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THE LAST STAGE OF THE FUNCTIONING OF ZIGEUNERLAGER IN BIRKENAU CAMP - NEW RESEARCH FROM HISTORIANS OF THE AUSCHWITZ MUSEUM

YAD VASHEM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: 'TIME, PLACE AND RELEVANCE' **HOLOCAUST CENTER OF NEW ZEALAND**

THE ANNE FRANK HOUSE **IN VIRTUAL REALITY**

'FACES OF AUSCHWITZ': **LEARNING HISTORY IN COLOR**

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THE HOLOCAUST CENTER OF NEW ZEALAND 'FACES OF AUSCHWITZ': LEARNING HISTORY IN COLOR THE ANNE FRANK HOUSE IN VIRTUAL REALITY E-GUIDE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (ITS)

EDITORIAL

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-chief

On August 2, we will commemorate the 74th anniversary of the liquidation of the so-called Zigeunerlager at the German Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp. In this issue, we publish an article by historians of the Research Center of the Auschwitz Museum which analyzes the last stage of the existence of the Roma sector. So far, the number of victims of the liquidation of the Zigeunerlager has been estimated at almost 3,000 people. An in-depth analysis of documents shows that, on the afternoon of August 2, there were approximately 4,200-4,400 Roma in Birkenau: men, women and children. All of them were taken from their barracks and, despite desperate resistance, loaded onto trucks and then taken to the gas chambers of crematoria II and V.

Another important topic is the analysis of testimonies and documents regarding the so-called Roma uprising, which was to take place on May 16, 1944. The case of passive resistance did indeed occur, but at the beginning of April 1944 instead, and the circumstances of this event are far different than has so far been reported.

In July's Memoria, we also summarize the Yad Vashem International Educational Conference; we write about the 'Faces of Auschwitz' project; the activities of the New Zealand Holocaust Center; virtual reality in the Anne Frank House; and an e-guide of the International Tracing Service.

I also encourage all our readers to co-operate with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we could write about. We also accept proposals for articles. Please do share information about this magazine with others, particularly via social media.

Our e-mail: memoria@auschwitz.org

LINKING THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD

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

Young people from the Lower Silesia Special School and Education Centre No. 12 for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired in Wrocław visited the Memorial under an internship project implemented jointly with the Voluntary Service Office of the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

Not only did they receive the opportunity to work with conservators of the Museum, but also visited the sites of the former camp, and, as volunteers, helped with the 78th anniversary commemoration of the first deportation of Poles to the German Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz.

"We look at this project and our presence from a historical perspective because, in Nazi Germany, the deaf and people with other disorders were sterilised and sentenced to death. Our youth, in spite of the difficult start in life, are precious and we want to show the world that we can, too. Here, we can help save the artefacts and commemorate those who died here. In our centre, we have a group of carpenters and restorers. Young people can work on high-quality equipment in the Museum's woodwork shop," said Piotr Kondratowicz, the group's educator.

Mr Kondratowicz underlined that the visit to the Museum was a compelling emotional experience for the young people.

MORE



Professor Deborah Lipstadt on Facebook and Holocaust denial: 'As a person who created and provides a platform for the dissemination of information on an awesome scale, Zuckerberg must recognize that theirs [Holocaust deniers] is not a cognitive error or a regrettable misinterpretation or failure in judgment that can be rectified by showing them documentation or evidence.'

READ MORE

FUTURE TENSE

How One of the Internet's Biggest History Forums Deals With Holocaust Deniers

And how Facebook should, too.

By JOHANNES BREIT
JULY 20, 2018 • 5:32 PM

AskHistorians: 'Holocaust denial serves Nazism, and Nazism is an ideology that at its very core advocates for violence. The only way to fight this morally and factually wrong viewpoint is to deny these positions a platform.'

READ MORE

Additional Call for Applications for EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) Fellowships: Additional weeks of access at a limited number of EHRI institutions. The deadline for applications is August 31, 2018. Applicants will be notified during the second half of September.

DETAILS





WARNINGS AND READINESS TO PROTECT

An international conference on the road to the Holocaust and other Genocides.

'Sinatur', Lyngby, Denmark 26-28 September 2018

Genocides do not happen out of the blue. This extraordinay conference



Conference fee: 900 DKK or 150 US \$ Students: 700 DKK or 120 \$ The fee covers 2 x lunch,

The fee covers 2 x lunch, 2 x dinner, and coffee breaks plus the anthology 'Pre-Genocide - Warnings and Readiness to Protect'.

Tilmelding/Registration Send an e-mail to: Humanity in Action (Denmark) is pleased to announce the conference 'Pre-Genocide. Warnings and Readiness to Protect', to be held from September 26-28, 2018. The conference reflects on the question of whether the world is better equipped today to react to the warning signs of genocide.

DETAILS

THE LAST STAGE OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ZIGEUNERLAGER IN THE BIRKENAU CAMP

(MAY - AUGUST 1944)

Here, we publish a fragment of new research by historians of the Auschwitz Museum dedicated to the history of the *Zigeunerlager* at the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp. The entire article will be published in the next edition of *Auschwitz Studies*.

Was there a Roma uprising in Birkenau?

A fragment of the account of Polish political prisoner Tadeusz Joachimowski, report writer of section BIIe of Birkenau, served as a basis for the hypothesis on the Roma insurrection in May 1944:

"On May 15, 1944, Boniqut [SS-Unterscharführer Georg Boniqut worked as Rapportführer in the Roma camp] came to me and told me that the situation with the Gypsy camp was bad. It was decided that the Gypsy camp be liquidated. He got the order from the Political Department, transmitted to him by Dr. Mengele, on the liquidation of the Gypsy camp by killing with gas all those Gypsies who were still alive. At the time, there were about 6,500 Gypsies in the camp. Boniqut told me to inform those Gypsies in whom I had complete trust about it. He asked to prevent them "not to let themselves be slaughtered like sheep". He also said that "Lagersperre" will be the signal to begin the action and that the Gypsies should not leave their barracks. Boniqut assisted some Gypsies himself. I also performed the task entrusted to me in secret.

On the next day, [i.e. May 16] at about 7 p.m., I heard the sound of a gong announcing "Lagersperre". Cars arrived in front of the Gypsy camp and an escort of about 50-60 SS men armed with machine guns left them. The SS men surrounded the barracks inhabited by the Gypsies. Some SS men entered the habitable

barrack shouting "Los, los!" Complete silence fell over the barracks. The Gypsies gathered there - armed with knives, shovels, iron, crowbars and stones - were waiting for the further course of events. They did not leave the barracks. After a short consultation, they went to the "Blockführerstube", the commandant of the action. After some time I heard a whistle. The SS men surrounding the barracks left their posts, got in the car and drove away. "Lagersperre" was called off.

