

19 (04/2019)



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AUSCHWITZ SURVIVOR MAX EISEN. A PROMISE TO MY FATHER.

POLISH DIPLOMAT THE
RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE
NATIONS

FACT-CHECKING:
AUSCHWITZ LULLABY

„AUSCHWITZ. NOT LONG
AGO. NOT FAR AWAY”
EXHIBITION IN NEW YORK

PUBLICATION: MASS
MURDER OF PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES AND
THE HOLOCAUST

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We invite all of you to work closely with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we should share with our readers. We also accept proposals for articles.

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Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

Our e-mail: memoria@auschwitz.org

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LINKING THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD

LINKS TO THE MOST INTERESTING AND VALUABLE ARTICLES
DEDICATED TO MEMORY AROUND THE WORLD (WIDE WEB)

The Museum Collection has been enriched with a unique object associated with Captain Witold Pilecki, co-founder of the resistance movement in the German Nazi Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. It is a drawing made in the summer of 1943 in Nowy Wiśnicz immediately after his escape from the camp. It portrays Witold Pilecki and Tomasz Serafiński - the person whose identity Pilecki's assumed as an Auschwitz prisoner. The Museum acquired the drawing from Tomasz Serafiński's daughter - Maria.

Witold Pilecki's false identity was a matter of coincidence. He found an identity card with the name Tomasz Serafiński while hiding in Warsaw in the flat of Dr. Helena Pawłowska. Pilecki used his name when he was arrested by the Germans in September 1940 during an attempt to enter the Auschwitz camp.

Pilecki and Serafiński met only after his escape from Auschwitz. Upon arrival in Bochnia, he asked to see the commander of the Home Army in the area. He was permitted to see the deputy commander of the outpost in Nowy Wiśnicz. The deputy commander turned out to be the man, whose identity he had assumed previously - Tomasz Serafiński. Then, they didn't only have a meeting, which was allegedly a memorable experience for Pilecki. Pilecki found a safe haven for over three months in Tomasz Serafiński's home, in the so-called Koryznówka in Nowy Wiśnicz, known as Jan Matejko's favourite vacation spot. Pilecki wrote the first version of his report here. It was also here that Jan Stasiniewicz drew a double portrait of Witold Pilecki and Tomasz Serafiński.

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In 1961, sixteen years after Eric Vogel leaped from a transport train headed toward the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, he recounted his escape for Downbeat, an American jazz magazine: "This is a story of horror, terror, and death but also of joy and pleasure, the history of a jazz band whose members were doomed to die."

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Had it not been for Alexandra MacMurdo Reiter's grandfather, K. Heidi Fishman would've never existed. Through a fortuitous chain of events, the two women discovered in January that Reiter's paternal grandfather, Stefan Ryniewicz, used a fake foreign passport to help save Fishman's maternal grandparents from being among the 6 million Jews who were killed during the Holocaust.

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Institutions of memory such as Sachsenhausen in Germany and Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland play an important, and unique, role in educating people about the horrors of the Holocaust and of the Nazi regime. For millions of visitors annually, these institutions bear witness to the unthinkable crimes that took place on their grounds and expose people to the visceral discomfort associated with being in a former concentration camp.

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A Scottish "Holocaust heroine" and quiet champion of educating girls helped save many Jews in Hungary before dying herself in a concentration camp. Jane Haining, who cared for hundreds of Jewish girls at the Scottish Mission School in Budapest during World War Two, died at Auschwitz camp after the Nazis invaded Hungary in 1944.

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POLISH DIPLOMAT THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

Konstanty Rokicki, the Polish vice consul in Switzerland during World War II, produced fake passports of South American countries and distributed them to Jews who were about to be deported. Now he was declared the Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

Konstanty Rokicki was a consular officer who served as Polish vice-Consul in Berne between 1939 and 1945. He was responsible for issuing passports. Between 1941 and 1944, Rokicki bought over 1,050 blank Paraguayan passes from the Swiss honorary consul of Paraguay and forged passports for over 2,600 people. The passports often were issued to entire families which is why 1,050 blank forms could cover 2,600 people. He also issued other documents – confirmations of Paraguayan citizenship – some 2,000 people received such documents.

The owners of the passports were able to prove they were foreigners and that the Holocaust 'laws' did not apply to them. Many of them were interned by the Nazis rather than sent to death camps. Poland and some other states supported the idea of exchanging the 'passport Jews' against German nationals held by the Allies and some exchanges took place in 1944 and 1945. However, for many survivors, passports helped avoid massive deportations, after which they went into hiding.

