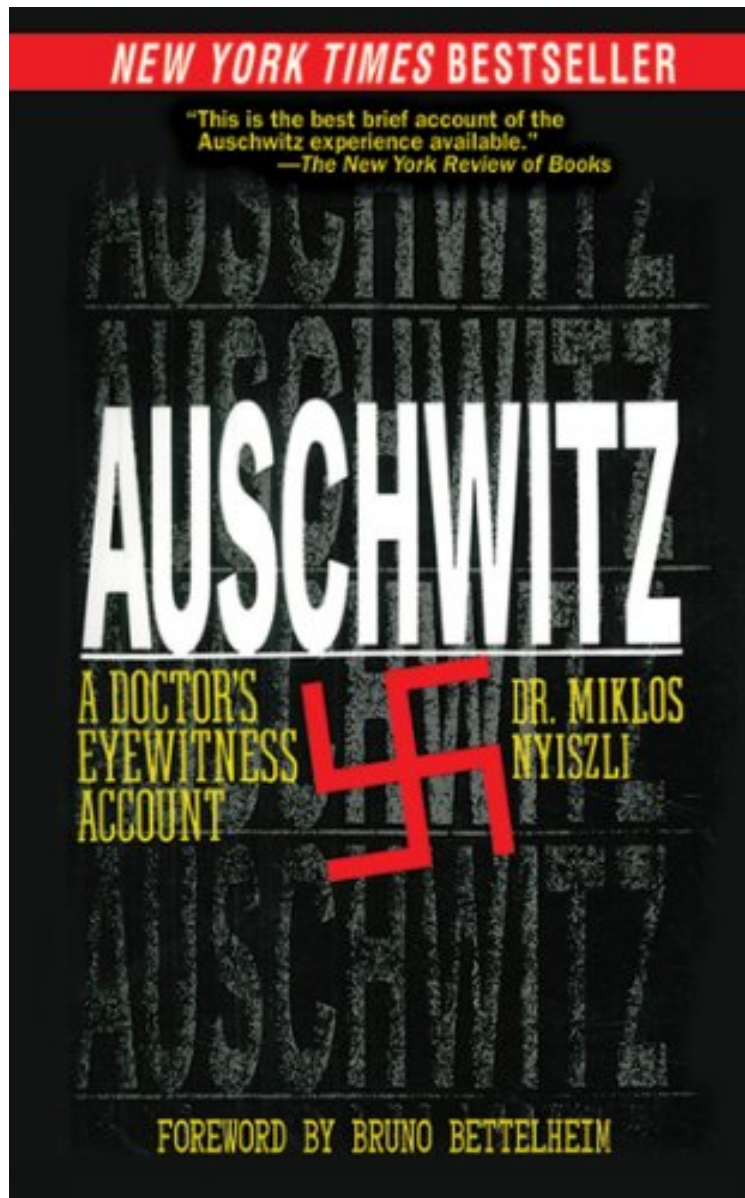


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Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account

Miklos Nyiszli

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Miklos Nyiszli : Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account:

61 of 63 people found the following review helpful. A doctor forced to work in the extermination camp By Bernie Gourley Auschwitz is the account of a Jewish medical doctor who performed autopsies at the crematoria of Auschwitz at the behest of the infamous Dr. Mengele. Its gut-wrenching reading. One is constantly reminded of the words of

