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Medical Personnel in Auschwitz: Inmate Doctors – and Nurses

This chapter will look at the lives of two Auschwitz inmates that were part of Block 10s medical personnel. Their lives, “collaboration,” and possible assistance in medical experiments as well as their resistance will serve as example for the many inmate doctors and nurses drawn into medical experiments, and in this case Drs. Carl Clauberg’s, Horst Schumann’s and Eduard Wirth’s sterilization experiments.

Historically speaking, since 1943 Jewish inmate doctors played an integrative role in every concentration camp throughout the Third Reich. However, prior to that date this was not always the case: The decision to allow Jewish doctors to care for Jewish inmates goes back to Dr. Eduard Wirths, then Auschwitz’s *Standortarzt* (garrison doctor)¹, which came at a time when the National Socialist regime started to realize that it was in their very interest to keep and control a solid Jewish work force, especially as they could be utilized for cheap and effective slave labor.

The situation faced by inmate doctors was difficult, to say the least: On a daily basis, they were faced with a never-ending ambiguity of being trapped in a world with no mercy, where the idea to heal and cure was far fetched. At the same time, however, they struggled to help, to assist or to simply show compassion with their fellow inmates. They still tried to honor the Hippocratic Oath.

Inmate doctors and nurses, including those drawn into medical experiments, as well as the medical personnel ‘assigned’ to work in the *Krankenbau* (the camp hospital) knew that it was largely dependent on their decision if an inmate was ‘worth’ saving, or if his/her state was so deteriorated that any help was deemed useless and probably a waste of the scarcely available medicine to begin with. Sure enough, this was against all medical ethics taught in medical schools, yet inmate doctors could not escape Auschwitz’s (or for that matter any other concentration camps) reality.²

¹ F.K. Kaul, *Ärzte in Auschwitz*, Berlin, 1968, page 138

² Both Ella Lingens and Gisella Perl worked as inmate doctors in Auschwitz and described this predicament. For further information, see for example: Gisela Perl, *I was a Doctor in Auschwitz*, North Stratford, 1948; Ella Lingens, *Prisoner of Fear*, London, 1948;

The situation faced by those inmate doctors and nurses drawn into medical experiments was perhaps even more complicated. Not only were some assigned to participate in operations or other medical procedures aimed at ‘misusing’ the inmate’s body, and knowing that their actions gravely harmed their victims and in some cases even caused a life-long disability or even their deaths, but that their abilities to medically treat or improve the victims situation after the experiment was equally rather limited. Besides, it was not unheard of that medical personnel was equally ‘used’ as medical experiment victims, either before, during or after they were enlisted to assist the Nazi doctors in charge.³

The following chapter will specifically portray the life of Dr. Maximilian Samuels, a German-Jewish inmate doctor working with and against Dr. Wirth’s and Dr. Schumann’s experiments, followed by a portrayal of Sylvia Friedmann, a Slovakian-Jewish inmate, who had served as Dr. Clauberg’s main assistant in Block 10.

Dr. Maximilian Samuels:

Dr. Maximilian Samuels, a renowned gynecologist and head of a female clinic and hospital as well as senior lecturer in Cologne,⁴ is a good case study for how the perception of one and the same person can vary depending on who is being asked to testify on his dealings in Auschwitz’s Block 10.

Unlike with many other inmate doctors, whose post-war testimonies or in some cases even published memoirs⁵ provide information on how the situation faced in Auschwitz and their story of survival, Dr. Samuels did not live to write down his memories. He was murdered in late 1943.

³ Imrich Gönczi, for example, who was assigned a medical personnel position at the SS-Hygienic Institute, recalled in his testimony against Dr. Schumann, how he was also used as an experimental subject. [*“Auch ich bin von Dr. Münch infiziert geworden und zwar einmal durch einen Einstich in den Unterarm, ein anderes Mal durch einen Einstich ins Rippenfell.”* Witness Statement Imrich Gönczi, 31 October 1967, Js 18/67 (GStH. Frankfurt/M.) - Ks 2/70] However, another good example is Sylvia Friedmann, whose portrayal will follow after that of Dr. Samuels. She too stated in post-war interviews how she was used as a medical experiment victim at the same time she worked as one of Dr. Carl Clauberg’s main assistants.

