



Prof. Gabriel Florence

THE CHILDREN'S CARERS

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Gabriel Florence was born on 21 June 1886 in Alsace. He was professor of biological and medical chemistry at the University of Lyons and a member of the French Nobel committee. During the German occupation he was active in supporting his Jewish colleagues. At the end of 1943, he joined the Comité Médical de la Résistance, in which the medical profession worked together in the Resistance.

On 4 March 1944 the Gestapo arrested him. First he was brought to Montluc prison near Lyons, then on 7 June 1944 he was transferred to Neuengamme. Because of his good knowledge of German he was initially used as an interpreter. At the end of July 1944 the SS deployed him to the sickbay. After the arrival of the 20 children he was in charge of documenting their health and making laboratory tests. Gabriel Florence tried to kill the tuberculosis bacteria by boiling them before they were injected into the children.

A former prisoner, Paul Weißmann, who was also deployed to the sickbay, remembered later his last meeting with Gabriel Florence on the evening before his murder: "He packed his few belongings together. Before he left the sickbay building, he pressed everyone's hands and said 'Au revoir'. But to me he also whispered: 'I don't believe we will see each other again'."

Simone Florence, who heard fairly quickly from other fellow prisoners of the fate of her husband, was instrumental in 1949 in trying to bring a criminal prosecution against Kurt Heißmeyer. Professor Gabriel Florence was honored posthumously for his medical research in 1953 with the Henri Labbé prize for biochemistry from the Académie des Sciences de l'Institut de France.