The next day (May 17, 1944), Lagerführer Bonigut came to me and said to me that, "For now, the Gypsies are saved."

The importance attributed to this account probably resulted from the fact that Tadeusz Joachimowski, who made numerous exhaustive statements and gave evidence after the war, would turn out to be a mostly reliable witness and, due to the function that he served in the camp, he used to be rather well-informed. As at that time, other equally exhaustive accounts of former Roma prisoners were missing, some researchers would tend to treat it as substantially sufficient and, to some extent, incontestable.

It should be mentioned, however, that among quite an important number of accounts included in the Museum archive until the 1970s, such an uprising is never mentioned, nor the attempts of armed resistance of the Roma towards the SS' intention to liquidate the Zigeunerlager.



Similarly, the prisoners of the neighboring men's camp BIId did not mention the Roma uprising in their statements and evidence given after the war, and even those who were incarcerated there for many months and knew a lot of Roma.

Statements and periodical reports which reached the Home Army Headquarters in Warsaw in the following weeks do not include any mention of the attempts to liquidate the Roma camp in May 1944 either. They are also absent in the reports sent from KL Auschwitz by the camp resistance movement, preserved for the period May – August 1944 in a quite significant quantity.

It was possible to collect some accounts by Roma witnesses concerning these events as late as the turn of the 20th and 21st century. However, they are usually quite laconic, which should not surprise anybody as their authors were very young during their incarceration in Birkenau and were making these statements over half a century after these events. Sometimes, however, they contain a lot of surprisingly detailed information, for example the exact date of the uprising (May 16, 1944) as well as the data concerning the number of the Roma leaving Auschwitz in transports, almost exactly matching the findings by Danuta Czech. Nevertheless, this does not seem particular in any way; very often, witnesses making their statements after such a long time wish, following their best intentions,

to support their memory by referring to historical literature, for fear of making a mistake.

Referring to essential elements of description included in the accounts above, it is necessary to emphasize that the Roma incarcerated in Birkenau were probably aware of the growing danger of total or partial liquidation of the camp for more than a year. It thus cannot be excluded that at least some of them did begin to collect and hide primitive weapons which they could use in that definitive moment in order, as Joachimowski wrote it, to at least try to give the end of their lives some value.

However, it is doubtful that the SS men, having received the order to liquidate the camp and drive the Roma who remained there to the gas chambers, would not perform the action for fear of potential confrontation with prisoners. After all, they had a huge advantage in weapons: one or two SS platoons, equipped with rifles and machine guns, would have been able to simply shoot all prisoners trying to resist them.

What is more, the SS men standing perhaps helplessly in front of the closed barracks would have had to become suspicious after a short time and thus, the Roma would have lost the only advantage they had – the surprise factor.







Finally, the most important aspect: such an event would have been remembered by practically all the Roma in the camp, who, shut in the barracks, would certainly have been aware of the danger. Survivors' accounts, as have been presented above, include very few (and/or late) mentions of the sense of danger on that critical day or of the intention to begin the fight with the SS.

If the SS men really had retreated, for fear of confrontation with the Roma, from performing the order assigned to them, the news would have spread among other Birkenau prisoners. From that moment, the prisoners would have known that, in case of selection and transport to the gas chambers, they would be equally determined to save their lives. For this reason, the SS men, if they had really been confronted with the Roma refusing to perform the order, could have not showed any weakness or retreat.

The story includes a few more enigmatic threads. For example, it is not clear when this supposed attempt to liquidate the camp could have taken place. Bonigut very generally mentioned only "May or June". Joachimowski, in turn, in his subsequent copies of the account, was later including important modifications, changing May 15 (when he was supposed to learn about the SS intentions) into April 15, 1944. Finally, in his next account he stated that the first attempt to liquidate the Roma camp took place "in early April 1944".

Trying to find the most probable explanation of the events which took place in the Roma camp in the spring of 1944 among the pieces of very divergent information from former prisoners, as well as referring to preserved documents from the SS office, the authors of the present study have concluded that:

- In early April 1944 (before the deportation of Jews from Hungary), in the face of the growing deficit of workforce in concentration camps, the SS men decided to assign a bigger group of Roma to work in the industry, mainly young and strong men.
- This happened a month after partial liquidation of the BIIb camp in Birkenau was announced, where six months before, the Jews from the ghetto in Theresienstadt had been placed. It is necessary here to refer to the circumstances in which this crime was committed: on March 7, 1944, the SS men led the Jews, who arrived in September 1943 in

the first transports from Theresienstadt to separated barracks in the Blla quarantine camp. The reason was supposed to be to 'travel to work in Heydebreck' (Kędzierzyn-Koźle). At that time, the relocation of prisoners for such reasons was quite common in Auschwitz; therefore, it did not result in any major anxiety among those selected. The next evening, the SS men led these Jews to lorries which transported them directly to death in the gas chambers. The information on these events soon reached the Roma incarcerated in the Blle camp; some of them had probably even witnessed this crime themselves, as their barracks were located at a distance of only 100 – 200 meters from the crematoria.

- When in early April 1944 the news about the planned big transport of Roma to work in a different concentration camp spread, some of them treated it as an SS plan to liquidate the next "family" camp in Birkenau this time BIIe. Maybe the information was indeed transmitted to his Roma friends by report writer Tadeusz Joachimowski.
- Finally, when soon after the SS men appeared in the Roma camp and ordered young Roma men to leave for work in Germany, to their surprise they came up against passive resistance and the refusal to perform the order. Maybe only then they realized (or some prisoners explained to them) what the reasons of such behavior of the Roma were. The SS men, without the intention to provoke riots and wanting only to calm the mood in the camp, told Joachimowski to prepare the list of Roma able to work, which was supposed to ease these concerns. It all seems to show that the plan brought the result desired by the SS as nothing is known about the expressions of rebellion or resistance when the lists were being prepared or later, directly when the transport was formed and when it left.

It is also necessary to emphasize that no sources, including the account by Tadeusz Joachimowski, mention the confrontations which were supposed to occur between the Roma defending themselves and the SS. In such context, referring to an 'uprising', or a 'revolt', seems to constitute a semantic misuse.