It's important to note that Rokicki did not work alone. He worked under instructions of

Ambassador Aleksander Ładoś and his deputy Stefan Ryniewicz. Documents show that Ryniewicz also played part in forging passports and Ładoś vehemently defended the whole procedure in his meeting with the Swiss Foreign Minister Marcel Pilet-Golaz. Ambassador Ładoś also initiated widespread intervention by Polish embassies after which Paraguay and some other countries recognized the illegal documents. Rokicki also worked with his Jewish colleague, Polish diplomat Juliusz Kühl and directly co-operated with representatives of both secular and religious Jewry, Abraham Silberschein and Chaim Eiss.

'Consul Rokicki was a representative of the Polish State. He received an order from Ambassador Aleksander Ładoś and his deputy Stefan Ryniewicz to break the Swiss law in the name of saving human life, and this task was performed by his Jewish subordinate Juliusz Kühl. All four took on a huge risk in case of failure,' said Jakub Kumoch, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Switzerland.



AU NOM DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE PARAGUAY



LE CONSUL
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE PARAGUAY
À BERNE

JUDITH NADIA GRADENWITZ ELIABRE
NÉE 10 OCT. 1912. 8 IV. 1940

SIGNALEMENT

Âgé de 14.5.1900
4.5.1910

Profession COMMERÇANT

Taille MOYENNE

Nos MOYENNE

Cheveux NOIR

Yeux NOIR

Bouche NORMALE

Dentier NORMALE

Visage OVALE

OVALE

Signes particuliers:

Signature du porteur:

Invite par les présentes toutes les autorités et les employés chargés
du maintien de l'ordre public et de la sûreté générale de laisser passer

librement et sans obstacles le porteur de la présente: MONSIEUR

HERBERT VIA KRUSKAL AVEC SON

ÉPOUSE EDDA NÉE GRADENWITZ ET SES

originaire de PARAGUAY 3 (TROIS) ENFANTS

allant EN EUROPE ET EN OUTRE-MER

Le porteur est recommandé à la protection et aux bons offices des
autorités.

Le présent passeport délivré est valable pour ~~un an~~ 2 DEUX ANS.

Donné à Berne sous notre sceau le 27 VINGT-SEPT/
du mois DÉCEMBRE 1942 (DEUX)



LE CONSUL:



When Rokicki left Poland's diplomatic service in 1945, he was considered a very poor man. Later, he lived in a homeless shelter. Also, Ambassador Ładoś spent last years of his life in extreme poverty.

It is estimated that the number of people to whom Latin American documents were made at 8-9 thousand and Abraham Silberschein estimated it at 10 thousand. The Polish Embassy in Bern knows the names of more or less one third of them. Most of documents were sent to German-occupied Poland, including its territories annexed illegally by Germany. A large number went to Holland, where they saved numerous lives of Dutch and German Jews, some were sent also to France, Belgium, Slovakia, Hungary and other countries.

By now 682 documented survivors have been found, but given the fact that only one third of all passport owners were identified and the fate of only one sixth of them is known, we believe, that this number should be multiplied.

A house in which Rokicki falsified passports. Thunstrasse 21, Berno



FACT-CHECKING: AUSCHWITZ LULLABY

Mario Escobar is a Spanish writer, a graduate of historical studies, author of many books and articles on the Inquisition era, the Catholic Church, the Reformation and religious sects, the history of the discoveries and colonisations of North and South America, as we read in the note at the end of the book.

He published the book devoted to Auschwitz in 2015 under the title "Canción de cuna de Auschwitz". The English version of "Auschwitz Lullaby" was published in 2018, while the Polish translation of the book was published in the first months of 2019.

In the preface, the author writes about his visit to the former Auschwitz camp, which deeply etched into his memory. Presumably, during his stay, he became acquainted with the place where the tragic fate of the Sinti and Roma unfolded; the family camp called Zigeunerlager in Birkenau. As a consequence of delving into the successive stages of the tragedy of the prisoners of the Birkenau camp, he described the history of Helena Hannemann, a German nurse who was imprisoned in the Birkenau camp along with her Roma husband and five children.

The reader should start reading the book from the chapter "Historical explanations" on pages 219 to 222. The author decided, albeit partially, to explain what is untrue in the book. It turns out to be quite a lot. He changed the names of the children; one of the sons was not murdered in the gas chamber, but "was given the opportunity to escape". As the author admits, Heinrich Himmler never visited the Roma camp in Birkenau; it is uncertain whether Helene Hannemann kept a diary, or the author decided that it could be a solid foundation for the narrative that he presents in the first person.