⁴ Witness statement Dr. med. Erwin Valentin, 30 March 1956, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Hermann Langbein, E/ 1797: 277/10; R. J. Minney, *I shall fear no evil*, London, 1966, page 120

⁵ See for example Alina Brewda’s memoirs on her time in Auschwitz: R. J. Minney, *I shall fear no evil*, London, 1966

Dr. Maximilian Samuels, who had served time as a military doctor during World War I, for which he was awarded the Iron Cross, is also mentioned as the co-inventor of Evipan, a barbiturate that is effective as a hypnotic and sedative.⁶ Yet, his scientific career soon came to end with the advance of the National Socialist regime which culminated in his transport to Auschwitz.

Dr. Samuels arrived in Auschwitz, together with his wife and daughter, sometime in the early months of 1943. While he and his 19 year old daughter were selected for work, his wife was immediately chosen for the gas chambers.

He was first assigned to work in Buna, or Auschwitz III, but by May 1943, placed to work with Dr. Eduard Wirths, in particular to lend his support for Dr. Wirths' efforts to study pre-cancerous conditions of the cervix. Samuels, who was a well-known and well-trained gynecologist and obstetrician, was a perfect match for Dr Wirths, who himself had far less experience. The method applied by Dr. Wirths in Auschwitz Block 10, was that of a colposcopic examination of the cervix – a method still in its infancy.⁷ Dr. Samuels was assigned to carry out these examinations, sometimes with the order to cut out part of the victims' cervix. Wirths' goal was to collect enough data that would allow him to scientifically publish a research paper on cervical cancer and the treatment of the latter. And so it perfectly panned out for Dr. Wirths that Dr. Samuels would collect exactly this data on Dr. Wirth's behalf in addition to compiling a study entitled: "*Carcinom. Die Geißel der Frauen der Welt ist heilbar.*"⁸ ("Carcinoma. The female hostage of this world is curable.") Sure enough, Dr. Samuels was not credited with this research. Rather the contrary: in order to avoid any mention of Dr. Samuels 'assistance' in compiling this data, as well as for other reasons, Samuels was to disappear. This enabled Wirths to simply put his name under the research, as if it had been his.⁹

Dr. Samuels' position to work 'alongside' Dr. Wirths, and in some cases carrying out orders issued by an other Nazi doctor, Dr. Horst Schumann¹⁰, was cause for lots of misinterpretations, in Auschwitz

⁶ Witness statement Tadeusz Paczula, no date, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Hermann Langbein, E/ 1797: 277/1

⁷ Dr. Hans Hinselmann is credited with the development of the colposcope in 1924. [John L. Powell, Biographic Sketch: Powell's Pearls: Hans Peter Hinselmann, M.D. 1884-1959, In: Obstetrical and Gynecological Survey, Vol. 59, Number 10, 2004; James S. McLean, The Life of Hans Hinselmann, In: Obstetrical and Gynecological Survey, Vol. 34, Issue 11, 1979]. For more information on Dr. Hinselmann's complicity in knowing about the medical experiments performed in Auschwitz, please see: Weinberger, Ruth. *The Deadly Origins Of A Life-saving Procedure*. In: Forward, 26 January 2007

⁸ Witness statement Paul Gründel, 22 December 1955, 2 Js 3484/55

⁹ Witness statement Ruth Friedhoff, 8 February 1956, 2 Js 3484/55

¹⁰ Felicja Pleszowska recalled during the Schumann trial how Dr. Samuels was approached by Dr. Schumann to perform surgical operations on female inmates of Block 10 all of whom were previously radiated. Witness Statement Felicja

itself, but also following in the decades after World War II had ended until this very day. As noted, parts of Dr. Wirths experiments on female inmates of Auschwitz Block 10, for which he engaged Samuels, involved not only the study of precancerous growth of the uterus, but the removal of part of the cervix.