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So, if one wanted to search for fighting in the history of the Zigeunerlager, or for the Roma actively resisting the SS men, the events which took place in Birkenau on August 2 1944 match such descriptions much more accurately. This is how former prisoner Alfred Fiderkiewicz described them:

"...uniforms began to swarm in the Gypsy camp. A few hundreds of them must have come. A line of lorries is coming. We hear the scream: "Raus! Raus!" The Gypsy barrack in front of our block is closed. The SS men are trying to open it, but the door must be locked from the inside. They are beating rotten boards with crowbars. They are coming inside as one body. We hear screams, shots, but nobody is leaving. One more group of the SS men is intruding the barrack. After a while we see them drag out two young Gypsy girls screaming piercingly. Others are attacking the torturers, scratching their faces. They are defending themselves with gunstocks. The SS men are dragging kids' legs and an elderly man is trying to defend them but one kick is enough to disable him and take him to the lorry. No one leaves the barrack without resistance. Everyone is fighting. We hear the SS men screaming and the Gypsies shouting. Women are the fiercest in their fight – they are younger and stronger – protecting their children. The fight lasted until dusk and it seems that everyone dragged to the lorries expressed some resistance. This is how the remaining Gypsies were murdered, in a number from three to four thousand. On that same night, our camp was covered with smoke, as dark as tar."

Liquidation of the Roma camp in Birkenau on August 2, 1944

The accounts of both Roma as well as Polish witnesses reveal – albeit, unfortunately very incomplete and differing in their details – the following image of the events preceding the liquidation of the Roma camp.

According to Tadeusz Joachimowski, in the second half of May 1944, he prepared a list of 3,200 Roma who were supposed to be relocated from Auschwitz; he also added that on the eve of liquidation of the BIIe camp, there were 3,300 Roma incarcerated there. It could thus be concluded that in late spring 1944, c. 6,500 Roma were supposed to remain in this camp. However, Joachimowski

mentioned that 3,229 prisoners were supposed to take part in the last roll call, including 1,575 women.

In another version of his account, revised and presented some time later, Joachimowski stated that in early June 1944 not 3,200, but 2,300 Roma were deported from Birkenau, the number which matches the reality much better, and that in the final period of the existence of the *Ziegeunerlager* there were about 3,500 prisoners incarcerated there.

Dr. Rudolf Weisskopf-Vitek, a doctor in the Roma camp, estimated that in the summer of 1944, 3,000 Roma were sent to other concentration camps, while 3,800 persons were later murdered in the gas chambers in Birkenau.

Tadeusz Śnieszko stated that on August 1, 1944, there were 5,000 people in the Roma camp.

Hermann Diamanski, the last *Lagerälteste* in the Roma camp, said that he took part in the selection of two to three thousand young Roma able to work, who were transferred from Birkenau to the mother camp. Soon after, the remaining Roma (two-thirds of their initial number) were murdered in the gas chambers. In his testimony before the tribunal in Frankfurt, he gave a more precise number of 2,000 people.

Felix Amann remembered that, right before the liquidation, there were 4,200 people in the Roma camp.

Marian Perski quoted the biggest number - about 7,000 - but it must have referred to the number of prisoners in the Roma camp before its partial evacuation in spring 1944. Elisabeth Guttenberger stated that during the last stage of the existence of the Roma camp, there were 4,500 Roma incarcerated there, who were all murdered.

Prisoner Michalý Keéri-Szántó, a doctor who remained in the neighboring BIIe section of the camp on August 2, 1944 (where the Jews from Hungary had already been placed) said that on that day, there were 3,540 Roma incarcerated there, all of whom were later transported to the gas chambers.

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Name, Vorname: Dienstgrad, Einheit: Klinische Diagnose:	Anlage (69/41)
Anschrift der einsendenden Diensts Zigeunerlager Auschwitz	stelle: HKrankenbau
Bemerkungen:	Der 1.Lagerarzt K.L. Aus chwitz II Lulluple SS-Hauptsturmführer. (Stempel, Unterschrift)

A request for histopathologic examination of the head of a 12-year old Roma boy signed by Dr. Josef Mengele

Miklós Nyiszli, the author of famous memoirs and a pathologist working in the nearby crematorium wrote that, on the day of liquidation of the Roma camp, there were 4,500 prisoners remaining there.
Rudolf Höss, commandant of KL Auschwitz, testified before Polish court that 4,000 Roma were murdered at that time.
It can thus be noticed that the number of Roma murdered in early August 1944 differ significantly between witnesses, but in general they are closer to over four thousand than to three thousand.

The study which has been most often referred to by researchers and journalists is *Kalendarz wydarzeń w KL Auschwitz (Calendar of Events in KL Auschwitz)* by Danuta Czech, published successively in subsequent editions of "Zeszyty oświęcimskie" (*Auschwitz Studies*) in the early 1960s, as well as being published separately in various languages thirty years later.

According to the author, what should be considered as the beginning of the *Zigeunerlager* liquidation action is the transfer from the Blle section in Birkenau of over 1,500

Roma to blocks 10 and 11 on May 23, 1944. They were supposed to be waiting there for transfer to other camps in the Reich. Under the date of July 29, 1944, the *Calendar* presents the number of men in the BIIe camp as 1,495 persons. According to Czech, the number of women incarcerated there at that time 'remains unknown'.

Nevertheless, three days later (August 1), according to the Employment Department's data the number of prisoners increased unexpectedly to 2,815 prisoners. According to Danuta Czech, this resulted from additions made by the person preparing the list (an SS man or a prisoner–schreiber) to the number of men and women incarcerated in the Roma camp.

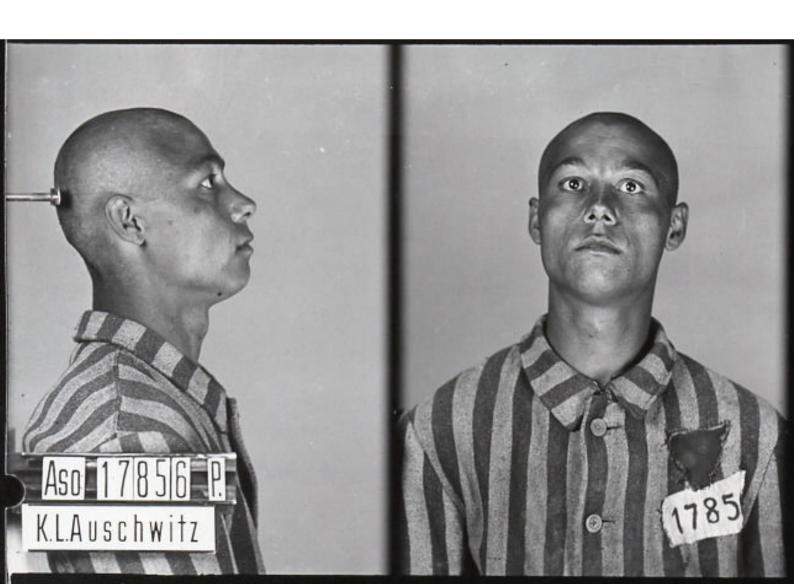
On the day that followed, the decisive liquidation phase began: 1,408 men and women were led from the mother camp (supposedly Blocks 10 and 11) to the rail ramp in Birkenau and then transported to KL Buchenwald. 2,897 Roma still remaining in Birkenau were then killed by the SS in the gas chambers of crematorium V.

