



# Pestalozzi

From the remembrance of the Holocaust to the  
prevention of radicalisation and crimes against  
humanity (PREV2)

## Medicine and human rights: where are the limits? Remembrance and prevention of medical atrocities

by

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## Medicine and human rights: where are the limits? Remembrance and prevention of medical atrocities

### Brief description

Remembrance of atrocities conducted in human research during the Third Reich makes us think about the limits of humanity. The primary task of this unit is not to describe once again the horrors that people suffered but to teach about prevention of crimes against humanity by avoiding transgression of human rights in science.

As stated in the Hippocratic Oath and subsequent codes of ethics one of the basic ethical principles for the protection of human subjects of research is respect for persons. The principles of respect for persons include that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents and therefore are capable to choose what shall or shall not happen to them.

### Expected outcomes

- ✓ To understand that values, beliefs and attitudes may be different between cultures in a given population but that human dignity is above differences
- ✓ To recognize that human participation in research studies is part of a multi-step process that brings up a number of ethical considerations
- ✓ To acknowledge one's misconceptions about science and human progress
- ✓ To raise awareness about atrocities committed in the name of science
- ✓ To be able to ask thought-provoking questions about atrocities and crimes in medicine
- ✓ To critique ideas showing respect to different viewpoints expressed
- ✓ To assume that the study of past and present experiments with the participation of humans involves conflicting moral choices and dilemmas about which people may disagree
- ✓ To value human dignity, human rights and rule of law.

## Activities

	Duration	Methods used
Activity 1: Getting into	20 minutes	✓ Group work
Activity 2: Life worth living	160 minutes	✓ Text and video analysis in Cooperative learning structures.
Activity 3: From healer to murderer	160 minutes	✓ Individual work ✓ Pair work ✓ Text and video analysis in Cooperative learning structures.
Activity 4: Evaluation/Debriefing	30 minutes	✓ Plenary debriefing

## Background and context

Research has shown that when science teachers trainees and students are exposed to the history of science they view biology, medicine and general science as a more philosophical and humanitarian discipline than they have thought.

Beyond the unquestionable benefits of research in medicine with human beings there is no doubt about the danger that can arise from it. The great advances that are occurring in the field of science and the high expectations created have caused at certain points public shock and disagreement. Although this has been in some cases due to (voluntary or involuntary) distortion of the information, reflecting about bioethical questions that arise from emerging science and biomedicine is of extreme importance for our decency, and even for our democracy.

This unit includes activities adapted from Mompoin-Gaillard P., Lazàr I., (2015) "TASKs for democracy – 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)", formerly published as "Developing competences for democracy – 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)", r, Pestalozzi series N°4, Council of Europe Publishing

## Pre-Task

All participants watch “Science and the Swastika”,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZquBH0CH24>

and choose another ONE to watch among:

“Les héritiers de Mengele”,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwSUqtyRbf8> (in French)

“Paperclip operation: the CIA and the Nazis”,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPxGA11hcMU>

“Forced sterilizations sanctioned by the Eugenics Board of North Carolina”,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hstkagJJDfg>

## Activity 1: Getting into

Duration: 20 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To create groups, to work together with others and become actively involved</li> <li>✓ To develop capacity to prevent the marginalisation of any individual or group</li> <li>✓ To get into the topic</li> </ul>
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Group work</li> </ul>
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Appendix 1 (one per group, printed on different colour paper).</li> <li>✓ Group member roles (Appendix 2, one per group).</li> <li>✓ Set of markers of 4 collors – red, green, black, blue (one per group)</li> </ul>
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Prepare tables for groups work</li> </ul>
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Form groups of 4. For that print appendix 1 in different colours, one copy per group. Cut printed copy to 4 parts. Ask participants to take one slot of paper and form groups according to the colour.</li> </ul> <p>Step 2 (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Give time for groups to read all 3 texts (appendix 1), and discuss them briefly in groups. The aim of this step is for participants to get to know each other in a group and to get to the topic.</li> </ul> <p>Step 3 (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Give one set of markers for each group.</li> <li>✓ Invite each group member to take one marker.</li> <li>✓ Hand appendix 2, one per group, and invite participants to clarify their roles according to markers colour. If there is a need, you may clarify roles in plenary.</li> </ul>
<p>Tips for trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Its important to have 4 members in each group. If there are more people, for instance, not 20, but 21, you make 5 groups of 4, and one participant becomes a “twin” of any member in any group – they both get the same text, same role, etc.</li> </ul>

## Activity 2: Life worth living

Duration: 160 min

### Expected outcome

- ✓ To develop aptitude to search for information through different channels and from diverse sources.
- ✓ To develop ability to draw on others' diverse expertise and experience for the benefit of the group's work.
- ✓ To develop competences of valuing human dignity, human rights and rule of law.

### Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Text and video analysis in Cooperative learning structures.

### Resources

- ✓ Appendix 3 (set of 6 texts. Text 1 and 2 – one per participant, texts 3,4,5,6 – one per group).
- ✓ Student research presentation on eugenics, euthanasia and extermination
- ✓ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wT1SbSvNAc&feature=em-upload\\_owner](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wT1SbSvNAc&feature=em-upload_owner)
- ✓ Flipchart paper (one per group)
- ✓ Projector

### Practical arrangements

- ✓ Prepare tables for group work.

### Procedure

#### Step 1 (20 min)

- ✓ Explain participants, that the activity is based on a study of propaganda from the Third Reich.
- ✓ Ask participants to stay in same groups like in activity 1, and keep their roles according to markers' colour during all activity.
- ✓ Ask each participant to individually read text 1 and 2 from Appendix 3.
- ✓ Distribute texts 3, 4, 5, 6 (appendix 3) to groups. Each group member has to take and read one text.
- ✓ Ask each group member to read their text and complete the following sentences:
  - a. *Lebensunwertes Leben* was used as....
  - b. The purpose of the posters is ...
  - c. Many of Germany's top scientists joined the Nazis because.....
  - d. By keeping the "unfit" alive to reproduce and multiply ....

Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to form four new “expert” groups. Everyone, who had text 3 goes to one group, text 4 – to another group, etc.
- ✓ The aim of working in “expert” groups is to clarify text once again, and to compare similarities and differences in answers to questions. Ask participants to make notes.

Step 3 (40 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to come back to their initial groups (as in step 1). Everyone has 5 minutes to present the results of their work in steps 1 and 2.
- ✓ Ask participants to write down basic statements from their group work on flipchart.

Step 4 (40 min)

- ✓ Invite participants to watch video “Student research presentation on eugenics, euthanasia and extermination” in plenary. Ask everyone to make notes individually.
- ✓ Ask participants to work in same groups as in step 3, and share their notes in word rotation (first group member shares one statement, then second participant, then third one and fourth one. They repeat same circle till all ideas in a group have been shared).
- ✓ Ask participants to write down basic statements from group work on same flipchart, as in step 3.

Step 5 (20 min)

- ✓ Ask groups to stick their flipcharts to the wall. Give time for everyone to walk freely and read every flipchart. Ask participants to make notes if they find something interesting on the flipcharts of other groups, or if they notice some general tendencies.

Step 6 - Debriefing (30 min)

- ✓ How did you feel during this activity?
- ✓ What was difficult/easy?
- ✓ Was there something on the flipcharts of other groups that struck you?
- ✓ How do you feel about the propaganda?
- ✓ What do you think was the impact on the population at that time? Did it have any effect? Did the propaganda work as intended?
- ✓ Why do you think propaganda has such impact on society? Is propaganda still effective nowadays? How and why does it influence us?
- ✓ Would you like to share any other thoughts or feelings, which came up during this activity?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ It may be a good idea to watch the video few times to get a better understanding.
- ✓ The group may want to have a break between steps 3 and 4. allocate time accordingly.

### Activity 3: From healer to murderer

Duration: 160 min

#### Expected outcome

- ✓ To be able to ask thought-provoking questions about atrocities and crimes in medicine.
- ✓ To react to ideas showing respect to different viewpoints expressed.
- ✓ To assume that the study of past and present experiments with the participation of humans involves conflicting moral choices and dilemmas about which people may disagree.
- ✓ To develop competences of valuing human dignity, human rights and rule of law.

#### Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Individual work
- ✓ Pair work
- ✓ Text and video analysis in Cooperative learning structures.

