

Forced Prostitution in National Socialist Concentration Camps – The Example Auschwitz

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Abstract

In the early summer of 1941, Heinrich Himmler, the Reich Leader of the SS, visited Mauthausen Concentration Camp near Linz, Austria, and its quarries. Following this visit, he ordered two brothels to be set up for prisoners, in Mauthausen and the sub-camp Gusen. His idea was that the total exploitation of the male prisoners might be further forced by permitting them to visit a brothel as a bonus and incentive. Now prisoners were to be permitted sex "in its freest form" with women in brothels, as a special privilege, embedded in a Regulation for Granting Benefits to Prisoners. The SS introduced a bonus system across the entire system of the concentration camps, in which the male prisoners were permitted a military haircut, cigarettes, more frequent letters, allowed to buy products in the canteen, and also granted visits to the camp brothel, as payment for extra work. In the following years, the SS then set up brothels for prisoners in most large concentration camps, which it referred to as "Special Prisoners' Buildings." In 1943 two brothels were opened in Auschwitz: one in Auschwitz-Stammlager and another one in Monowitz. The Auschwitz-Stammlager prisoners brothel became the biggest one in the entire concentration camp system.