The reconstruction of events by Danuta Czech presented above was later generally approved and often used by the authors of various commemorative texts as well as quoted while honoring subsequent anniversaries of the liquidation of the Roma camp.

Today, it is difficult to state why no one has so far paid attention to a number of inconsistencies in the argumentation by Czech as well as to visible discrepancies in the accounts by witnesses as well as in other sources to which she referred. According to the numbers presented by Czech in the *Calendar*, in the month of May there were about 6,500 Roma in the BIIe camp; more than two months later, at the turn of July and August 1944, only 4,303 remained alive (both in the Auschwitz main camp and Birkenau). It should be assumed that at that time, over two thousand Roma disappeared from the SS registers in an inexplicable way. Such an important decrease in the number of prisoners of the Roma camp at that time is not confirmed by any preserved sources.

For reasons which are difficult to guess, Danuta Czech did not use the collection of daily reports on the number of female prisoners in the Roma camp, preserved for the period from July 17 to 31 1944, in her study. They show that at that time, this number was subject to minor changes and was much higher, oscillating around c. 3,400.

These documents are essential as the data which they include challenge practically the entire argumentation of the author of *Calendar*.





Postwar photograph of SS-Unterscharführer Fritz Buntrock who supervised the liquidation of the Roma camp

It results from analysis of the preserved sources that, most probably, on July 18, nearly 2,000 Roma were taken from Birkenau: 535 women and about 1,400 men. They were placed in Auschwitz I, in Blocks 9 and 10 (women on the first floor of Block 10), separated from the remaining part of the camp with barbed wire fence. In this way, about 2,900 women and 1,500 men (in total 4,400 people) remained in section BIIe in Birkenau.



The last group of Roma was relocated from Birkenau to Auschwitz on August 1. They spent only one night there and then, together with other prisoners brought there nearly two weeks earlier, were led to the ramp in Birkenau. This is where the dramatic scenes of them saying farewell to the members of their families remaining in BIIe camp took place, as so often described by eyewitnesses. Next, these Roma were led to railway wagons and transported to KL Buchenwald and KL Ravensbrück.

On the afternoon of August 2nd, about 4,200 – 4,300 Roma were incarcerated in Birkenau: men, women and children. They were all subsequently led out from the barracks and, in spite of their desperate resistance, loaded onto lorries and transported to the gas chambers next to crematoria II and V.

Camp registration photo of Rudolf Richter who was deported to Auschwitz on July 9, 1941 and perished in the camp on June 24, 1942

'TIME, PLACE AND RELEVANCE'

Over 350 international leaders in Holocaust education, from five continents and 50 countries, gathered in the last week of June at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies for its 10th International Conference on Holocaust Education, entitled 'Time, Place and Relevance'.

The conference presented lectures, panel discussions and interactive workshops by some of the world's leading Holocaust historians, scholars and educators. Each day of the four-day conference tackled a range of aspects connected to Holocaust education in the 21st century. The mornings were dedicated to plenary sessions, while afternoons included breakout sessions allowing participants to play a more active role in the proceedings. The conference was held in English with simultaneous translation to French, Russian and Spanish.

Director of the International School's Jewish World and International Seminars Department Ephraim Kaye explained that the goal of the conference was to "provide an international," intergenerational and multicultural forum for an experiential dialogue on how to preserve the legacy of the Holocaust and how to face the challenges of ensuring that Holocaust education is relevant for years to come."

Many experts from Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies' International Institute for Holocaust Research and Archives Division presented topics related to their area of expertise. One of the first lectures of the conference was delivered by Yad Vashem Senior Historian and Editor-in-Chief of the academic journal Yad Vashem Studies Dr. David Silberklang on the topic of "What Was the Holocaust?"





Dr. Silberklang explained how, in late spring of 1944, the Germans carried out an operation to gather and deport all the Jews located on the scattered islands of Greece. "Despite the advancements of the Allied Forces throughout Europe and the pending collapse of Germany as World War II was ending, it was a 'seek-and-destroy' mission of the Nazis to murder all the Jews of Europe and North Africa."

Former Israeli Ambassador to the United States, MK Michael Oren, addressed the plenary at the conference, pointing out how "all Jews, especially of my generation, walk around with their own personal Holocaust." Oren recalled that growing up Jewish in the United States, the Holocaust wasn't discussed as openly as it is today – it was "just beneath the surface." He applauded the participants for their dedication in educating and keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive and relevant for future generations.

Director of Yad Vashem's Visual Center Liat Benhabib gave a fascinating lecture, entitled "From Newsreels to YouTube: Film and the Holocaust." She stated: "Filmmakers try to reconstruct memory – and today, everyone is a filmmaker. Especially as survivors pass away, I believe that film will become even more important in Holocaust remembrance and education."

On the last day of the conference, participants had the opportunity to meet and interact with several Holocaust survivors from a variety of locations and backgrounds. Frieda Kliger, whose image was used on all of the conference materials and posters, was in attendance. One of the only members of her family to survive the Holocaust, Kliger described how after liberation she noticed "only sadness in people's eyes."

She and her late husband were among the first to marry after liberation in the Bergen Belsen DP Camp on December 18, 1945. "I chose to put life into his eyes," she remembers. Kliger now has two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, some of whom were present at the conference.











Conversation between Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Piotr M.A. Cywiński

The culminating point of the 10th International Conference was a candid conversation between Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev and Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Piotr M.A. Cywiński. These two institutions represent two aspects of Holocaust remembrance and education: Auschwitz-Birkenau, the authentic site of the murder of over a million Jews during the Holocaust; and Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, complete with its world renowned Museum Complex, Archives and Museums, Art and Artifacts Collection.

Each of these institutions contribute and shape the way the world relates to the Holocaust, remembers it, and teaches it to future generations. During the session, which was moderated by Director of Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research Dr. Iael Nidam Orvieto, the two shared their perspectives of where Holocaust remembrance and education is headed in an age when there will be no more Holocaust survivors left to tell their stories.

stresses the human experience in its museums as well as in its educational approach and programs, Cywiński stated: "If the Holocaust is only part of history, it isn't enough. It needs to be part of *our* history."

