

some transports. In the spring of 1943, tattooing was extended to all categories of prisoners except Germans, reeducation and police prisoners. Prisoners deported from Warsaw during the uprising were not tattooed, and neither were the Jewish women from Hungary or from liquidated ghettos held in Birkenau transit camps BIIC and BIIL. In addition to their serial numbers, some categories of prisoners were tattooed with additional markings. Jewish women (although not all of them) had a triangle tattooed before or under their serial number, and after mid-1944 an "A" prefixed to the number. Gypsy women had the letter "Z" prefixed to their serial numbers.³⁶

The fragmentary surviving camp documents, including lists of prisoners' employment assignments and reports by the resistance movement, make it possible to estimate the population of the women's camp at various points in time. On December 1, 1942, for instance it contained 8,232 prisoners; on April 30, 1943—18,659; on January 20, 1944—27,053; on August 22, 1944—39,234; on October 3, 1944—43,462 in Birkenau (including the Jewish women in the transit camp) and 3,785 in the main camp women's camp (in the camp extension—the Lagererweiterung—and Blocks 22 and 23); December 30, 1944—12,695 in Birkenau, 6,015 in the main camp and 2,036 in the sub-camps attached to industrial plants. At the last roll-call on January 17, 1945, 10,381 women assembled in Birkenau, 6,196 in the main camp, and 2,095 in the sub-camps.³⁷

3. LIVING CONDITIONS

Female prisoners were confronted with the horrendous reality of Auschwitz from the moment when their transports were unloaded. This was accompanied by the screams and curses of the SS men, brutal shoving and beating with rifle butts, and the barking of dogs. Still terrified at such a reception, the women were driven into the

³⁶ Tadeusz Iwaszko, "Tätowierung der Häftlinge des KL Auschwitz," *Comité International d'Auschwitz. Informationsbulletin* (1980), nos 1-3.

³⁷ Lists of work assignments for female prisoners, APMAB, D-AuII-3a/54a, D-AuII-3a/78, D-AuII-3a/90b; APMAB, Mat. RO, vol. 2, pp. 60, 94; vol. 3, p. 208; vol. 5a, p. 301.