The storyline of the novel begins in May 1943 in Berlin and transfers to Auschwitz in the same month (Chapter 3). The events of the next 6 chapters take place in May 1943, and only

chapter 9 begins in June 1943. The book ends with the liquidation of the camp in August 1944. After the epilogue, the author publishes "Historical Explanations", the "Calendar of the Gypsy Camp at Auschwitz", the "Glossary", the "Acknowledgements", information about the author, the drawing of the Gypsy camp - without providing the source - and it was done by a former prisoner and the writer of the Roma family camp - Tadeusz Joachimowski. The book is 235 pages long.

Let us take a closer look at a few excerpts from the book.

The story begins with the "Prologue" which took place in Buenos Aires in 1956. A man on a plane to Switzerland is carrying reports from genetic tests he had conducted in Auschwitz and old notebooks from the Zigeunerlager preschool, i. e. the journals of a German woman he met in Auschwitz, Helena Hannemann, the director of a Gypsy preschool in the camp. As the author puts it, this man was once known as Dr Mengele.

The peaceful life of a Berlin family was interrupted by the events of May 1943, when Helena Hennemann's husband, Johann, who was a Roma, and five children were arrested. The police informed the mother of the children, who was not a Roma woman that the arrest warrant did not apply to her; however, she decided to stay with her family. While leaving the apartment, Helena hummed the favourite lullaby of her children, written by Johannes Brahms, to calm the children down and at the same time become a symbolic transition from safe family life to camp tragedy.