Throughout the conference participants had the opportunity to network with fellow educators from around the world, thus gaining new ideas for effective teaching methods. Concluded one educator from the United States: "The 'crosspollination' exchange of ideas and points of view between people from different backgrounds will only enrich the educational experiences in each of our classrooms."

The International Conference was generously supported by Yad Vashem's worldwide partners in Holocaust education: the Adelson Family Foundation, the Asper Foundation, the Azrieli Foundation, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, Gandel Philanthropy and the Genesis Philanthropy Group.

THE HOLOCAUST CENTER OF NEW ZEALAND

HCNZ is the country's national Holocaust education and remembrance center.

The purpose of the Holocaust Center of NZ is to educate and inform New Zealanders about the Holocaust and the messages that came out of the Holocaust, that as a society we have much to learn from this event to ensure that "Never Again" is upheld.

We aim to inspire and empower people to take a stand against prejudice, discrimination and apathy, and to do this they need to be informed, so we educate on how they can best use evidence of the past (primary resources, eyewitness accounts from actual Holocaust survivors) to make that stand.

Our Vision

Through testimony, experience and advocacy, the Holocaust Center of New Zealand inspires and empowers individuals to stand against prejudice, discrimination and apathy.

- 1. Ensure that the memory of the Holocaust remains in the present and shapes our future
- 2. Work and converse with all of NZ society
- 3. Teach and encourage people to take individual responsibility for opposing prejudice and discrimination in all of its forms
- 4. Guard against attempts to make any group a target of mass prejudice or discrimination
- 5. Encourage respect for diversity.

Our Mission



The exhibition space and research center displays the stories of Holocaust survivors who fled Hitler's Europe and came to live their lives in New Zealand, contributing quite substantially to the NZ community. We are situated within the Wellington Jewish Community Centre in the midst of the city center. We are a volunteer-led organisation, having two full-time staff (Office Administrator/Volunteer Manager and a National Director of Education) and the Center is open to the public 6 days a week. Entrance to the Center is free and the volunteers onsite are available to explain and provide tours of the Center, sharing and exploring important information on the atrocity that was the Holocaust.



History

Before the Holocaust Center came to be, Hanka and George Pressburg (Wellington-based Holocaust survivors) first talked about the Holocaust to school groups. To support these talks they set up a small display; a yellow star, documents from the Theresienstadt concentration camp, currency used in the camp, food stamps, and some photos. In 2005, when the UN General Assembly adopted resolution to designate January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a Holocaust Remembrance Day memorial service was first held at Beth El, the Wellington Jewish Community Center synagogue. The synagogue was packed. There were Jews and non-Jews present which highlighted the universality of the Holocaust.

Holocaust survivor Steven Sedley shouldertapped a few people who had Holocaust connections and formed a committee in 2005. Hanka and George Pressburg's display would be enhanced, with the addition of material from the community and other sources and the focus would be on a New Zealand perspective:

New Zealanders involved in the liberation of the camps, eyewitness accounts, Righteous Gentiles living in New Zealand, immigrant stories - and exhibitions and educational programs relevant to contemporary New 7ealand.

Since its establishment in 2007, the HCNZ has grown to become an active and internationallyrecognised institution dedicated to combating racism, hatred, prejudice and discrimination by fostering tolerance and understanding within our community.

What We Do

HCNZ has an exhibition space, on-site educational programmes aligned with the New Zealand school curriculum, and education outreach. We develop curriculum resources for NZ educators to help them teach the Holocaust and provide training for teachers and university students. We record, collect and share survivor testimonies, undertake research, teaching, publishing and advocacy.



Some of the HCNZ volunteers (Centre in black outfit is our Director, Inge Woolf QSO)

HCNZ sends NZ educators to Yad Vashem in Israel biannually for professional development and gives them support and follow up so that they can learn how to best teach the Holocaust across curriculae in schools around the country.

HCNZ also hosts events, screenings, commemorations and speakers to help further foster remembrance and understanding of the impact of the Holocaust and the lessons that are enduring. We advocate for Human Rights, promoting human rights education as the cornerstone of a liberal, democratic and inclusive society. We have recently launched a new initiative, 'At the Forefront: Human Rights – The Human Rights Speaker Series', which has Professor Gillian Triggs as its inaugural speaker in August 2018.

Our National Director of Education, Chris Harris, embarks on education outreach throughout New Zealand and members of our volunteer educational team also hold presentations to student and adult group's offsite.

The Holocaust Center of New Zealand is also undertaking the continuation of a special project that began in Moriah College, the small primary school formerly located within the Wellington Jewish Community Center; The New Zealand Children's Holocaust Memorial. In 2008, Principal Justine Hitchcock and her primary school students (aged 5 – 12) initiated the collection of 1.5 million buttons in an attempt to comprehend and illustrate the sheer vastness of the number of children killed during the Holocaust and to build a memorial to them to ensure that the children that perished would never be forgotten. With buttons and support from around the world, the Moriah College children collected 1.5 million buttons which were entrusted to the Holocaust Center to turn into a memorial, fulfilling their goal after the school sadly closed down. The design of the Memorial incorporates a selection of twelve variously sized 'nesting tables', the first and smallest table holding a single candle, the next a single button, representing one child. Following on, each unit increases in size and volume of buttons, forming an emotional and poignant display. In conjunction, but separate to the memorial, there will be an educational

component, providing engaging historical and contemporary contextual material. The memorial will travel throughout New Zealand and will eventually become a permanent fixture in the future.

This year HCNZ has brought the Anne Frank Exhibition - 'Let Me Be Myself, The Life Story of Anne Frank' - from Amsterdam to New Zealand, with the help of many generous sponsors. Having been shown in Auckland and now in Wellington, it will travel to many cities and regional areas around the country,= between 2018 and 2020. Bringing the Anne Frank exhibition to NZ is an important way to illustrate the Holocaust, especially as Anne Frank's story resonates across age groups. The story of Anne is not just of one individual, but of a young person who suffered at the hands of the Nazis who had insight into how we should treat each other, and the messages Anne writes about are some of the same issues young people experience today, most evidently as bullying. For older generations who grew up on her story it is one they remember fondly and continue to relate to, many of them having their own memories and experiences during WW2. This exhibition not only gives the visitor knowledge of the events of Anne's life and of WW2; it contains a chapter in which young people of today address subjects like identity, exclusion and discrimination with trained local secondary school pupils as Peer Guides. The exhibition aligns with the HCNZ Vision and illustrates the importance and power of individuals to speak up, advocate for others and affect change for a better, inclusive society.