#### Resources

- ✓ Appendix 4 (set of 3 texts, one set per group).
- ✓ Flipchart paper (one per group)
- ✓ Projector
- ✓ Video "The Stanford prison experiment"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZwfNs1pqG0>

#### Practical arrangements

- ✓ Prepare tables for group work.

#### Procedure

##### Step 1 (40 min)

Ask each participant to individually sort the following statements (identifying them by A, B, C, D, E, or F) into "correct/accurate" or "wrong/not accurate" and explain why they sorted the answers the way they did.

- A) Most of our medicines and modern medical treatments would not be available without experiments that were done on people.
- B) German physicians of the SS and Wehrmacht played an active role in Nazi extermination plans.



- C) The SS physicians in Auschwitz violated the Hippocratic Oath, carried out the selection of newly arrived transports and oversaw the killing process.
- D) Experiments on prisoners and medical tests performed by doctors or nurses can be used today asking for permission first.
- E) All of the research involving humans in concentration camps saved German soldiers' lives.
- F) Experiments were planned at the highest levels to reinforce the bases of racial superiority.
- ✓ Compare answers. Record the results on a board (D and E are not accurate)
- ✓ Ask participants: "What are we trying to achieve by teaching bioethics? List three aims."
- ✓ Have participants discuss their three aims with a partner.
- ✓ Record all the ideas on a board or flip chart.

Step 2 (40 min)

- ✓ Ask each participant to individually make a list of ideas about what makes a biologist/doctor/nurse/scientist act as a murderer.
- ✓ Organise participants into groups of three according to the film they as a pre-task watched among "Les héritiers de Mengele", "Paperclip operation: the CIA and the Nazis" and "Forced sterilizations sanctioned by the Eugenics Board of North Carolina". Make sure each group has a member who has watched a different film.
- ✓ Distribute sets of texts (Appendix 4). Each group member has to take and read one text, and find connections with the film they have watched.
- ✓ Reorganise the groups sitting together with those who have the same text and/or film at different tables.
- ✓ Ask each group to come to a consensus on the main ideas both from texts and film and then participants go back to the original group.
- ✓ Ask every group member to share the text and film main ideas with his/her group. Remind participants to keep their roles according to markers colour.
- ✓ Ask every group to write down main ideas per text and film on the flipchart.

Step 3 (40 min)

- ✓ Invite all participants to watch “The Stanford prison experiment” in plenary.
- ✓ Ask each group to discuss the content of the film and reach an agreement on main issues. Ask to write those statements on the same flipchart, as in step 2.
- ✓ Ask groups to stick their flipcharts to the wall. Give time for everyone to walk freely and read every flipchart. Ask participants to make notes if they find something interesting on flipcharts of other groups, or if they notice some general tendencies.

Step 4 - Debriefing (40 min)

- ✓ How did you feel during this activity?
- ✓ Was there something on the flipcharts of other groups which struck you?
- ✓ Do you think that previously having taught bioethics to the college students could have changed the results in the Stanford prison experiment?
- ✓ Was it easy or difficult to decide what may turn us into a perpetrator? Why?
- ✓ Did the group discussion help clarify the issues?
- ✓ Would you like to share any other thoughts or feelings, which came up during this activity?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ The group may want to do a break between steps 2 and 3. allocate time accordingly.

## Activity 4: Evaluation/debriefing

Duration: 30 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To evaluate new materials, asses new feelings</li> <li>✓ To debrief on the possibilities of using this material in schools.</li> </ul>
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Plenary debriefing</li> </ul>
<p>Resources</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (30 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Discuss following questions in plenary :</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How could you make use of this activity in a variety of subjects or in an interdisciplinary fashion? (Teachers could organise and develop the activity together with students in an interdisciplinary way, integrating e.g. Biology, Health Education, Civic Education, Languages, History, Visual Arts or Project Work.)</li> <li>2. How and where would you organise this activity for your students? (Teachers need to manage and organise a timetable to work as a team and provide practical arrangements to support the students' work.)</li> <li>3. What changes would you make?</li> <li>4. What difficulties can you foresee?</li> </ol>
<p>Tips for trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Make sure everyone's opinion is heard. If the group is big, you may ask to answer questions individually, and then go to group and plenary discussions.</li> </ul>