As for Dr. Schumann's x-ray sterilization experiments, which in some cases were followed by surgical castrations,¹¹ witness statements allude to the fact that Samuels participated in six such operations. However, Samuels was soon replaced by the Polish inmate doctor Wladyslaw Dering¹², whose enthusiasm in performing these gruesome procedures never seemed to cease. Nevertheless, during these six operations, it is believed that Dr. Samuels was mostly accompanied by not only Dr. Schumann, but in some cases also by Dr. Clauberg.¹³

For a short while, Dr. Samuels served as the head block doctor of Block 10¹⁴, a female block in the otherwise male dominated Auschwitz I camp. Soon after his arrival, the decision was made to slowly transform the Block into a female only one, which implied that Dr. Samuels was to slowly pass on his responsibility to Alina Brewda, a Polish-Jewish doctor, who had arrived in Block 10 in September 1943.¹⁵

Dr. Samuels murder in the ensuing weeks after Dr. Brewda's arrival in Block 10 left many unanswered questions about his doing as an inmate doctor in Auschwitz, his willingness to participate in medical experiments, or possible his refusal and resistance of the latter. While the entire reality of his actions in Auschwitz will remain unknown, yet by looking at witness statements made during post-war trials and memoirs, it is possible to approximate what his role might have been, and how he had dealt with the situation he was faced with in Auschwitz.

Pleszowska, 23 October 1967, Js 18/67 (GStH. Frankfurt/M.) - Ks 2/70

¹¹ Please see the previous chapter of this book for a more in-depth analysis of Dr. Horst Schumann's experiments in Auschwitz.

¹² Dr. Wladyslaw Dering was transported to Auschwitz in July 1940. While he first worked in Block 21, in August of 1941, he was appointed as a prisoner doctor, which put him in charge of Block 21 as a whole. This was soon topped in August 1943, when Dering was given unprecedented authority over the camp hospital for a prisoner doctor when he was appointed by Dr. Wirths to serve as the block elder of the infirmary, thus making him not only the chief prisoner doctor, but also the leading Kapo. His official title was that of a senior prisoner-doctor of the whole camp hospital. (Witness Statement Dr. Dering, Evidence First Day, 13 April 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library)

¹³ Witness Statement Ima Shalom Sara Spanjaard, 16 March 1956, 2 Js 3484/55s

¹⁴ For a more in-depth description of Block 10, please see the previous chapter of this book.

¹⁵ On 21 September 1943, after Alina Brewda had already been incarcerated in the Warsaw ghetto and in Majdanek, she was transferred to Auschwitz. She was soon assigned to Block 10, where she was in charge taking care of Drs Clauberg and Schumanns victims. (For more information, please see: R. J. Minney, I shall fear no Evil. The Story of Alina Brewda, London 1966)

Sure enough, different witnesses remember different details. Yet, what is striking in Dr. Samuels case is the fact that his ‘victims’ or more generally speaking, women who were used as medical experiments in Block 10, remember him very differently than his Jewish and non-Jewish inmate medical counterparts, or inmates who had certain functions attached to their stay in the camp.