HCNZ fosters national and international relations between other Holocaust-related organizations and works with many National and local organizations including embassies in Wellington. We have positive relationships with the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, Human Rights Commission and local and central government.

Our challenges

Being a not-for-profit, non-government funded registered charity, funding is an area of challenge and we are fortunate to have some regular generous donors and supporters.

The distance of both time and place of the events of the Holocaust continues to be a challenge to modern-day New Zealand: a challenge which all personnel of the Holocaust Center rise to on a daily basis, reiterating the relevance of Holocaust education and of remembrance, when engaging with members of the local and wider community and also with secondary school pupils on educational visits.

With New Zealand being so remote a location it is sometimes a challenge for our students to understand the impact of the Holocaust on society. To overcome this challenge we encourage students to understand the individual stories from the Holocaust and thereby enable them to have people to relate to. Students are encouraged to discuss what are the lessons learned from the Holocaust and relate this to the present day and how they can apply what they learn to be better citizens, so an event like this may never happen again.

The importance of teaching about the Holocaust in NZ

We hear from people who seem to believe that the Holocaust was just about death, murder, genocide, but not about aspects like resistance, Righteous people, or the way that people tried to make life as normal as possible.

Teaching about the Holocaust is not mandatory in the NZ curriculum. Through our outreach and our program with Yad Vashem, however, we try to assist teachers to see the relevance and the ways to teach this topic; to focus away from the trauma but look at the individual stories; to see that people were strong in the face of death and destruction; that effective teaching needs to happen; and that graphic images of piles of bodies or statistics achieve little and may traumatize the students whilst individual stories sharing hope (whilst not always with a happy ending) familiarise the students to see the victims and survivors as real people, as human beings rather than numbers.

Antisemitism and Holocaust denial are more visible every day as people appear to feel that it is okay to question facts. 'Fake news' has meant that people feel they can look at historical events and say they didn't really happen.

the Warsaw Uprising Commemoration in collaboration with the Embassy of Poland in Wellington





The Holocaust was the single biggest genocide in human history and should not be forgotten, but the messages and lessons from the Holocaust should be shared to raise awareness that something as small as name-calling, and standing by enabling such a thing, can lead to bigger, more dangerous consequences of

discrimination and prejudice to isolation and death. We each have a responsibility to be upstanders in our communities and speak up rather than be bystanders and allow such things to happen.



'FACES OF AUSCHWITZ': LEARNING HISTORY IN COLOR

New media have created new spaces for people to communicate, build identity, and discuss issues across the globe. How digital communities interact with the past and memory through posts, images, and content on social media is becoming increasingly relevant to Holocaust and genocide scholars.

While some social media users employ Holocaust-related visual content in transgressive and often insensitive ways, others take advantage of social media affordances to participate in online communities of Holocaust memory and history educators. It is the latter group of social media users that Marina Amaral - a self-taught Brazilian colourist – belongs to.

In January 2017, Amaral chose an original photograph of a 14-year old Polish girl named Czesława Kwoka (camp no. 26947) to be the first installment of her colorized Auschwitz-Birkenau registration photos series. She carefully colorized the black-and-white triptych of Czesława's Auschwitz registration portraits and shared it via Twitter to an overwhelmingly positive reception. However, it was not until March 2018, when the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum shared Marina's

work on its Twitter and Facebook accounts, that the colorized image of Czesława became viral on social media and the project 'Faces of Auschwitz' was officially born.

Emphasizing its educational and didactic mission, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum accompanied Amaral's colorized image with a brief description of Czesława Kwoka's life and information on the young girl's haunting registration images. The Museum's Twitter and Facebook followers learned that Czesława was one of the 230,000 children and youth deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz-Birkenau; that she arrived in Auschwitz on December 13, 1942 in a transport of 318 women; and that three months later, she was murdered with a phenol injection to the heart.





What is left of Czesława's short and tragic life are snippets of information that allow us to establish traces of individualized memory. We know that Czesława was born on August 15, 1928 in Wólka Złojecka, a small village in the Polish Zamość region that fell victim to Hitler's Lebensraum (living space) – the ideological policy of territorial expansion into Eastern Europe. We also know that she was arrested alongside her mother, Katarzyna, who received number 26949 and perished in the camp on February 18, 1943. The three images that Marina Amaral colorized in her studio in Brazil are the last indexical evidence of Czesława's life, arrest, and brutal death.

Amaral started colorizing black-and-white photos in 2015 after finding an inspiring collection of WWII color photos online. The very first image that she colorized was a portrait of an American Civil War soldier. Past the initial fascination with the process and techniques of colorization, what has kept Amaral invested in combining history and technology has been the notion of bringing history to life. However, it was not until Czesława Kwoka's colorized image went viral on Twitter that Marina realized the power and responsibility her work holds.

Initially, it wasn't clear whether it was the heartbreaking story of Czesława Kwoka's short tragic life or the color used to bring her history closer to the online audiences that made the post viral. An overwhelming outpouring of comments and follow-up questions directed at

the Museum and Marina suggest that both factors played a role. Learning that 14-year old Czesława was brutally beat with a leather whip moments before the camp photographer released the camera shutter individualized her story. Color allows the audiences to notice stains of barely coagulated blood on Czesława's swollen bruised lips and empathize more with a young girl who posed for three distinct shots standard in prison photography: a profile shot, an en face shot, and a head-covering shot with a headscarf. Color makes visual testimony and record more relevant and compelling to social media and digital natives.



Marina Amaral



Pointedly, Marina Amaral's work inspires a need to learn about the Holocaust in new audiences through alternative forms of communication.

Inspired by the positive reception of Czesława Kwoka's colorized registration photo, Amaral committed herself to colorize more photos of Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoners and initiated an official creative collaboration with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum: 'Faces of Auschwitz'. The goal of the project is to tell stories of individual Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoners who were photographed during the registration process. Each week, Marina colorizes one of the original black-and-white prisoners' photos ensuring historical accuracy of the colors she uses.

The 'Faces of Auschwitz' project engages with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum's collection of 38,916 registration photographs that were taken between February 1941 and January 1945 in the laboratory of Erkennungsdienst in Auschwitz I. The preserved photos, 31,969 of men and 6,947 of women, constitute only a fraction of a vast Nazi photo archive destroyed during the camp evacuation in January 1945.

While we do not know the total number of registration photographs taken during the operation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, we do know that only prisoners who survived





Witold Pilecki

the initial selection and incorporation into the Auschwitz-Birkenau prisoner population had their photos taken. Those condemned to extermination at the onset were not photographed.