## References

1. International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects.  
[http://www.cioms.ch/publications/layout\\_guide2002.pdf](http://www.cioms.ch/publications/layout_guide2002.pdf)
2. Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account by Miklos Nyiszli, Translated by Tibere Kremer. Penguin Modern Classics
3. Medical crimes. The experiments in Auschwitz, by Irena Strzelecka
4. Voices of Memory 2. International Center for Education Auschwitz
5. Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146180E.pdf>
6. Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors  
<https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/who-we-are/>
7. Fundamentals of genocide and mass atrocity prevention by Scott Straus
8. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
9. Centro Internazionale di studi Primo Levi  
<http://www.primolevi.it/>

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Text 1: **Dear Teacher,**

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:  
Gas chambers built by learned engineers  
Children poisoned by educated physicians  
Infants killed by trained nurses  
Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.  
So I am suspicious of education.  
My request is: help your students to become human.  
Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.  
Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.  
**Haim Ginott** (originally *Ginzburg*, 5 August 1922–4 November 1973)

#### Text 2: **If this is a man, by Primo Levi**

You who live safe  
in your warm houses,  
You who find, returning in the evening,  
Hot food and friendly faces:  
Consider if this is a man  
Who works in the mud  
Who does not know peace  
Who fights for a scrap of bread  
Who dies for a yes or a no.  
Consider if this is a woman  
Without hair and without name  
With no more strength to remember,  
Her eyes empty and her womb cold  
Like a frog in winter.  
Meditate that this came about  
I command these words to you.  
Carve them in your hearts  
At home, in the street,  
Going to bed, rising;  
Repeat them to your children,  
Or may your house fall apart,

#### Text 3: **Hippocratic Oath: Modern Version**

I will remember that there is art to  
medicine as well as science, and that  
warmth, sympathy, and understanding may  
outweigh the surgeon's knife or the  
chemist's drug.  
If it is given me to save a life, all thanks.  
But it may also be within my power to take  
a life; this awesome responsibility must be  
faced with great humbleness and awareness  
of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play  
at God.  
I will prevent disease whenever I can, for  
prevention is preferable to cure.  
I will remember that I remain a member of  
society, with special obligations to all my  
fellow human beings, those sound of mind  
and body as well as the infirm.  
If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life  
and art, respected while I live and  
remembered with affection thereafter. May I  
always act so as to preserve the finest  
traditions of my calling and may I long  
experience the joy of healing those who  
seek my help.

## Appendix 2

### Group-member roles

**RED MARKER - Tracers:** the task of the Tracer is to facilitate the group process. S/he has to keep the group hot on the trail, on the given task. For example, s/he makes sure that the work results are summarised to help move on with the task.

**GREEN MARKER - Encouragers:** the task of the Encourager is to ensure equal access and participation for all the group members. S/he is a practical helper, who has to ensure that everybody contributes to the work equally. For example, s/he may encourage silent members to express themselves and talkative members to “rest” if needed.

**BLACK MARKER - Timers:** the task of the Timer is to help the micro-group be on time by finding common solutions, and help the group find efficient ways to complete its task on time. For example, s/he helps micro-group members find quicker ways to carry out their activity.

**BLUE MARKER – Writers:** the task of the Writer is to ensure that every group member’s voice is taken into account and recorded. S/he makes sure each member has written something on the final document.

Important note: The roles described here are in no way a fixed rule of organisation but rather a tried and tested example of practice. Educators should create new structures if they need to. Micro-group roles are always designed for a member of a micro-group to help the other members of the micro-group “do” and “act” together rather than “do” and “act” on his/her own.

## Appendix 3

### Text 1

#### Adolf Hitler als Arzt des deutschen Volkes

"Adolf Hitler as the Doctor of the German Nation,"  
National Health Guardian, 1935.

At a mass meeting in 1934, Nazi Deputy Party Leader Rudolf Hess stated, "National Socialism is nothing but applied biology."

Willy Brandt, Nobel Peace Prize 1971 and German Chancellor (1969–1974) who many years ago when addressing the widespread moral collapse in Nazi Germany said:

"Too few people made conscious choices against evil when it could have made a difference"

*National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD*



## Text 2



*National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD*

Life unworthy of life" ("*Lebensunwertes Leben*") was a Nazi designation for the segments of the populace which, according to the Nazi regime of the time, had no right to live.