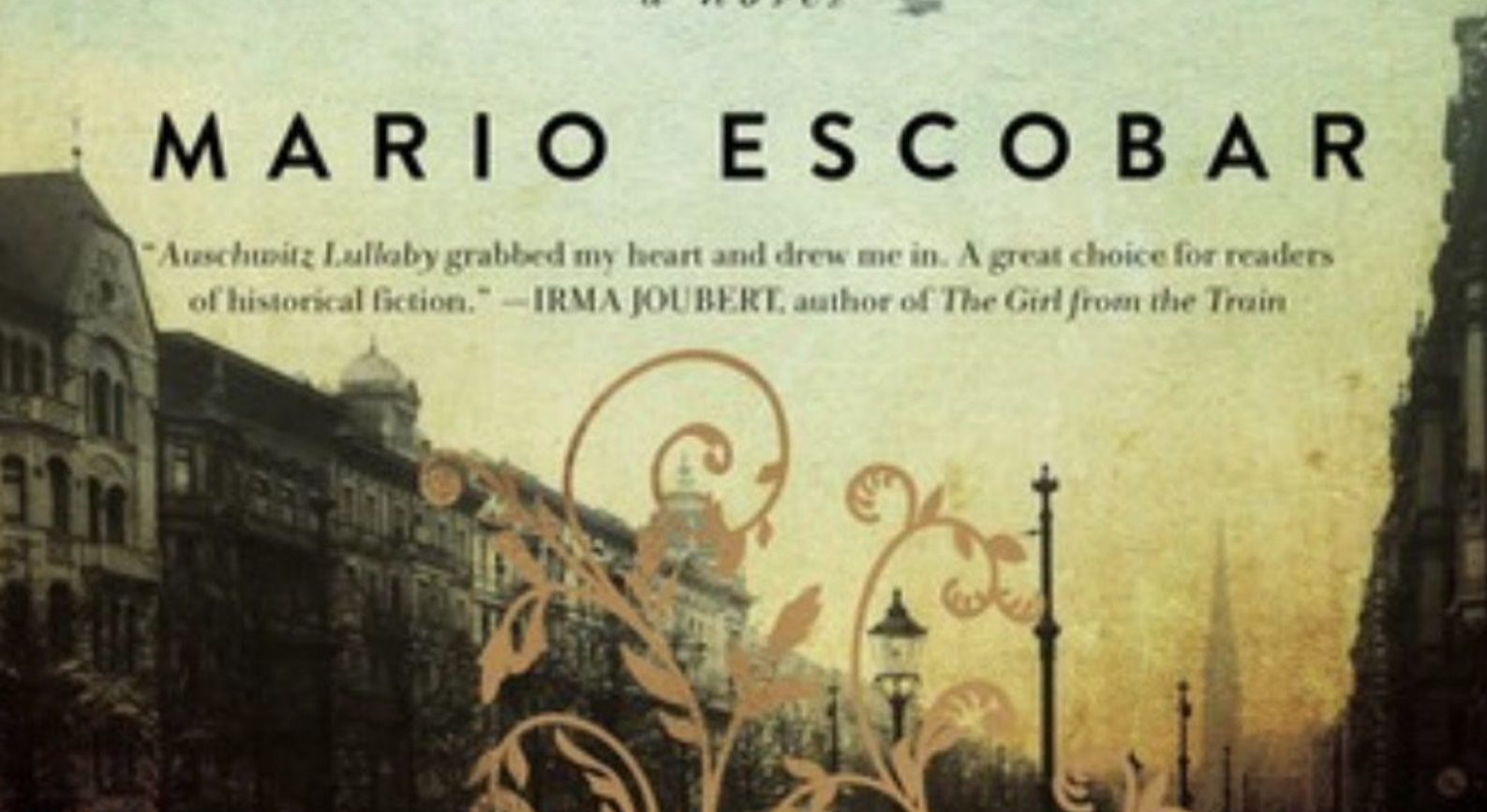


Auschwitz Lullaby

a novel

MARIO ESCOBAR

"Auschwitz Lullaby grabbed my heart and drew me in. A great choice for readers of historical fiction." —IRMA JOUBERT, author of *The Girl from the Train*



Blockführerhabe →

Brana

Kuchnia

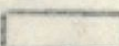

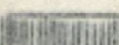




Ulica między barakami w obozie BIIc - Zigeunerlager

Kuchnia

Obóz BII d

Ulica średnicowa →

Obóz BII c

-  Baraki miesz.
-  Umywalnia
-  Sauna
-  Ubikacje
-  Ogródzenie
-  Studnia
-  Rowy

Rampa wyładownicza

Szkic sytuacyjny "Zigeunerlager" w Brzezince

The family was taken directly from their home to the railway station, placed in crowded freight wagons and transported under such conditions. Upon arrival, the men in their twenties and forties were separated from the others. Johann was included in this group.

We follow the dramatic fate of the mother of five children in the catastrophic conditions of the Birkenau camp, with no sewage system, where a part of the section is under construction, the food rations supplied are insufficient, and where conflicts ensue between prisoners.

As the author writes, the camp doctor Josef Mengele appears on the first day of their stay in the camp. The author sets the time of the event in May 1943, and this is where the first serious inaccuracy appears, as preserved SS-Hauptsturmführer documentation proves that Josef Mengele began work at KL Auschwitz on 30 May 1943, which suggests that the earliest he could have begun work as a camp doctor is in the last days of the month, not earlier. The author portrays Mengele as a very gallant scientist who addresses the prisoners, doctors and Helena Hannemann herself in a cultured manner: ... That is why I want you to become the director of the preschool, Kindergarden, which I intend to open in Auschwitz-Birkenau. (...) I will provide you with all the necessary supplies: food, new clothes, milk, films for children (p. 77).

In explaining the circumstances of the experiments, he supposedly addressed the assembled prisoners as follows: ... Dear colleagues, let me introduce you to the new members of our team. Dr Zosia Ulewicz will be my personal assistant in the laboratory that I intend to open in the sauna. Dr Berthold Epstein, a prominent paediatrician, will assist us with the children. As you can see, we receive invaluable support from the Emperor Wilhelm Institute in Berlin, especially from Director von Verschuer (p. 74).

Preserved accounts of former prisoners or their published memoirs do not confirm such intimacy between Josef Mengele and the prisoners.

The author also writes about Mengele's brutality and the illegitimacy of his experiments, which involved bonding two boys like Siamese twins, leading to the death of the children and their mother (p. 191). He also describes an argument that ensued between Helena Hannemann and Josef Mengele, during which the agitated doctor supposedly put a gun to the prisoner's temple (p. 194, 195). We also read that Josef Mengele was a football lover and watched matches in Birkenau: ... A match was about to begin; people gathered to watch the SS and Sonderkommando teams from the crematoria compete for ninety minutes on the trodden earth (p.192). As we know, football matches were played in Birkenau, but the players were prisoners, most often functionary prisoners.