Initially, the Nazis planned to photograph each of approximately 400,000 prisoners registered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, half of whom were Jewish. The motivation was to create a visual aid to identify runaway prisoners or those whose identity had to be confirmed during their stay in the camp. However, the system proved to be ineffective. The cruel and inhuman conditions of the camp life made prisoners' emaciated physique and facial features unrecognizable shortly after they arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Prisoners were photographed soon after their arrival in Auschwitz-Birkenau by fellow inmates who were forced to work in the camp photo laboratory in Block 26. Prisoners' faces and heads were shaven and their uniforms embroidered with camp numbers, triangles corresponding to different prisoner categories, and letters identifying prisoners' countries of origin. While most of the photographed prisoners wore camp uniforms, a few of the registration photographs feature prisoners wearing civilian clothes.



In January 1945, Nazis ordered prisoners Wilhelm Brasse and Bronisław Jureczek to burn the remains of the Auschwitz-Birkenau photo archive.

In an attempt to preserve photographic evidence of the camp registration system, Wilhelm and Bronisław retrieved undestroyed photographs from the furnace and boarded the lab door to prevent unauthorized access after the evacuation of the camp. The two saved 38,916 photographs, all of which constitute the current archival collection of the Museum.

"Ideally, I would like to colorize all the 38,916 images, but I need to be realistic," Amaral said. "This is a task that would take me years to complete. However, if I manage to tell at least 200-500 stories, I will feel satisfied!"

As she is preparing for the launch of her debut book *The Color of Time: A New History of the World, 1850-1960* this August, Amaral emphasizes that "color has the power to bring life back to the most important moments." When asked specifically about her Holocaust project, she affirms that "color makes us understand that these [photographed] people were human beings, not mere statistics."

So far, her work has received more praise than criticism. Since the visual aspect of 'Faces of

Auschwitz' lends itself well to online sharing, the affordances of social media have become central to online proliferation of Amaral's work. She has taken to Twitter to release her work and, consequently, educate her followers about the history of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Rarely, Amaral tweets about her frustration with people who "don't understand her work" and view it as transgressive or inconsiderate: "I only express my dissatisfaction when I receive criticism that is based on sheer prejudice. What I am trying to achieve is not a simple task: I dedicate hours, days, and weeks of labor to colorize a single photo.

There is an intense research involved in each one of my projects and people underestimate the physical and emotional burden involved. (...) I am not trying to replace the original photos, but rather offer a new perspective on well-known documents. Probably, if the technology was accessible to camp officials at the time these pictures were taken, many of them would have been taken in color. I want to show the events how they really happened, the way the photographers saw them."





Józefa Głazowska



In the trailer for 'Faces of Auschwitz', Murray Goldfinger – a survivor – exclaims that Marina's colorized photos remind him of what he saw when he was in Auschwitz-Birkenau: "It would be as if I was there right now looking at those people!" Indeed, Amaral's project is meant to create an emotional connection with its audience. To Amaral, "black-and-white photos, while very important as historical documents, generate an inevitable distance on an emotional level. On the other hand, after seeing these same faces in color, people pay attention to what I want to say. Perhaps, if the photos were black-and-white, they would not have the slightest interest in stopping for a minute to read the stories. That is why I believe so much in the relevance of 'Faces of Auschwitz'. Each person who sends me a message saying that they felt truly connected with the victims for the first time after seeing their faces in color counts as a victory for the project."

LEARN MORE:

- Faces of Auschwitz website
- Marina Amaral website
- Faces of Auschwitz Twitter account
- Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum on the history of prisoners' photos

ANNE FRANK HOUSE VR

On Anne Frank's 89th birthday, June 12, 2018, the Anne Frank House, Force Field VR and Oculus launched a virtual reality tour of Anne Frank's hiding place: Anne Frank House VR.



All images: Anne Frank House Virtual Reality

The real Secret Annex is empty. The furniture was removed by order of the Nazis after the arrest of the eight people in hiding. It was the wish of Otto Frank, Anne's father, to leave the rooms of the Secret Annex empty. Otto Frank was the only one of the eight to survive the war. After his return from Auschwitz he devoted himself to the publication of his daughter's diary and the preservation of the Secret Annex and its opening to the public.

"The VR tour gives people all around the world the opportunity to explore Anne Frank's hiding place as it was in July 1942 to August 1944, the period when Anne Frank was forced into hiding and wrote her diary. The tour offers an immersive experience," said Ronald Leopold, executive director of the Anne Frank House. The VR tour has been installed at the Anne

Frank House in Amsterdam to enable visitors with restricted mobility to see the Secret Annex, as it was in the hiding period, with other sites including the Anne Frank Zentrum in Berlin and Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect in New York rolling it out later this year – giving more people around the world an opportunity to see for themselves what the space would have looked and felt like.

The tour lasts for around 25 minutes, is available in seven languages and can be downloaded free of charge from the Oculus Store.





With virtual presentations people often ask what are the additional, different features that a virtual visit can give which are not possible during a visiting the site itself? You write about a 'never-before-seen way'. What is the value of visualization in this particular case?

The VR tour gives a uniquely immersive experience of the hiding place of Anne Frank and the seven other people in the Secret Annex. In the tour all the rooms of the Secret Annex are furnished in the style of the time spent in hiding.

The Anne Frank House and the Anne Frank House VR are two different experiences. In the Anne Frank House you enter the actual Secret Annex. You go through Otto Frank's former company, walk up the stairs and go past the original bookcase to the former shelter. You can

see original objects of the people in hiding, the map of Normandy, the growth marks of Anne and Margot and the pictures that Anne has put up on her wall in her room. Last but not least, the Anne Frank House shows the original diaries and other writings of Anne Frank.

Who do you see as the main target group for such a project?

We'd like to reach as many people as possible. We will include the VR tour in our educational programs at the Anne Frank House and will include the VR tour in our traveling exhibitions worldwide. For people who can't visit the Anne Frank Museum, the Anne Frank House VR is a beautiful alternative.

What are the educational benefits of using VR in the context of Anne Frank House and its story?