The expression first appeared in print via the title of a 1920 book, *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung Lebensunwerten Lebens* (*Allowing the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life*) by two professors, the jurist Karl Binding (retired from the University of Leipzig) and psychiatrist Alfred Hoche from the University of Freiburg. According to Hoche, some living people who were brain damaged, mentally retarded, autistic (though not recognised as such at the time), and psychiatrically ill were "mentally dead", "human ballast" and "empty shells of human beings".

Hoche felt killing such people was useful. Some people were simply considered disposable. Later the killing was extended to people considered 'racially impure' or 'racially inferior' according to Nazi thinking.



Text 3



Dr. Otmar von Verschuer examines twins at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. As the head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute's Department for Human Heredity, Verschuer, a physician and geneticist, examined hundreds of pairs of twins to study whether criminality, feeble-mindedness, tuberculosis, and cancer were inheritable. In 1927, he recommended the forced sterilization of the "mentally and morally subnormal."

During the Third Reich, a politically extreme variation of eugenics determined the course of state policy.

Everything that I thought until now was the supreme aim of Medicine (caring for the sick without distinction, treating any patient despite religion or gender differences, help everyone and alleviating their suffering) is not considered appropriate in the opinion of the National Socialism. It's the opposite. They want a total war against the inferiors of all kinds, especially sick people without hope of recovering, and get rid of them [...] Patients who do not have the possibility to cure are predestined to the elimination, and the doctor is just the manager. The doctor will become a murderer!

**Julius Moses** (1868-1942

Theresienstadt)--Jew--physician--social democrat

*National Library of Medicine,  
Bethesda, MD*

## Text 4



During the ensuing political and economic crises of the Weimar Republic, ideas known as *racial hygiene* or *eugenics* began to inform population policy, public health education, and government-funded research. By keeping the “unfit” alive to reproduce and multiply, eugenics proponents argued, modern medicine and costly welfare programs interfered with natural selection –the concept Charles Darwin applied to the “survival of the fittest” in the animal and plant world. In addition, members of the “fit,” educated classes were marrying later and using birth control methods to limit family size. The result, eugenics advocates believed, was an overall biological “degeneration” of the population. As a solution, they proposed “positive” government policies such as tax credits to foster large, “valuable” families, and “negative” measures, mainly the sterilization of genetic “inferiors.”

*National Library of Medicine,  
Bethesda, MD*

## Text 5

In October 1939, after Hitler authorized “mercy deaths” for patients deemed “incurable,” the murder program expanded from children to adults. Operation T-4—referring to the address of the secret program’s headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse 4, Berlin—mostly targeted adult patients in private, state, and church-run institutions. Individuals judged unproductive were particularly vulnerable. From January 1940 to August 1941, more than 70,000 men and women were transported to one of six specially staffed facilities in Germany and Austria and killed by carbon monoxide poisoning in gas chambers disguised as showers. Growing public awareness and unrest over the killings influenced Hitler to halt the gassing program. Euthanasia murders resumed in other guises; patients were killed by means of starvation diets and overdoses of medication in hospitals and mental institutions throughout the country. From 1939 to 1945, an estimated 200,000 persons were killed in the various euthanasia programmes.

*National Library of Medicine,  
Bethesda, MD*



“You Are Sharing the Load! A Hereditarily Ill Person Costs 50,000 Reichsmarks on Average up to the Age of Sixty,” reproduced in a high school biology textbook by Jakob Graf. The image illustrates Nazi propaganda on the need to prevent births of the “unfit.”

–US Holocaust Memorial Museum



## Text 6



Eugen Fischer (5 July 1874 – 9 July 1967) was a German professor of medicine, anthropology and eugenics. He was director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics between 1927 and 1942. He was appointed rector of the Frederick William University of Berlin by Adolf Hitler in 1933, and later joined the Nazi Party. His ideas expressed in his work, related to maintaining the purity of races, influenced future German legislation on race, including the Nuremberg laws.

The Reich Ministry of the Interior instructed midwives and physicians to register all children born with severe birth defects. Three expert physicians evaluated each case and, usually without seeing the potential victims, selected those to be killed. Officials deceived the children's families by providing falsified causes of death. From 1939 to 1945, more than 5,000 boys and girls were killed in some 30 special children's wards established at selected hospitals and clinics.