The author's decision to include two camp supervisors, Marie Mandel and Irma Grese, in the story of the Zigeunerlager is completely incomprehensible. They were both stationed at the Frauenlager site in Birkenau and had no official duties in the Roma camp. Although, he justifies his decision:

...In the profiles of the Nazi guards Irma Grese and Maria Mandel, I tried to get as close as possible to the historical truth. Rumours circulated that the former, a very beautiful and yet extremely cruel young woman, was Dr Mengele's lover, who had a miscarriage during her stay in the camp. According to the book Maria Mandel, on the other hand, took a liking to one of the gypsy children, but had to split up with him when he was condemned to death. (p. 220)

As he claims ... The entire medical staff mentioned in the book are true figures (p. 220); however, he attributes too much significance to some people in the history of the Roma camp. The mentioned doctor - prisoner Roman Zenkteller (the book retains the incorrect spelling Senkteller), had plenty of tasks entrusted to him in the prisoner hospital for men, but not in the Roma camp, and had to deal with the so-called noma cases: ... Dr Senkteller and Ludwik told me that some children had a strange disease visible on their faces and genitals (p. 168).



Similarly, the story of the Roma uprising in the Litzmanstadt ghetto (p. 179) or the transfer of Roma prisoners from the ghetto to the Birkenau camp is incomprehensible, as one of the prisoners, Helena Hannemann, said: I came from the ghetto in Łódź. For whatever reason, they sent all the Gypsies there. I had lived in this hell since 1941, and my daughter was born here. (s. 116)

The Roma from the Reich were actually placed in a separate part of the Litzmanstadt ghetto in 1941 and murdered in the Kulmhof extermination camp. There was no Roma uprising there.

In a few excerpts, the author has serious problems with the topography of the Birkenau camp. He writes that toilets and showers were located in the last barracks at the end of the camp, numbers thirty-five and six (p. 39), while the highest number of the barracks in Birkenau was 32, and the sanitary barracks were not numbered. Elsewhere, he writes about trains visible from the Roma camp in June 1943: We nearly made it to the end of the camp, heading towards the bathhouse. (...) When we passed the last barrack, I noticed one of the trains. (p. 115) Perhaps the author meant the ramp built

in the camp in April 1944, which he saw during his visit to Birkenau.

The railway motif in Birkenau appears in yet another fragment; this time the author writes about a train station building (non-existent) in the Birkenau camp (p.129). The women's camp orchestra conducted by prisoner Alma Rose, an Austrian violinist, was set up right next to the aforementioned building (which, as the author admitted on p. 221, was never situated in the Roma camp) during Himmler's visit in June 1943. Meanwhile, Alma Rose was transferred to the camp on July 20, 1943 (camp number 50831) and assumed the duties of conductor a few weeks later. Surely, therefore; she was not in the Birkenau camp in June 1943.

The horrible sanitary conditions in the Sinti and Roma family camp were the main cause of the high mortality rates in this camp. The author presents this situation in chapters dated May 1943.

As he writes, orders were given to disinfect the barracks and at the same time to conduct a selection among the Roma. The presented descriptions resemble the accounts of female prisoners of the women's camp in Birkenau, where actions were taken to eliminate the outbreak of epidemics, mainly typhus. To accentuate the dramatic situation of the prisoners during the disinfection of the barracks, the author writes that in May 1943, they had to stand outside in the snow (p. 62), which, as we know, is unlikely at this time of year.

The issue of the very harsh climate in Birkenau and the difficult weather conditions resurface in other fragments of the "Lullaby". Helene Hannemann supposedly carried a bucket of waste outside, complaining: ... and I have to go out into cold darkness to pour out the contents somewhere on the embankment (p. 39). We should recall that the incident was taking place in May 1943. In the subsequent chapter, the author again writes about snow: One of the many dreams I had during those long sleepless nights finally came true: the mud of Birkenau was covered with a layer of snow. Nobody expected it at the end of May, but it still fell. (s. 59)

These are just a few significant inaccuracies noted in the book. A careful reader will find many more.

The author has certainly gathered historical information on the subject, so it should be noted that many fragments are valuable to the reader, e.g. fragments of the book concerning the organisation of preschool, concern for the life and health of children, attempts to organise education. The author tells the story of Elza Baker (registered in the camp as Schmidt), a 6-year-old girl who was taken away from German parents as an adopted Roma child and placed in the camp for the Roma. Fortunately, thanks to the intervention of the parents, the child was released from the camp (p. 196). It also portrays a Czech Jewish woman, Dinah Gottliebowa, a painter who, on Josef Mengele's orders, painted portraits of selected Roma prisoners (p. 188).

It should be added here that several portraits survived and may now be seen at the Auschwitz Museum in Block 13, which houses the permanent exhibition dedicated to the "Sinti and Roma Holocaust".

