. These lasted six to eight hours. We had to sit naked in a room. Every part of our body was measured, poked and compared to charts and photographed. Every movement was noted. I felt like an animal in a cage.

Three times a week we went to the blood lab. There we were injected with germs and chemicals, and they took a lot of blood from us.

I have seen some twins fainting from the great amount of blood that they lost. I believe the Nazis wanted to know how much blood can a person lose, before it can cause death.

The experiments were in various stages and Mengele had an unlimited supply of guinea pigs in the camp. If a twin died as a result of the experiments, the other twin was injected with a phenol injection into the heart and comparative autopsies were done on both twins. When one pair of twins was lost to the experiments, another pair of twins would come in on the next transport to replace the pair who had been killed.

On a white snowy day, January 27, 1945, four days before my 11th birthday, Auschwitz was liberated by the Soviets and we were free. We were alive. We had survived. We had triumphed over unbelievable evil.

I have told you my story because there are some important lessons to learn from it:





I, Eva Mozes Kor, a survivor of Mengele's medical experiments, have learned that human rights in medical experimentation is an issue that needs to be addressed. Those of you who are physicians and scientists are to be congratulated. You have chosen a wonderful and difficult profession: wonderful because you can save human lives and alleviate human suffering, but difficult, because you are walking a very narrow line. You have been trained to use good judgment, to be calm, cool and collected, but you cannot forget that you are dealing with human beings. So, make a moral commitment that you will never, ever violate anyone's human rights or take away anyone's human dignity. I appeal to you to treat your subjects and patients with the same respect you would want if you were in their places. Remember that if you are doing your research solely for the sake of science and not for the benefit of mankind, you have crossed that very narrow line and you are heading in the direction of the Nazi doctors and the Dr. Mengeles of the world. Medical science can benefit mankind, but medical science can also be abused in the name of research.

We are meeting here as former adversaries. I hope we can part as friends. My people, the Jewish people, are hard-working, intelligent and caring. My people are good people. We did not deserve the treatment we received. No one deserves such treatment. Your people, the German people, are hard-working, intelligent and caring. Your people are good people, but you should never have permitted a Hitler to rise to power.

There is a lot of pain that we, the Jewish people, and you, the German people, carry around. It does not help anyone to carry the burden of the past. We must learn to heal ourselves from the tragedies of the Holocaust and help our people to heal their aching souls.

I would like to share with you my ultimate act of healing from the horrors of 56 years ago. I do realize that many of my fellow survivors will not share, support or understand my way of healing. There might be some people

on both sides who will be angry with me. I understand that. I believe we should not go on suffering forever. This is the way I healed myself. I dare hope that it might work for other people.

I have forgiven the Nazis. I have forgiven everybody. At the fiftieth anniversary observance of the liberation of Auschwitz, in a ceremony attended by my children, Alex and Rina, and by friends, I met with a Nazi doctor, Dr. Hans Münch, a former SS doctor at Auschwitz, and with his children and granddaughter.

In July, 1993, I received a telephone call from Dr. Mihalchick of Boston College who asked me to lecture at a conference on Nazi medicine. Then he added, "Eva, it would be nice if you could bring a Nazi doctor with you." I said, "Dr. Mihalchick, where am I going to find a Nazi doctor? The last time I looked they were not advertising in the yellow pages." "Think about it", he said.

In 1992, Miriam and I were co-consultants on a documentary on the Mengele Twins done by ZDF, a German television company. In that documentary they had interviewed a Nazi doctor by the name of Dr. Hans Münch.

I contacted ZDF to ask them if they would get me Dr. Münch's address and phone number, in the memory of my sister who had died the month before. An hour later, I had his address and phone number. A friend of mine, Tony Van Renterghem, a Dutch Resistance fighter, contacted Dr. Münch. Tony called him and then called me to tell me that "Yes, he's alive, willing to give you a videotape interview." That was July, 1993. By August, I was on my way to meet Dr. Münch.

