

About the *Lancet* Commission on Medicine, Nazism, and the Holocaust

The Nazi era arguably provides the best-documented historical examples of medical involvement in transgressions and crimes against vulnerable individuals and groups. Health professionals played an important role in formulating, supporting, and implementing the Nazi regime's programme of eugenics and 'racial hygiene', and in the Holocaust.

This included participation in forced sterilizations, coerced and often deadly human experiments, the 'euthanasia' killing programmes, medicalized killings in concentration camps, and selecting prisoners for murder in the extermination camps of the Holocaust. What happened in Europe during the Second World War has wide-ranging ramifications for medical professionals to this day. Confronting what happened in medicine in this period is crucial to inform the ethical practice of health care and to understand potential dangers in medicine today.

With this report, the commission aims to provide a reliable, up-to-date historical documentation and a thorough analysis of the implications. Teaching of this subject should be part of health professional curricula around the world, helping to promote ethical conduct, moral development, courage to stand up against antisemitism, racism, and other forms of discrimination, and the formation of a history-informed professional identity based on compassion.

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THE LANCET



Launch Event:

The *Lancet* Commission on Medicine, Nazism, and the Holocaust:

Historical Evidence, Implications for Today, Teaching for Tomorrow

Tuesday, November 14, 2023, 2-4:30 pm

Charité Medizinhistorisches Museum –
Historical Lecture Hall (*Hörsaalruine*),
Virchowweg 16, 10117, Berlin, Germany
and online

Convener:

The Lancet, and
Lancet Commission on Medicine, Nazism, and the Holocaust

Co-Hosts:

Charité (Institute for the History and Ethics of Medicine)
Max Planck Society
Robert Koch-Institute

<http://www.uni-giessen.de/lancet-launch-event>

Opening

Co-chairs, *Lancet* Commission:

Herwig Czech
Medical University, Vienna, Austria

Sabine Hildebrandt
Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, USA

Shmuel Pinchas Reis
Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and Holon Institute of
Technology, Holon Israel

Local organizers & members, *Lancet* Commission:

Volker Roelcke
Giessen University, Germany

Carola Sachse
Vienna University, Austria

Greetings

Chair: Carola Sachse

Miriam Sabin
North American Executive Editor, *The Lancet* (host)

Heyo K. Kroemer
Chairman, Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin (co-host)

Lars Schaade
President, Robert Koch-Institute (co-host)

Arno Villringer
Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences
(co-host)

Günter M. Ziegler
President, Freie Universität Berlin

Presentation of the *Lancet* Commission on Medicine, Na- zism, and the Holocaust: Historical Evidence, Implications for Today, Teaching for Tomorrow

Herwig Czech
Sabine Hildebrandt
Shmuel Reis

Chair: Volker Roelcke

Statements by survivors and representatives of the victims

Jona Laks
survivor of twin experiments by Josef Mengele in
Auschwitz (video)

Moran Ezrai
granddaughter of Peter Joseph Greenfeld Kleinman,
survivor of twin experiments in Auschwitz
(reading by Shani Levany, member of the Student Advisory
Council, *Lancet* Commission)

Margret Hamm
representative of the Society of victims of forced sterilization,
and relatives of "euthanasia" victims (*Bund der „Euthana-
sie“ – Geschädigten und Zwangssterilisierten*)

Hartmut Traub
nephew of "euthanasia" victim

Invited statements by representatives of medical associations and institutions:

*Medicine and the biomedical sciences during the Nazi period
and the Holocaust:*

- *What do you see as the implications for today and
tomorrow?*
- *What is the commitment of your institution?*

Zion Hagay
President, Israel Medical Association (video)

Jesse Ehrenfeld
President, American Medical Association (video)

Klaus Reinhardt
President, German Medical Association
(*Bundesärztekammer*)

Osahon Enabulele
Past-President, World Medical Association (WMA) (video)

Lars Schaade
President, Robert Koch-Institute

Arno Villringer
Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences

Invited statements by German federal political institutions

Alena Buyx
Chair, German Ethics Council (*Deutscher Ethikrat*)

Jürgen Dusel
Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to
Persons with Disabilities

Questions

Closing Remarks

Co-chairs of the *Lancet* Commission