Undoubtedly, it is important to take an interest in the fate of the victims of Auschwitz, especially the groups of prisoners who are often insufficiently represented in the commemorative literature, such as the Sinti and Roma deported to Birkenau, but not presenting their situation in a thorough historical manner makes it difficult to recommend such literature. This is because it contains too many substantive and factual errors that are harmful to those who want to learn about the history of Auschwitz.

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Häftlings Nr.	Häftl. Art	Name	Vorname	Geburtsdatum			Geburtsort
				Tag	Monat	Jahr	
✓ 4899	✓ -	Dor	Eva	6	5	02	Krasnopol
✓ 4900	✓ -	Dor	Marie	8	12	39	Krasnopol
4901	✓ -	Dor	Marie	4	2	66	Przedecz Skoto
✓ 4902	✓ -	Dor	Anna	31	1	93	Petrov
✓ 4903	✓ -	Kirsch	Anna	18	9	94	Krasnopol
✓ 4904	✓ -	Dor	Olya	12	3	32	Krasnopol
✓ 4905	✓ -	Kaiser	Marie	12	8	02	Krasnopol
✓ 4906	✓ -	Kaiser	Milada	18	10	32	Krasnopol
✓ 4907	✓ -	Kaiser	Marie	6	10	34	Krasnopol
✓ 4908	✓ -	Schulke	Edith	16	3	05	Cesice
✓ 4909	✓ -	Schulke	Sidonia	22	4	36	Krasnopol
✓ 4910	✓ -	Daniel	Anna	27	6	83	Lipov
✓ 4911	✓ -	Daniel	Marie	16	3	02	Querschlag
✓ 4912	✓ -	Daniel	Marie	15	3	28	Petrov
✓ 4913	✓ -	Daniel	Beatrice	12	5	33	Petrov
✓ 4914	✓ -	Daniel	Pauline	24	4	96	Vilovec
✓ 4915	✓ -	Daniel	Ludmila	23	3	21	Petrov
✓ 4916	✓ -	Daniel	Katharina	23	11	24	Petrov
✓ 4917	✓ -	Daniel	Marie	28	3	30	Petrov
✓ 4918	✓ -	Daniel	Anna	26	7	91	Volie

„AUSCHWITZ. NOT LONG AGO. NOT FAR AWAY” IN NEW YORK

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust will present the most comprehensive Holocaust exhibition about Auschwitz ever exhibited in North America. "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." created by the Auschwitz Memorial and the Spanish company Musealia will open in New York City on May 8, 2019 and run through January 3, 2020.

At the end of march in front of the building of the New York museum a historical freight train car was placed. In such cars the German Nazis deported people into ghettos, extermination centers and concentration camps from all over occupied Europe.

For the first time, 74 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, a traveling exhibition dedicated to the historical significance of the camp will be presented to a U.S. audience. The exhibition's opening on May 8 marks the anniversary of VE Day or Victory in Europe Day, 1945, when the Allies celebrated Nazi Germany's surrender of its armed forces and the end of World War II.

"Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." will arrive in New York City after the exhibition completed a successful run in Madrid, where it was extended two times, drew more than 600,000 visitors, and was one of the most visited exhibitions in Europe last year.

Featuring more than 700 original objects, the New York presentation of the exhibition will allow visitors to experience artifacts from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum including hundreds of personal items—such as suitcases, eyeglasses, and shoes—that belonged to survivors and victims of Auschwitz.

Other artifacts include concrete posts that were part of the fence of the Auschwitz camp; fragments of an original barrack for prisoners from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz camp; a desk and other possessions of the first and the longest serving Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss; a gas mask used by the SS; Picasso's

Lithograph of Prisoner; and an original German-made Model 2 freight wagon used for the deportation of Jews to the ghettos and extermination camps in occupied Poland.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage has incorporated into the exhibition more than 100 rare artifacts from its collection that relay the experience of survivors and liberators who found refuge in the greater New York area.

"Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." was conceived of by Musealia and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and curated by an international panel of experts, including world-renowned scholars Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt, Dr. Michael Berenbaum, and Paul Salmons, in an unprecedented collaboration with historians and curators at the Research Center at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, led by Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz.

The exhibition traces the development of Nazi ideology and tells the transformation of an ordinary Polish town of Oświęcim where during the occupation the German Nazis created the largest concentration camp and extermination center—at which ca. 1 million Jews, and tens of thousands of others, were murdered. Victims included Polish political prisoners, Sinti and Roma, Soviet POWs, and other groups persecuted by Nazi ideology, such as: disabled, asocials, Jehovah's Witnesses or homosexuals. In addition, the exhibition contains artifacts that depict the world of the perpetrators—SS men who created and operated the largest of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camps.