another famous Holocaust chronicler, Viktor Frankl, who said, We who have come back, by the aid of many lucky chances or miracles - whatever one may choose to call them - we know: the best of us did not return. That's a sad fact with which Dr. Nyiszli had to live. Nyiszli lent his expertise to many despicable acts in the process of surviving, and it's to his credit that he had the courage to write this work. He was the only one who could have told much of this story, and it's a story that he felt the world must know--even if it meant rehashing the nightmare scenario of his life during the Holocaust years, even if he was not always to be seen at his most virtuous. While Nyiszli was a man of science who tried to stick to the objective task of conducting autopsies, his results were routinely perverted to support Nazi pseudo-science the pseudo-science used by Nazis to justify elimination of the Jews and other despised classes of humanity. Nyiszli stayed alive first-and-foremost because Dr. Mengele valued Nyiszli's expertise, and perhaps the credibility that expertise offered to the Nazis' insane attempts to emulate science. Sometimes by just answering basic scientific questions, Nyiszli was contributing to the advancement of dire atrocities. There's no better example than when Mengele asked Nyiszli how one could obtain a skeleton from a corpse. These skeletons displayed deformities, and were thus to be sent to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics to support the absurd assertion that Jews were genetically degrading. Of course, as Nyiszli points out the disease these two people were afflicted with was no less common among blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryans than it was among the Jewish people. At any rate this resulted in two corpses (made corpses by force, not nature) being boiled to remove the skeletons so they could be sent to an institute as pseudo-evidence. Nyiszli's forthcomingness is astounding. Nyiszli performed many objectionable actions at the behest of Mengele, but it's clear he couldn't have survived disobeying the Nazi doctor. However, there were also times when Nyiszli acted on his own in a way that was, arguably, detestable. After Auschwitz was abandoned, Nyiszli used his former position--and Mengele name-dropping)--to cut in line to get into an encampment (essentially a refugee camp) so he could get a shower and food for the night when others were left out in the cold. I don't mean to make Nyiszli look evil. He did many virtuous things in the process of surviving as well. This included sneaking medical supplies from the crematoria infirmary (where there was abundance) to barracks infirmaries (where there was a dire shortage.) He did his best to save those he could. It's to Nyiszli's credit that he shows us a complete picture. One expects such a book to be distorted when it comes to the author, but Nyiszli's book seems honest. This is an important book as it lets us peer into one of the darkest hours of humanity, and gaze upon a terribleness that would have been lost to posterity. The book gives a chilling account of what it must have been like to be in the gas chambers, told by someone who saw the aftermath in person. Nyiszli saw the piles of bodies reaching to the ceiling dog piles in which the weakest were trapped on the bottom as the strongest tried to climb over women and children to get a gulp of good air. (Another proof of Frankl's thesis.) Nyiszli also describes how one little girl, in a freak occurrence, managed to survive the chambers owing to an air pocket, only to have the SS finish the execution by cruder means. I think everybody should read this book, but I'll offer a warning that it's not for the faint of heart. One has to keep righteous rage in check to just get through the book. However, to ignore this wicked moment in history is to fail to see the traps humanity is capable of falling into through simple refusal to do the right thing or a willingness to try to feel better about oneself by casting aspersions on those with slightly different physical features.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is not a work of fiction. By Catherine Lewis A very well-written account by a Jewish doctor who gained favor with Dr. Mengele because he was a pathologist and did the work Dr. Mengele wanted in the exact way he wanted it done. Dr. Nyiszli lived in constant fear that he would be among the next of the *Sonderkommando* to be sent to the gas chamber for execution. The life span of the *Sonderkommando* was only four months; by that time they already knew too much about what was going on and needed to be exterminated. The author does not hold back. He invites his readers to read carefully and thoughtfully. This is not a work of fiction. *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account* 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Hard Subject to Read and Write About By Peri Dwyer Worrell Heartbreaking and gripping. The details of the power structure and procedures in the camp helped me to understand the answer to the great question of the Holocaust: how could this have happened? The book manages to capture the human drama and pathos of individual atrocities at the same time that it zooms out to show the magnitude of the calamity. There are a few bright spots of compassion or reprieve that keep it from being an act of utter despair to keep reading.

When the Nazis invaded Hungary in 1944, they sent virtually the entire Jewish population to Auschwitz. A Jew and a medical doctor, Dr. Miklos Nyiszli was spared from death for a grimmer fate: to perform scientific research on his fellow inmates under the supervision of the infamous Angel of Death: Dr. Josef Mengele. Nyiszli was named Mengele's personal research pathologist. Miraculously, he survived to give this terrifying and sobering account.

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