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MEMORIA

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„TO REACH PEOPLE IN THE MOST REMOTE CORNERS OF THE WORLD“. THE LAUNCH OF THE ONLINE TOURS OF THE AUSCHWITZ MEMORIAL

MELBOURNE
HOLOCAUST
MUSEUM REOPENS
WITH TWO NEW
EXHIBITIONS

YAD VASHEM

INTERNATIONAL
BOOK PRIZE

PUBLICATIONS
GRANTED

THE WITOLD
PILECKI AWARD

POSTWAR
“DOCUMENTATION
CAMPAIGN”

IN PRAGUE

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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.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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Please do share information about this magazine with others, particularly via social media.

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“TO REACH PEOPLE IN THE MOST REMOTE CORNERS OF THE WORLD”

THE LAUNCH OF THE ONLINE TOURS OF THE AUSCHWITZ MEMORIAL

“Auschwitz in Front of Your Eyes” is an application through which millions of people from around the world will gain access to education conducted directly from the authentic Memorial Site. It allows an online guided tour of the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. Reservations can already be made through the visit.auschwitz.org system.

The online tour lasts about two hours and is divided into two parts – in Auschwitz I and Birkenau. The guide's narration is conducted live. Additionally, the educator will also use multimedia materials, archival photographs, artistic works, documents, and testimonies of Survivors. Thanks to the application, interaction with the guide and asking questions is also possible.

'This form of a visit differs from on-site tours primarily because, in the online version, we do not present the museum exhibitions. Technology allows us to somewhat transfer the content of the exhibition to the historical site, as many things can be additionally shown on the screen. In addition, during online tour, it will be possible, thanks to video recordings, to enter several spaces that are either not accessible to visitors, such as Block 10 in the former Auschwitz I camp, or are located too far from the regular tour route, such as the Sauna building in the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp,' said Tomasz Michaldo, coordinating the project at the Museum.

The tour is currently available in 7 languages (English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, and Spanish). Bookings can be made for dates from 15 January 2024. A form is available on visit.auschwitz.org to book a visit for a group or to have an exclusive guide. Visits for individuals starting at specific times of the day will also be launched soon.

The Auschwitz Memorial and its resources must remain accessible to all who want to understand it. This is where we have the opportunity to confront and address the most important issues related to humanity, society, the threats of antisemitism, racial hatred, and contempt for others. These threats unfortunately become more relevant in today's world,' said Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, the director of the Auschwitz Museum.

'Our mission is to commemorate the victims and preserve this universal memory, on which to a large extent we have built and continue to build our post-war identity. Although thousands of people visit the authentic site every day, thanks to this unique technology, we will be able to reach people in the most remote corners of the world. We hope that this will strengthen the memory that actually gives us the power to act responsibly for the repair of the world. Thanks to this, it will be a better place to live for our children and grandchildren,' emphasized director Cywiński.



Technology allows us to go beyond the exhibition space and tell the story of Auschwitz where it actually took place,' added Aya Feldman from AppsFlyer, responsible for the creative work in the project.

The creation of the online guided tour project is also possible thanks to the support of global companies such as Orange, which has provided stable and high-speed wireless internet access throughout the Memorial, as well as the producer of the devices through which the guides will connect with visitors to the Memorial.

'On behalf of the Foundation, which was responsible for raising funds, but also for building partnerships to support the project, I would like to thank all the donors, without whom the realisation of this unique project would not have been possible,' added Wojciech Soczewica.

At various stages of its creation we could count on the support of many private and corporate donors, foundations, but also memorial sites from all over the world, who donated to us pro bono, among other things, the rights to the recordings of Survivors' accounts. Most noteworthy is the decision of the first cities and countries to donate funds to test the technology and to enable visits for schools. I very much hope that the launch of the app will help us implement this digital education programme around the world,' said Soczewica.

In November of this year, AppsFlyer received this year's Global AWS Partner Award for the online tour project as the partner of the year in the field of social impact.





MELBOURNE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM REOPENS WITH TWO NEW EXHIBITIONS

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum reopened to the public following extensive renovations, showcasing two new exhibits that share the stories of Shoah survivors.

EVERYBODY HAD A NAME

Everybody had a name – nobody has a grave: This is what survivor Tuvia Lipson would tell visitors and school children when sharing his story of survival. The experiences shared in this exhibit form a collective history of the Holocaust, from a uniquely Melbourne perspective. It honours the survivors who migrated here. Those who built a strong community from the ashes of the Holocaust – determined to inspire and educate future generations. Determined to prevent such atrocities from happening again.

For those of us fortunate to not live through these experiences, it can be challenging to comprehend. Six million people murdered. Targeted for extermination. Our survivors know better than anyone, grasping the sheer weight of this is difficult. So they break it down one story at a time. Sharing their experiences, along with that of their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, neighbours and friends. To commemorate the victims – and amplify the voices of survivors.

The exhibition is home to six sections, each showcasing pivotal components of the Holocaust – and sharing related stories from our survivor community.

1. The World That Was

Setting the scene of vibrant pre-war Jewish life, this carefully curated collection draws visitors to the small details of individual lives – home movies, household objects, Judaica and artworks. It affirms the philosophy that you cannot understand what was lost. Until you understand what was.

2. Rights Removed

This section follows the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party – and the laws and policies they introduced to exclude those deemed unworthy of citizenship in the Third Reich. It also details the desperate attempts to find safe havens and the lack of support for refugees.

3. Freedoms Lost

This display provides insight into the labelling, ghettoization and incarceration of Jews who became slave labour for the Nazi war machine. Powerful documents, artefacts and multi-media reveal the harrowing history.