As for the second group, the general assumption prevailing is the agreement that Dr. Samuels indeed took part in medical experiments and consequently ‘harmed’ his victims. This position is most striking among the three female inmate doctors who worked alongside (or at different times) in Block 10: Drs. Dorota Lorska, Alina Brewda and Adelaide Hautval.¹⁶

Dr. Adelaide Hautval, for example, who was imprisoned in Auschwitz as a French political inmate, recalled Dr. Samuels as having been too willing to please Dr. Wirths, and therefore not refusing to participate in medical experiments.¹⁷ She noted that he was led by his fear and the desire to please ‘them’. But, she did acknowledge that

“(..) since he was Jewish, his situation was more dangerous than mine. Furthermore, it was said that his daughter was in the camp. Without a doubt, he told himself that by obeying his masters he could save himself.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Dr. Dorota Lorska, a Polish Jewish woman who had fought in the French resistance, was sent to Auschwitz on August 2, 1943. After arriving in Auschwitz, where she was first selected by Dr. Wirths as a victim for medical experiments, but she soon was able to join Dr. Weber, who performed experiments as part of the SS-Hygienic Institute in Block 10. (For more information on Dr. Lorska, please see: Dorota Lorska, Block Ten in Auschwitz, In: International Auschwitz Committee, Inhuman Medicine, Anthology, Vol. 1, Part 2, Warsaw 1971 (or: Dorota Lorska, Block 10 in Auschwitz, In: Die Auschwitz Hefte, 1987) Dr. Adelaide Hautval, a French protestant doctor, was transported to Auschwitz in January 1943 on account of her having been too ‘sympathetic’ with the Jews. In March 1943, she was selected to work in Block 10.

¹⁷ Dr. Adelaide Hautval refused twice to participate in any ongoing medical experiments: while the first one implied an encounter with Dr. Wirths, the second time around, she did not follow Dr. Mengele’s orders to assist him in his medical experiments. After the war, Dr. Hautval was asked on what account she refused these orders, and how she was able to convince Dr. Wirths in particular that she was not willing to experiment on Jewish inmates, despite the fact that they were different from her – at least in Dr. Wirths eyes. Hautval’s simple response was that *“there were several other people different from me, beginning from him [Dr. Wirths].”* (For more information see: Witness Statement Dr. Adelaide Hautval, Evidence Thirteenth Day, 29 April 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library; Dr. Adelaide Hautval, Bericht: Experimente betreffend die im Block 10 im Konzentrationslager von Auschwitz gemacht wurden, report addressed to the French Justice Ministry, 1946, 2 Js 3484/55)

¹⁸ Memoirs of Adelaide Hautval, Yad Vashem Archive O33 / 2250 – private translation; original in French

At the occasion of the Leon Uris vs. Wladyslaw Dering trial¹⁹, at which Dr. Hautval functioned as one of the key witnesses, she recalled Dr. Samuels as someone who was suffering from mental stress which ultimately impaired his decision making:

*“I think at the beginning he was a very competent doctor. I am amazed that I had a different opinion of him from Dr. Lorska and Dr. Brewda. I think that the anxiety in which he was constantly living brought about a senile condition and upset his judgment.”*²⁰

Drs. Lorska and Brewda similarly recalled Samuels as a collaborator and as someone guided by his own fear and insecurity. In Lorska’s eyes, he was an old and not quite normal man, someone who was mentally “*not quite right.*”²¹ Dr. Brewda equally called to mind Dr. Samuels age and desperate situation in Auschwitz:

*“He was an old man, in a very bad mental condition and, I do not know, bewildered.”*²²

Moreover, she brought to mind that

*“it was possible because of Dr. Samuels’ concern for his daughter that the S.S. doctors in charge of Block 10 were able to blackmail him into carrying out some of the sterilization experiments. It did not help him for both he and his daughter were eventually sent to the gas-chambers.”*²³

Not surprisingly, also Dr. Wladyslaw Dering, who took over some of Samuels responsibilities, foremost in the carrying out of sterilization castrations, referred to Dr. Samuels in a statement made to the Home Office in May 1948 in the United Kingdom that Dr. Samuels was a German Jew, who