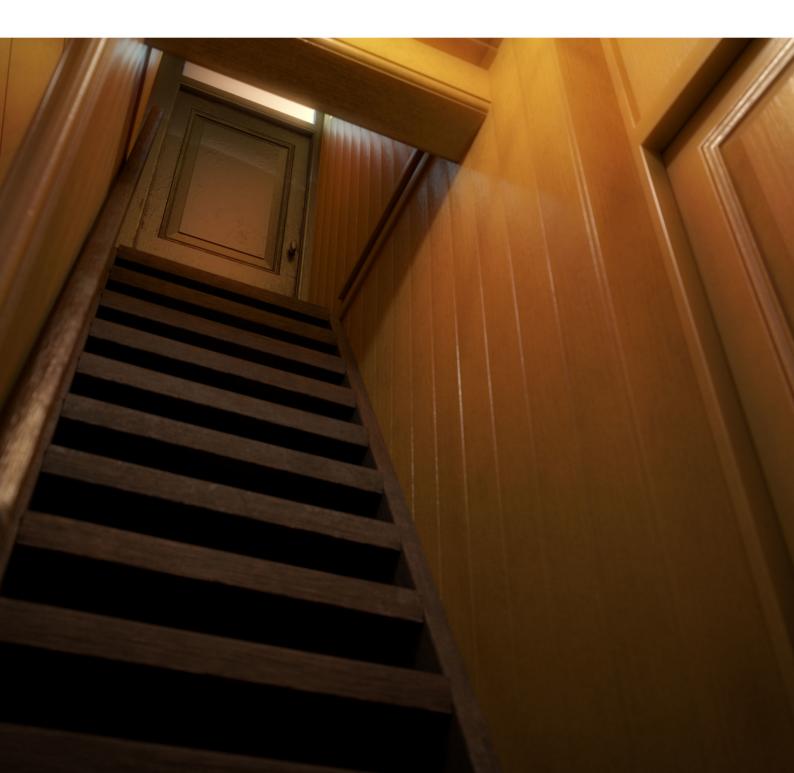
The VR tour shows pupils how cramped the hiding place was, something which is difficult to imagine walking through the empty rooms. And it shows pupils what Anne Frank's hiding place looked like with furniture and personal belongings. It can bring them closer to Anne Frank's life story.

The Anne Frank House develops educational programs and products based on Anne Frank's life story, with the aim of raising young people's awareness of the dangers of

antisemitism, racism and discrimination and the importance of freedom, equal rights and and democracy.

I believe you have used the VR yourself - what are your personal impressions of using such technology and difference of experiences?

With a VR headset on, you really find yourself in another place. That's different from wandering through a 3D environment on your computer, where there is literally a distance between you and your screen. With VR you can immerse yourself in a story.



ONE LETTER CAN BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

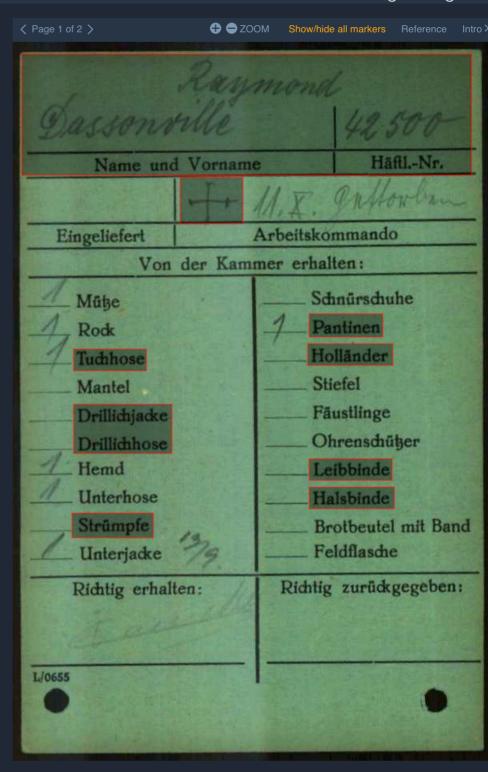
UNDERSTANDING DOCUMENTS OF CONCENTRATION CAMP
INMATES THROUGH THE ITS E-GUIDE

What does a "3/1 45" on a labor assignment card stand for? Who filled in which space on the prisoner registration form? Why does it matter whether Pantine or Holländer is checked on a clothing storage room card? And what did it mean for the person if a certain scribble is found on his or her sick bay card? When working at a memorial site or in educational programs teaching about the Holocaust one often faces questions like these. But even while working with the historical documents on an academic level quite a lot of questions arise which can delay or – in the worst case – even prevent further insight.

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The documents from concentration camp inmates, which are conveyed at the International Tracing Service (ITS), can tell a lot about the fate of the humans behind the cards and forms. However, extensive background knowledge is required to understand them in their full context. With the e-Guide, the ITS offers a key to 'open up' the documents. The free online tool in German and English facilitates users to comprehend the 30 most

common documents which were filled out in concentration camps, e.g. Prisoner Registration Cards, personal effects cards, post control cards and sick bay cards (see fig. 1). In co-operation with memorials, international scholars and numerous other experts, the ITS is now making this knowledge available at https://eguide.its-arolsen.org.



On the other hand, the tool answers five key questions about each document type. In many cases, it has proven possible – with the aid of the latest research results – to figure out who used a particular document when, for what purpose and how frequently (see fig. 3). The e-Guide also contains additional resources such as an inmate number index, a short description of the main categories of imprisonment and an organizational chart of the concentration camp administration.

To start with, the ITS e-Guide comprises descriptions of about 30 different concentration camp documents. And work on expanding the tool is already in progress. In the autumn/winter of 2018/2019, descriptions of the most frequently occurring documents on Displaced Persons will follow, and in the summer of 2019 explanations of the documents on forced laborers will also be available online.

om card Print versi

On these clothing storage room cards, prisoner functionaries in the concentration camps recorded which items of clothing had been issued to individual newcomers. Various clothing storage room cards were used in different camps, with different items pre-printed on each card. They all served the same purpose, however.

→ Background information on concentration camp documents

Fig. 2: Highlighted areas (so-called overlays) like on this clothing storage room card can be activated individually. The information is then presented next to the card. This technique adapts to the level of previous knowledge of the users as one only has to read what he or she is interested in.

The e-Guide can be found under https://eguide. its-arolsen.org. And in fact it is supposed to grow: further information on documents can be integrated at any time. One main purpose of the e-Guide is to share the information spread around the world by combining it.

About the author

Christiane Weber, MA, was born in 1984 and studied History, German Literature and British and American Literature and Culture at the University of Giessen/Germany. After ten years at the Arbeitsstelle Holocaustliteratur – a research unit at the University of Giessen focusing on fictional and non-fictional literature about the Holocaust – she is now working for the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen. There she develops an online guide and a finding aid that will help to contextualize documents on the Holocaust, on forced labor and the lives of Displaced Persons after the Second World War.



memoria.auschwitz.org

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