Securing and packing objects for the exhibition. Photo: Marek Lach

"While commemorating the victims of Auschwitz we should also feel moral discomfort. Antisemitic, hateful, xenophobic ideologies that in the past led to the human catastrophe of Auschwitz, seem not to be erased from our lives today. That is why studying the Holocaust shouldn't be limited to history classes. It must become part of curricula of political and civic education, ethics, media, and religious studies. This exhibition is one of the tools we can use," said Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

"Six million Jews were murdered and Jewish ways of life were nearly stamped out forever. Documented facts of this history, original records and photographs, and witnesses' accounts are our strongest answers to those who deny or minimize the Holocaust. We must ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust are not lost to fading memories," said Michael S. Glickman, President & CEO of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. "Learning the history of the Holocaust as a history of individuals is an act of resistance. The Museum will present this groundbreaking exhibition to ensure that we mobilize the painful lessons of the past to create a world worthy of our children's futures."

"Seventy-three years ago, after the world saw the haunting pictures from Auschwitz, no one in their right mind wanted to be associated with Nazis. But today, 73 years and three generations later, people have forgotten, or they never knew," said Ron Lauder, Founder and Chairman of the The Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation Committee and President of the World Jewish Congress. "This exhibit reminds them, in the starkest ways, where anti-Semitism can ultimately lead and the world should never go there again. The title of this exhibit is so appropriate because this was not so long ago, and not so far away."









"In the wake of alarming studies that point to the ways in which collective Holocaust memory is disappearing, the Museum is increasingly focused on ensuring that visitors not only walk through the doors of our lower Manhattan home, but also leave with a more concrete and expansive understanding of the Holocaust," said Bruce C. Ratner, Chairman of the Museum's Board of Trustees.

"Auschwitz did not start with the gas chambers. Hatred does not happen overnight: it builds up slowly among people. When we had the vision to create the exhibition we conceived its narrative as an opportunity to better understand how such a place could come to exist, and as warning of where hatred can take us to," said Luis Ferreiro, Director of Musealia and the exhibition project.

"All through the exhibition there are stories—stories about individuals and families, stories about communities and organizations, stories about ideologies that teach people to hate, and responses that reveal compassion and love. There are stories of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders, stories with heroes and villains—stories that all merge into an epic story of

a continent marked by war and genocide," said Chief Curator Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt.

The exhibition features artifacts and materials on loan from more than 20 institutions and private collections around the world. In addition to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust from where most of the objects come, participating institutions include Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oświęcim, the Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen in Oranienburg, and the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide in London.

GENERAL INFORMATION & OPENING HOURS
& TICKETS are already available at the
website:
Auschwitz.nyc

"A PROMISE TO MY FATHER"

Max Eisen is a father, grandfather, great-grandfather, retired businessman, educator, an award winning author and holds an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Trent University. He is also a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp who has spent the last seventy-four years of his life working to keep a promise to his father.



1940, photo of Max (centre) with his mother, father and two brothers (a census photo that was required of all Jewish families)

In July 1944, Max Eisen stood on the opposite side of the fence from his father and uncle for only moments as they had been selected out for medical testing. Max's father and uncle were all who remained – Max's mother, baby sister, two brothers, grandmother, grandfather and aunt had all been sent directly to the gas chamber upon their arrival only a month earlier.

In the rushed moments of their final goodbye, Max's father blessed him with a classic Jewish prayer and made a request of Max: "If you

survive, you must tell the world what happened here."

Max was 15 years old when he and his family were arrested and deported to Auschwitz during the Hungarian transports. His father and uncle were his guardian angels during the first month of life in Auschwitz, giving him extra pieces of food and shielding him, to the best of their abilities, from the realities of life in this hell on earth.





TRENT UNIVERSITY

The Honourable

Max T...

Director of Law

with a

graduate

by

...

...



UNIVERSITY

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Department of Education

College of Education

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Once his father and uncle were selected out, Max was taken on a work detail where he was badly beaten by one of the guards. Dragged back to Auschwitz at the end of the day, Max was left at the hospital in Block 21. Max's injury was severe and his 3-day furlough at the hospital wasn't enough for his recovery. Therefore, he was on a stretcher destined to be delivered to the gas chamber – this wasn't, however, to be the end of Max's journey.

A Polish political prisoner, Dr. Tadeusz Orzeszko – chief surgeon of the surgery ward - pulled Max off of his stretcher and brought him into the prep room of the surgery where he became the cleaner of the surgery department. Max had learned numerous medical procedures and was expert at maintaining a clean and sanitary operating room. Working in the hospital had also kept Max out of the winter elements and given him a small extra portion of food – both of which would provide Max with the strength that he would need to endure the next part of his journey.