¹⁹ In 1960, Dr. Wladyslaw Dering, then living as a practicing doctor in Great Britain, brought suit against the author Leon Uris for a libel by one sentence in Uris’ book “Exodus”: “*Here in Block X, Dr Wirthe [Wirthe] used women as guinea-pigs and Dr Schumann sterilized by castration and X-ray and Caluberg [Clauberg] removed ovaries and Dr Debring [Dering] performed seventeen thousand experiments in surgery without anesthetics.*” (Mavis M. Hill, L. Normann Williams, *Auschwitz in England: A Record of a Libel Action*, New York, 1965, page 18.) This motion was followed by Dering issuing a claim for damages he suffered as a result of the book on 22 June 1962, which was soon followed by a statement of claim dated 21 December 1962. The actual trial took place in April 1964. After 23 days of deliberation, on 6 May 1964, the jury decided to grant Dr. Dering his libel, however, it only awarded him the compensation of one halfpenny in damages.

²⁰ Cross Examination Dr. Adelaide Hautval, Evidence Thirteenth Day, 29 April 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library

²¹ Witness Statement Dorota Lorska, Evidence Tenth Day, 27 April 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library

²² Witness Statement Alina Brewda, Evidence Eleventh Day, 27 April, 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library

²³ Minney, I shall fear no evil, page 125

was performing experimental operations on Jewish women at Block 10 before Dr. Brewda's arrival, and that he was 'finished by SS men' not because he knew too much, but rather on account of his clumsiness and old age.²⁴

Hermann Langbein, for example, who had been imprisoned as a political prisoner of Auschwitz, equally recalled Dr. Samuels in a very comparable unsympathetic light. Langbein's experiences and encounters with Dr. Samuels are based on his position as having worked as Dr. Wirths' "*Schreiber*". In his memoirs²⁵, Langbein made a point of stating how overly studious Dr. Samuels was, and how he was too willing to please the SS. Yet, Langbein admitted that this attitude might have been a result of Samuels endeavor to try to save his daughter's life.

This allegation of Samuels as a collaborator, as someone who had participated in medical experiments can also be found in researches published throughout the decades. For example, in Robert J. Lifton groundbreaking book "The Nazi Doctors,"²⁶ he portrayed Dr. Samuels as having been too diligent in addition to having worked too closely with the Nazis. It should be noted though, that much of Robert J. Lifton's writing on Dr. Samuels is based on Hermann Langbein's encounters with him. Consequently, Lifton concludes in his book that "*certainly post former prisoners I spoke to, Jewish or otherwise, remembered Samuels as either arrogant or pathetic, or both.*"²⁷

But then, after reading all of these negative perceptions of Dr. Samuels, why then should we question his deeds in Auschwitz?

By looking at survivors testimonies, which largely differ from the already mentioned *Funktionshäftlinge*, it stands to reason if Samuels was indeed a collaborator, a traitor, or if he simply had managed to disguise his real actions in order to save some of the inmates of Block 10.

²⁴ Witness Statement Dr. Wladyslaw Dering, Evidence Fourth Day, 16 April 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library

²⁵ Hermann Langbein, *Menschen in Auschwitz*, Wien, 1995

²⁶ Robert J. Lifton, *Nazi Doctors. Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, New York, 1986

²⁷ Lifton, *Nazi Doctors*, page 251

Some survivors not only point to his positive actions, but go even as far as to refer to Dr. Samuels as their savior, as someone who risked his own life to help them. A survivor, who later testified at the trial proceedings against Clauberg, recalled that Samuels “*was a kind, mild mannered person.*”²⁸

A survivor of Schumann’s sterilization experiments similarly remembered her encounter with Dr. Samuels. At that time, she was only 16 years old. She originated from Salonika, Greece:

“After the doctor and it was a doctor, a Jewish, Dr. Samuel[s]. A Polack. He saved my life. He was over there. And he talked to me, and said ‘listen young girl. Tomorrow we are going to have an operation.’ ‘But I am not sick.’ ‘We have to, this is the experiment block. If you don’t go, they are going to kill you, they going to put you in the gas chambers. You are only 16 years old, you are teenagers..’

