



2. Auschwitz, Poland - Concentration camp opens April 1940
The message: "Work makes one free."

The way we selected our victims was as follows: we had two doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming trains of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the Camp. Others were sent immediately to be executed. Children were often exterminated, since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Very frequently women would hide their children under their clothes but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. Still another improvement we made was that at other camps the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated. At Auschwitz we tried to fool the victims into thinking that they were to be bathed or showered before starting work. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz.

— Rudolf Hoss Auschwitz camp commandant, Nuremberg testimony.

1. What did the sign over the entrance to Auschwitz say (in English)?
2. Why would the Nazis put up a sign like that?
3. What could keep you from being sent to the gas chambers?
4. How did the Nazis fool their victims in Auschwitz?
5. Why was it impossible to not know what was going on at Auschwitz?