*National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD*

## Appendix 4

### Text 1

#### Primo Levi "The best had all died"

It has been suggested that Levi's love of science and his training as a chemist explain his disposition to observe, describe and analyze under the most appalling circumstances. His faith in rational understanding led him to view the lager experience, in his own terms, as a "gigantic biological and social experiment." He detected fundamental truths about human nature in the social structures of the camp, claiming that this "cruel laboratory" was a "ferocious sociological observatory."

Levi wonders how a sample of humanity would behave under certain constantly controlled conditions of life, a sample that has not been chosen in advance and therefore represents *the* human material in a precise way. What is left of humanity? What, in such an extreme place, is essential in how humans behave and what, instead, is acquired? With Levi, Auschwitz has become, for the first time, the name of a scientific experiment, one of the most terrible of all the experiments invented and created by people against other people.

"It is a grey zone, poorly defined, where the two camps of masters and slaves both diverge and converge.... The harsher the oppression, the more widespread among the oppressed is the willingness ... to collaborate."

Primo Levi's paradigmatic concept of the 'grey zone' focuses on the moral ambiguity that is so often found, yet seldom discussed, in human behaviour. Indeed, the renewed interest in, and often uncritical use of, the terms 'good' and 'evil' in contemporary philosophy seems unsuitable to negotiate the complexities exhibited in situations of moral 'compromise' under duress. According to Levi, an examination of the 'grey zone' requires a rejection of the 'Manichean tendency which shuns half-tints and complexities', and resorts to the black-and-white binary opposition(s) of 'friend' and 'enemy', 'good' and 'evil'. Levi's 'grey zone' is essentially a metaphor for moral ambiguity: a conceptual realm with 'ill-defined outlines which both separate and join the two camps of masters and servants. The "grey zone" possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure, and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge'

Centro Internazionale di studi Primo Levi

## Text 2

### Perpetrator Motivations

- Power of the situation
- Obedience and identification with leaders
- Role playing
- Indoctrination
- Peer pressure and coercion
- Fear
- Greed and opportunity

Some disturbing mechanisms in which perpetrators may act to fulfil a certain role: Authorities may cast perpetrators as defenders of the nation, or the perpetrators themselves may believe that they have a job to do. They then seek to fulfil that job as best they can, irrespective of the moral implications of committing harm. Studies suggest that some perpetrators will take the initiative in a permissive environment. They will be creative in the way they commit harm. No prior hatred was necessary for perpetrators to find creative ways to denigrate and humiliate their victims. Zimbardo somberly noted, “The line between Good and Evil, once thought to be impermeable, proved instead to be quite permeable

### Fundamentals of genocide and mass atrocity prevention

### Text 3

#### Miklos Nyiszli

Miklos Nyiszli simultaneously worked as a pathologist for the infamous SS-physician Dr. Josef Mengele and as a physician for the staff of the Sonderkommando-prisoners. In light of this situation, he relates to the "medical experiments" performed by Mengele and his team.

The barbarity and cruelty of German physicians, who attributed no importance to human lives and dignity are described in a strong realistic manner.

*"Dr. Mengele wanted to solve the problem of the multiplication of the race by studying human material, especially twins that he was free to experiment on as he saw fit. Dr. Wolff was searching for causes of dysentery. Actually, its causes are not difficult to determine; even the layman knows them. Dysentery is caused by applying the following formula: take any individual – man, woman, or innocent child – snatch him away from his home, stack him with a hundred others in a sealed box car, in which a bucket of water has first been thoughtfully placed, then pack them off, after they have spent six preliminary weeks in a ghetto, to Auschwitz. There, pile them by the thousands into barracks unfit to serve as stables. For food, give them a ration of moldy bread made from wild chestnuts, a sort of margarine of which the basic ingredient is lignite, thirty grams of sausage made from the flesh of mangy horses, the whole not to exceed 700 calories. To wash this ration down, a half liter of soup made from nettles and weeds, containing nothing fatty, no flour or salt. In four weeks, dysentery will invariably appear. Then, three or four weeks later, the patient will be 'cured', for he will die in spite of any belated treatment he may receive from the camp doctors."*

#### Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account