(...) And he took me to the operation room. And I saw - He was doctor, Jewish Samuel [s]. He used to make operation. He was very, very good doctor. (...) It was Dr. Samuels who had the operation with the children. (...)

Dr. Samuel[s] said, I am going to close this girl, ‘you are so beautiful.’ (...) I called grandpa. He spoke Spanish. But he was Pollack. He saved my life.

(...)

And the doctor Samuel[s] come in the morning. (...) He gave me some medicine and said you are so young. I called him grandpa, because I was like his grandchild.”²⁹

After the war, she had children and named one of her sons Schmuel, in Samuels memory and to honor his deeds.

Rozette van Thyn, one of Dr. Carl Clauberg’s sterilization experiment victim, referred in an interview with the author to the Samuels, as someone who had tried to help – as much as was possible.

“And he had treated, there were a group of women, in August [1943], they came in August, and there were about 20 Jewish women. And this doctor Samuels was going to experiment with one

²⁸ Written interview conducted with Ms. W., 20 October 2005.

²⁹ Interview conducted with Ms. Germaine P., 6 June 2005 (The Interview was not corrected for grammatical mistakes. It reflects the exact wording of the Interviewee.)

*of the women, and cut their female organs out. But he never did. And then the Germans found out. And we never saw him, and we know what happened.*³⁰

Ms. Van Thyn continued by describing Dr. Samuels as “*a pretty tall guy and he wore glasses. Because once in a while he would come in our room and talk to the women he had treated. Yes, I remember him. I think,... He was not young. I think he was already getting gray. Tall guy, he wore glasses. And then we did not see him. And then he we decided, or Clauberg or whoever.... they found out that he did not treat the women in Auschwitz [as he was supposed to]. And then we never saw him anymore.*”³¹

Along with Ms. Van Thyn there are other survivors who hold similar recollections of Dr. Samuels: In a witness statement issued by Schewa Melzer, one of the women who was scheduled to be operated on by Dr. Samuels himself, she recalled how he was obviously shocked to be operating on such a young and healthy body (“*My god, destroying such a beautiful, young body*”). As a result – in Ms. Melzer’s memories – Dr. Samuels simply notified the SS doctor in charge that she had her period, which made her unusable for any operations. Soon thereafter, however, Dr. Samuels was dead and Schewa Melzer was used as one of Dr. Clauberg’s experimental subjects.³²

Frieda Heumann, alongside Schewa Melzer, was similarly chosen to be operated on by Dr. Samuels. But she too recalled how Dr. Samuels assured her not to worry, as he still needs to stand judgment with God and the world. While she was under tranquilizers, Dr. Samuels carefully removed parts of her uterus.³³

One of the more striking memoirs of Dr. Samuels actions in Block 10 is being held by Aliza Barouch, a Jewish girl from Salinika, who was only 15 years when she was selected for Schumann’s sterilization experiments, which included a complete hysterectomy. Dr. Samuels was ordered by Schumann to perform the latter, yet in her recollection, Samuels “*cheated*”, and that not only with her, but also with two other women from Saloniki. His cheating resulted in all of them having

³⁰ Interview with Rozette van Thyn, August 18, 2005.

³¹ Ibid.

³² “*Mein Gott, so einen schönen, jungen Körper zu zerstören.*” Witness Statement Schewa Melzer, 16 March 1956, 2 Js 348455

³³ Witness Statement Frieda Heumann, 27 November 1956, 2 Js 3484/55

children after the war. She also recalled how after the operation, Dr. Samuels looked at her and stroked her hair. He told her that if she will live, she ought to remember him. And she did.³⁴