In August of 1993, I arrived at Dr. Münch's house. I was very nervous. I kept asking myself, "How would I feel if he treated me like nothing – the way I was treated in Auschwitz?" Dr. Münch treated me with the utmost respect. As we sat down to talk, I said to him, "Here you are – a Nazi doctor from Auschwitz – and here I am – a survivor from Auschwitz – and I like you, and that sounds strange to me." We talked about many things. I asked him if, by any chance, he knew anything about the operation of the gas chambers. And he said, "This is the nightmare I live with." Then, he proceeded to tell me about the operation of the gas chambers and that when the bodies were dead, he had signed the death certificates.



I thought about it for a moment, and then I said, "Dr. Münch, I have a big request to make of you. Would you please come with me to Auschwitz in January 1995, when we will observe fifty years to the liberation of Auschwitz, and sign a document at the ruins of the gas chambers and in the presence of witnesses, about what you have told me?" He said yes. I went home delighted that I was going to have a document about the gas chambers at Auschwitz – a document that would help me combat the revisionists who say that there were no gas chambers.

I tried to think of a way to thank Dr. Münch. Then, one day, I thought, "How about a letter of forgiveness?" I immediately realized that he would like it. I also realized that I had the power to forgive. NO ONE could give me this power and NO ONE could take it away.

I began writing my letter to Dr. Münch, and friends, who spell better than I do, met with me to correct the letter. One of them threw a question at me. "Would you be willing to forgive Dr. Mengele?" It was an interesting question, and I thought about it and decided that I could. Well, if I forgave Mengele, I might as well forgive everybody. I had no idea what I was doing. I only knew that it made me feel good inside that I had that power. In January 1995, my children, Alex and Rina, my friends and I, and Dr. Münch with his children and granddaughter arrived in Auschwitz.

On January 27, 1995, we were standing by the ruins of one of the gas chambers. Dr. Münch's document was read and he signed it. I read my Declaration of Amnesty and then signed it. I felt a burden of pain was lifted from shoulders. I was no longer a victim of Auschwitz. I was no longer a prisoner of my tragic past. I was finally free. So I say to everybody,

**"FORGIVE YOUR WORST ENEMY.
IT WILL HEAL YOUR SOUL
AND SET YOU FREE."**

Eva Mozes Kor thanks the President of the Max Planck Society Hubert Markl with the hope „in some small way to send the world a message of forgiveness“ (picture left). The pictures below left shows the scientific symposium with (from left, front row) Jafa and Efraim Reichenberg, Shmuel Kriegel.

The day I forgave the Nazis I forgave my parents because they did not save me from a destiny in Auschwitz, and I also forgave myself for hating my parents.

My latest thoughts on how to heal the pains of the past are different than most victims'. As I understand it, most governments and world leaders bear a heavy burden in trying to keep the world at peace. In my opinion, they have failed miserably by not advocating, encouraging and facilitating survivors of tragedies such as the Holocaust to forgive their enemies, which is an act of self-healing.

Most governments and world leaders advocate and support one thing only – JUSTICE. Justice does not exist and by demanding justice they condemn the victims to life-long suffering.

Let's explore a possible scenario that could have changed things for both victims and victimizers.

All the Nazi criminals would have been encouraged to come forward to testify to the crimes they committed, in return for their freedom. The perpetrators or victimizers would also have paid financial retribution for five to ten

years and those funds would have gone into a special reconciliation fund to assist the victims in rebuilding their lives. The victims could have testified if they so choose. The victimizers' testimonies would have validated the victims' suffering.

As it is today, I still don't know what was done to us. But Mengele could have solved this problem by testifying. Both the victims and the victimizers – by verbalizing their painful memories – could have started the healing at once.

As it has happened, the victims were silent and hurting. The victimizers were silent, hurting and hiding. The victims anguished in pain. The victimizers anguished in pain, shame and fear of being caught. The added tragedy of all this is that the victims have passed on to their children a legacy of pain, fear and anger. The victimizers have passed on to their children a legacy of pain, shame and fear. How can we build a healthy, peaceful world while all these painful legacies are festering underneath the surface?

I see a world where leaders will advocate and support with legislation the

act of forgiveness – amnesty and reconciliation rather than justice and vindictiveness.

We have seen in Bosnia, Kosovo and Rwanda that victims have become victimizers and victimizers have become victims. Let's try something new to end this vicious cycle.

I would like to end my lecture by saying that I hope this courageous gesture of Dr. Markl and the Max Planck Society becomes an example to the world of how we might learn to cope with the past. As a German friend of mine has said, "Why can't your people and my people be friends?"

