

From the Publisher

The International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim is proud to present the first in a series of books that will appear under the joint title *Voices of Memory*. This series arose as a response to requests, which we have frequently received from participants in the specialist seminars and conferences that we have organized at the Museum over the last ten years, for additional source material. Several thousand people have attended various kinds of courses, postgraduate programs, and conferences. Many of them want to continue learning about the tragic history of Auschwitz, the Nazi German death camp, and, in the case of teachers, to share this knowledge with their students.

Each of these books is devoted to one of the numerous issues in the complicated history of this camp, and contains, in addition to a scholarly article discussing the subject in detail, a selection of source material from the archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. These include German records created in the various offices of the Nazi state and the departments in the camp, as well as excerpts from accounts submitted after the war by former prisoners. In the more than 60 years of its existence, the Museum has amassed many thousands of accounts and memoirs, as well as a rich collection of photographs. For the historian, this material is a priceless source of information and, in the case of some issues, the only source making it possible to learn the truth about the camp, since the camp authorities deliberately falsified certain events in the official records. This applies to the execution of prisoners in the camp, and matters connected with organizing the mass killing of Jews. In such cases, eyewitness accounts of these events are the only way of learning the truth.

The accounts presented in this volume are the testimony of specific people known to us by name, which is all the more reason to remember that the tragedy of Auschwitz is, at one and the same time, the tragedy of the more than one million victims, and also the tragedy of each individual person.

We hope that the publication of the series *Voices of Memory* will help readers to grasp more fully the uniqueness of the Auschwitz camp, its complicated history, and the contemporary significance of this place for Europe and for the world.

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