It is not known who ordered Dr. Samuels murder in the fall of 1943: Dr. Münch, for example, who had worked as an SS doctor in the SS-Hygienic Institute³⁵, noted after the war that Samuels died as a result of direct orders issued by Dr. Wirths, who in turn ordered him to be shot.³⁶ Dr. Lorska, on the other hand, held the opinion that Dr. Samuels was sent to the gas chambers: “*Because he knew these experimental operations were being carried out. (...) That it what was being said in the camp.*”³⁷

On the other hand, some of Clauberg’s sterilization victims, such as Frieda Heumann, recalled after the war that the reason for his murder might have been his unwillingness and defiance in carrying out fertility experiments, or for only removing part of the cervix as opposed to the entire one.³⁸ Even Dr. Adelaide Hautval recalled an incident at which the Nazi doctors in charge presumably already had the suspicion that Dr. Samuels operations might not have fulfilled their requirements, which is why Dr. Clauberg attended some of his operations as to ensure the correct method of Dr. Samuels tasks.³⁹

A similar recollection is held by Karl Lill, a political prisoner of Auschwitz, who recalled how Dr. Samuels disappearance was a result of an order received by Dr. Clauberg, „*to murder him, with*

³⁴ Lore Shelley, *Criminal Experiments on Human Beings in Auschwitz and War Research. Twenty Women Prisoners’ Accounts*, San Francisco, 1991, page 82; Similar recollections are being held by Ms. David Kallis and Felicja Pleszowska. Ms. Pleszowska recalled that “*Bei 1 oder 2 Operationen war zugegen und Dr. Samuel sagte mir, er müsse sich für die Operation beeilen weil nach seinen Feststellungen bei den Opfern nicht beide Eierstöcke sondern nur eine durch Röntgenbestrahlungen zerstört worden und er versuchen wolle den Mädchen wie möglichst den zweiten Eierstock zu erhalten.*“ Witness statement Felicja Pleszowska, 23 October 1967, Js 18/67 (GStH. Frankfurt/M.) - Ks 2/70 Similar to that also Ms. David Kallis remembered how “*Dr. Samuels führte einige Operationen im Block durch. Seine Patientinnen wurden nur auf der einen Seite sterilisiert und gegen den Auftrag Schumanns. Dr Samuels entfernte nur den verbrannten Eierstock und beließ den gesunden. Dr. Samuels versicherte Schumann, dass beide Eierstöcke sterilisiert wurden.*“ Witness statement Ms. David Kallis, 15 June 1968, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Hermann Langbein, E/1797: 277/1

³⁵ Please note that the full name of the SS-Hygienic Institute was: “*Hygienisch-Bakteriologische Untersuchungslager der Waffen-SS und Polizei Süd-Ost, Auschwitz, Oberschlesien*”. (Mieczyslaw Kieta, *Das Hygiene-Institut der Waffen-SS und Polizei in Auschwitz*, In: *Die Auschwitz Hefte*, 1987)

³⁶ Witness Statement Dr. Hans Münch, 15 June 1956, 2 Js 3484/55

³⁷ Witness Statement Dr. Dorota Lorska, 24 April 1964, Evidence Tenth Day, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library

³⁸ Witness Statement Frieda Heumann, 27 November 1956, 2 Js 3484/55

³⁹ Witness Statement Adelaide Hautval, 2 July 1956, 2 Js 3484/55

whom he had a disagreement of opinion. The pressure on Dr. Wirths by Clauberg, who acted on direct order of Himmler, must have been very harsh and strong."⁴⁰

Gilda Eliezer remembered how she was first subjected to a castration operation by Dr. Samuels, in the operating theatre of Block 10 at which he assured her that if she survives the horror of the concentration camp *"then you will be like all the others I operated on."*⁴¹

After Dr. Samuels was made disappear, Dr. Schumann himself told her that *"the operation of Dr. Samuels is not in order. You must have another operation by another doctor."*⁴² This other doctor was Dr. Dering. He castrated her completely.

