

Daily Life in the Camp



Screams and beatings welcomed the arriving prisoners to the camp. At the same time the guards informed them that everything in the camp was to be done on the double. They received instead of their names prisoner numbers to which they had to react immediately if called. After they were run around the appeal place a few times, all their bodily hair was shaved off, they were showered and given prison outfits. The new arrivals were then sent to the quarantine for a few days. Afterwards the guards sent the new prisoners to their barracks in the camp and assigned them to their respective work group at the morning roll call. Fear of arbitrary violence, hunger and hard physical labour defined the prisoners' daily life. The prisoners usually had to get up at 5:00 a.m. in the summer and 6:00 a.m. in the winter. After a room check, they went to wash and get dressed, make their beds and then to so-called 'morning sports'. Breakfast which followed consisted of bread, some margarine and marmalade as well as a very thin 'coffee substitute'. The day continued with a walk on the double to the roll call at the appeal place. Afterwards the prisoners had to go out to work. Those who remained in the camp had a watery soup for lunch at 12:00. Then they would continue working until 6:00 p.m. They were all subsequently required to appear for the evening roll call. At 7 p.m. they had soup again, but often enough only 'tea'. At 9:00 p.m. came the room inspection, which was followed by quiet time. These times could vary considerably depending on the prisoners' work in the work groups. If the workplace was farther away, the prisoners had to wake up earlier and returned to the camp later.