I would also like to thank Dr. Benno Müller-Hill for his years of friendship and his role in pioneering this symbolic apology.

I would also like to quote from my Declaration of Amnesty:

"I hope, in some small way, to send the world a message of forgiveness; a message of peace, a message of hope, a message of healing.

Let there be NO MORE WARS, NO MORE EXPERIMENTS WITHOUT INFORMED CONSENT, NO MORE GAS CHAMBERS, NO MORE BOMBS, NO MORE HATRED, NO MORE KILLING, NO MORE AUSCHWITZES."

Thank you.



Presidential Commission “History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the National Socialist Era”

Independent historians will investigate the contribution of the German Science Organization to National Socialism

With approval of the administrative council and the senate of the Max Planck Society, the Presidential Commission was established by the society's President in 1997. The commission is headed by two historians who are not members of the Max Planck Society: Prof. Dr. Reinhard Rürup (Technical University of Berlin) and Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Wolfgang Schieder (University of Cologne).

The Max Planck Society was founded in 1948 as a new research organization in a democratic Germany. In a scientific aspect and due to numerous instances of overlapping personnel and ideals, the Max Planck Society became the heir of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, which was founded in 1911.

The relation of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society to the NS-regime, the scientific and political conduct of its representatives and scientists during the period of National Socialism, and finally the consequences of this conduct for the Max Planck Society are to be investigated and eventually published as completely as possible, without any constraints or institutional bias. For this reason independent historians were entrusted with the direction of the commission and the guidance of its work, while external historians of science were engaged for leading and implementing the research programme itself.

AFT



The five-year research programme of the Presidential Commission „History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the National Socialist Era“ started with an international conference in March 1999 reviewing current research and giving interpretive perspectives on the history of science in National Socialism.

Chairs

Prof. Dr. Reinhard Rürup
Technical University of Berlin

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Wolfgang Schieder
University of Cologne

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Prof. Dr. Fritz Stern,
Columbia University, New York

Prof. Dr. Michael Stolleis,
Max Planck Institute for European
Legal History, Frankfurt/Main

Prof. Dr. Paul Weindling,
Brookes University, Oxford

Main Fields of Research Interests

The work of the Presidential Commission "History of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society in the National Socialist Era" is currently subdivided into four major parts

The two chairmen of the Presidential Commission, Professor Wolfgang Schieder (left), Professor Reinhard Rürup (right) and research director Dr. Carola Sachse.



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1. Organisation, policy and administration of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society

Collaboration of the general administration, the Presidents and the general secretaries with various agencies of the NS-regime; policies of hiring and firing; influence of party-members, economic leaders, representatives of the state and the military functioning as Vice Presidents, senators, curators, trustees, and members of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society; the position of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society within the research agenda of the NS-regime; personnel policy during the NS-period (dismissal of Jewish members, use of slave labor); rehabilitation of émigré scholars / remigration-barriers on part of the Max Planck Society after the war; compensation and / or commemoration of victims of human experiments and other abuses; treatment of

2. Racial hygiene, genetic, medical, and psychiatric research in Kaiser Wilhelm institutes

Post-war continuity in anthropology, racist and criminal biology, hereditary pathology at specific institutes; contribution of scientists at Kaiser Wilhelm institutes to the national socialist policies of racial and population policy as experts involved in legislation, and the carrying out of forcible sterilisation, euthanasia and genocide.

3. Military Research; war-related and applied science in Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes under the supervision of the "Four-Year-Plan" and the war economy

Intensification of contract-research, especially for the improved use of domestic natural resources and surrogate-products; contributions to the development of conventional, biological and chemical weapons; position of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes amidst the power-triangle of industry, „Four-Year-Plan“-administration and the various agencies of Nazi science administration.

4. "Ostforschung" and "Lebensraumforschung" at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes in the context of expansionistic and occupation politics

Cooperation with the Reich Ministry of Nutrition and Agriculture with special focus on Herbert Backe's role as state-secretary, minister and Vice President of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society; botanical, genetic and agricultural research at Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes contributing to the politics of self-sufficiency; the political significance of the newly founded or confiscated agricultural institutes in eastern Europe and the Balkans.



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