Similar memories are held by Aliza Barouch who recalled how Dr Samuels *"decided to take revenge on the Germans. When he was ordered to operate on Jewish prisoners, he tried to minimize the damage as much as possible. (...) for instance, in my case he removed only one ovary and one half of the uterus instead of everything."* But, when the Nazi doctors in charge got notice of that, *"the German doctors searched for all Jewish prisoners of Block 10 in order to be operated again."*⁴³ But, Aliza Barouch was lucky; she is the mother of two.⁴⁴

And lastly there is Sara Mayzel, a Belgian Jewish woman who worked as a nurse on Block 10 and assisted Dr. Samuels in some operations. She too recalled that Dr. Samuels carried out operations in such a way that the victim would still remain fruitful. *"Dr. Samuel[s] told this girl that the conducted the operation in such a way that she still will be able to have children. Schumann got word of it and ordered that this girl would be operated again. A few days following the second operations, this girl died as a result of it."*⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *"Nach der Überzeugung aller Kameraden mit denen ich das plötzliche Verschwinden Dr. Samuels besprach, ist dieser auf Verlangen Claubergs ermordet worden, weil er mit Clauberg eine Meinungsverschiedenheit gehabt haben soll. Der Druck Claubergs, der in direktem Auftrag Himmlers handelte, auf Wirths muss sehr schroff und scharf gewesen sein."*
Witness Statement Karl Lill, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Hermann Langbein, E/1797:277/10

⁴¹ Witness Statement Gilda Eliezer, 23 April 1964, Evidence Ninth Day, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library; Trees Soetendrop, a Dutch survivor of Block 10, recalled similar events in which Dr. Samuels told the women that it was all 'harmless' and that they would be able to have children. (Shelley, Criminal Experiments, page 139)

⁴² Witness Statement Gilda Eliezer, Evidence Ninth Day, 23 April 1964, Uris vs. Dering, Harry Ransom Research Library

⁴³ Shelley, Criminal Experiments, page 83

⁴⁴ Ibid, page 82

⁴⁵ *"Zu diesem Mädchen hat Dr. Samuel gesagt, er habe die Operation so ausgeführt, dass sie noch Kinder bekommen könne. Davon hat Dr. Schumann erfahren und er veranlasste, dass sie ein zweites Mal operiert wurde. Einige Tage nach der zweiten Operation, ist dieses arme Mädchen an den Folgen der Operation gestorben."* Witness Statement Sara Mayzel, 17 November 1967, JS 18/67 (GStH. Frankfurt/M.) - KS 2/70

Following Hermann Langbein's memoirs, who as noted worked as Dr. Wirths *Schreiber*, the circumstances surrounding Dr. Samuels death become more clear. According to Langbein:

“One day the chief physician asked my opinion about Samuel[s]. Even earlier, Dr. Wirths had occasionally asked my opinion about functionaries in the infirmary, without ever giving reason for his question. Afterward it always turned out that he wanted to learn what I thought because he was considering the person concerned for a leading function. Since, from all I knew about Samuel[s], I had doubts about helping him acquire an influential post, I answered reservedly. Wirths replied that he too did not have the best opinion of Samuel[s], and [he] dictated something else. Soon afterward, Dr. Samuel[s] was taken to Birkenau by the chief physician's sergeant, Friedrich Ontl. The office was ordered to prepare his death announcement.”⁴⁶

So, what could the reasons be for these very different portrayals of one and the same person? As none of the prisoner doctors who portrayed Dr. Samuels are alive today, and the only live voices left are those of fertility experiment victims, one can only speculate. It stands to reason that Dr. Samuels may have purposely given other inmate doctors a false impression regarding his zeal for conducting experiments in order to protect himself and his ‘women of Block 10.’ Although it will be impossible to clearly prove that Dr. Samuels was as courageous as the experimental subjects of Block 10 described him, at a minimum their statements should give enough reason to reconsider the negative portrayal of Dr. Samuels that has long existed.

⁴⁶ Langbein, *Menschen in Auschwitz*, page 263