Leaving Auschwitz in January of 1945, the Death March took Max through a series of camps in the most extreme winter conditions before being liberated from Ebensee on May 6th, 1945.

While Max's return to freedom was difficult – regaining his physical and mental health, returning home to find only one surviving cousin from his family, being turned away from the Eisen family homestead by a neighbour who had moved in, escaping communism - he eventually made his way to Canada to start a new life.

However, it wasn't until Max's retirement in 1988 that he began to reflect on his life as a Holocaust survivor. And he began to tell his story.

Max has spent the last 31 years fully engaged in Holocaust and human rights education. Not only does he recount his personal story as he travels across Canada speaking to groups, he shares lessons about the consequences of hatred in all of its forms with people of all ages. He has spoken to

tens of thousands of students in hundreds of schools starting with the message: "It all started with words."

"I believe that education is the only way we are going to shift the cycle of hatred and intolerance," said Dr. Eisen. "Antisemitism and hate of all kinds did not end in 1945. It is alive and well today. The reason I go out and speak every time I am asked is to try to do my part to open people's eyes up to this hatred and to show them they each have the power to change this cycle."

In addition to his work with students in schools, Max has travelled with students, adults and high level delegations of police, educators and politicians to sites of the Holocaust, including Auschwitz.

Max's story also came full circle when he testified against former German SS accountant Oskar Gröning and former German SS guard Reinhold Hanning.

The promise to his father - always in the back of his mind - was formally documented in 2016 when Max published his memoir, "By Chance Alone." The memoir has been recognized with award nominations. Just last month, Max's memoir was a finalist – and winner - in the Canada Reads 2019 competition – an annual battle of the books to determine the one book that every Canadian should read.

At 90 years old, Max shows no signs of slowing down. His drive and determination are stronger than ever as he is once again witnessing a surge of hatred and intolerance in Canada and all around the world. "We have a lot of work to do and I don't intend on stopping. I have a promise to fulfill to my father: telling the story of our collective suffering so it will never be forgotten. My job is not yet done."

MASS MURDER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THE HOLOCAUST

The latest International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) publication “Mass Murder of People with Disabilities and the Holocaust” edited by Brigitte Bailer and Juliane Wetzel presents the results of the latest research on these murders in the German occupied territories, as discussed at an IHRA conference held in Bern in November 2017.

In Germany and annexed Austria, people with disabilities were the first to fall victim to National Socialist mass murder, propagated under the euphemistic term of “euthanasia”. For racist and economic reasons, they were deemed unfit to live. The means and methods used in these crimes were applied later during the Holocaust — perpetrators of these first murders became experts in the death camps of the so-called “Aktion Reinhardt”.

Over the course of World War II, the National Socialists aimed to exterminate people with disabilities in the occupied territories of Western Europe, and also in Eastern Europe.

‘The fact that the National Socialists tested their killing methods on people with disabilities before applying these methods to perpetrate the mass murder of European Jewry sinks easily into oblivion, given the enormity of the Holocaust. After the establishment of memorials at the former killing sites of the T4 program, such as Hadamar (Germany) or Hartheim (Austria)—to name just two—only in 2014 was a visible monument and information center opened at the historic location, Tiergartenstraße 4, where the “euthanasia” program was planned and organized under the code name “T4.” The website [www. Gedenkort-T4.eu](http://www.Gedenkort-T4.eu)—currently only in German—provides a great deal of information on the Nazi “euthanasia” program,’ we read in the



The publication "Mass Murder of People with Disabilities and the Holocaust" is available for free in the PDF format. Print copy of the book can be purchased [here](#).

The IHRA contributes to the body of scholarship in the field of Holocaust Studies by carrying out research projects and hosting academic conferences. We disseminate our research findings and conference papers free of charge through our publication series.

In the IHRA Publication Series include Refugee Policies from 1933 until Today: Challenges and Responsibilities (2018), Research in Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust: A Dialogue Beyond Borders (2017); Bystanders, Rescuers or Perpetrators? The Neutral Countries and the Shoah (2016); and Killing Sites: Research and Remembrance (2015).





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PUBLISHER

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Paweł Sawicki

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka

EDITED BY

Bartosz Bartyzel

Imogen Dalziel

Marek Lach

Łukasz Lipiński

CONTACT

memoria@auschwitz.org