Paul



John



Floris



Joe



Halina



hiding: Joe de Haan, John Lamovie, Halina Zylberman, Paul Grinwald, Henri Korn, Sonia Kempler and Floris Kalman.

Visitor is taken through the exhibition by an MHM team member, visitors to hear first-hand the survivor's perseverance and bravery, along with the acts of kindness and courage of others, that helped to save their lives.

The exhibition showcases testimonials, photos and artefacts that keep the child's perspective in mind. All delivered through cutting-edge exhibition technologies – by virtue of our partnership with immersive exhibition specialists, Art Processors.

With moving images, soundscapes, dioramas and projections, this exhibition offers a truly profound and engaging learning experience.

For younger visitors to encounter stories of survivors – who were children like them during the war, but had incredible experiences of being in hiding and being rescued – what better way to learn about history, humanity, intolerance and kindness, justice and hope?" said MHM CEO Jayne Josem.

The Hidden exhibition showcases primary source materials from the Holocaust – keeping a child's perspective in mind

More information: <https://mhm.org.au/>

YAD VASHEM INTERNATIONAL BOOK PRIZE

Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research awarded the winners of the prestigious International Book Prize for Holocaust Research, in memory of Benny and Tilly Joffe z"l. This year's award goes to Dr. Laurien Vastenhout of the University of Amsterdam and Prof. Edward Westermann of Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The awards were officially presented in a virtual ceremony with Brian and Lee Joffe, congratulating the recipients on behalf of the Joffe family. For over two decades, Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, has been awarding the prize to scholars and historians who have written important research on the subject of the Holocaust.

Prof. Edward Westermann is being recognized for his publication entitled, *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany* (Cornell University Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021), while Dr. Laurien Vastenhout is noted for her book, *Between Community and Collaboration: Jewish Councils in Western Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

The winners were selected by an international panel of judges presided by Prof. Dan Michman, Head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, Incumbent of the John Najmann Chair for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem; Bar-Ilan University. Other judges serving on the panel this year included Prof. Laura Jockusch, (Brandeis University, Boston), Prof. Elizabeth Harvey, (University of Nottingham; and Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich and Berlin), Dr. David Silberklang (Yad Vashem, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Haifa), Yad Vashem Senior Academic Advisor Prof. Dina Porat, Dr. Sharon Kangisser-Cohen, editor-in-chief of Yad Vashem Studies, and Dr. Iael Nidam-Orvieto, Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem.

Noted finalists in the International Book Prize competition were Dr. Yechiel Weizman: *Unsettled Heritage: Living next to Poland's Material Jewish Traces After the Holocaust* and Dr. Anne-Christin Klotz: *Warsaw's Yiddish Daily Press and its Fight Against National Socialism, 1930-1941*.

Remarks from the Judges:

"Edward Westermann's *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany* examines an important and hitherto barely researched factor in understanding the perpetrators of the Holocaust: alcohol consumption. The book demonstrates that the common understanding of



Dr Laurien Vastenhout, zwyciężczyni
Nagrody Literackiej Yad Vashem 2023

OFFICIAL REPORT ON THE NATIONAL RAILWAY COMPANY IN BELGIUM AND THE DEPORTATIONS

On 8 December 2023, head of the Belgian Study Centre War and Contemporary Society Nico Wouters presented the final report on the role of the Belgian Railway society (NMBS/SNCB) in deportations carried out during WW2 in Belgium. The research was commissioned by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Mobility Georges Gilkinet and the Belgian Senate, and carried out between August 2022 and November 2023.

The research presents a broader war history of the Belgian National Railway Company to put the deportations in its historic context, but also to compensate for the problematic lack of archival sources. The report confirmed that the deportation trains were executed by the Belgian Railway Company.

For the first time, the research could also confirm that the NMBS/SNCB received close to 51 million Belgian francs from the Mitteleuropäische Reisebüro, to pay for the different deportation trains of Jews, Roma, forced laborers and probably also political prisoners. The report and book however offer a nuanced, complex and often contradictory occupation history of the company, with ample attention to the judicial and moral dilemma's of the so-called Belgian 'politics of the lesser evil', as

well as to the strong resistance movement within the company and the internal social policies by the general director.

The report and the book were received with wide attention by the national media. The responsible minister responded by creating a 'council of sages', which will have to reflect on follow-up measures and provide policy recommendations in 2024.

The integral report is available online in French and Dutch via the Senate website.

The book version (in Dutch) was published on 9 December.

The French-language version will appear in March 2024.



Nico Wouters

La SNCB face à son
passé de guerre :
entre collaboration et résistance

LE RAIL BELGE SOUS L'OCCUPATION

Racine

PUBLICATIONS GRANTED THE WITOLD PILECKI AWARD

Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych, Bartłomiej Noszczak and Zbigniew Parafinowicz are this year's winners of the Pilecki Award. The award committee also granted five distinctions. The statuettes, awards and prizes were presented at a gala at the Ujazdowski Castle.

This year marks the third edition of the Witold Pilecki International Award, granted in three categories: academic history book and historical reportage. A special award will also be granted for the best book on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine that has been ongoing since 2014 - Prof. Magdalena Gawin, director of the Pilecki Institute, said at the gala.

Witold Pilecki composed his reports to inform the entire world of the events that transpired at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Today, journalists are heading to Ukraine to provide coverage of the events unfolding on the frontline. This category is our tribute to journalists and reporters - added Prof. Gawin.

Award in the category "Academic history book"

This category recognises the best monograph or synthesis discussing the Polish experience of confronting two totalitarian regimes during the XXth century. The best monograph is the book titled "Child in the Face of the Holocaust. Institutional Care for Orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto" by Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych, published by the Jewish Historical Institute.

The life of children and their guardians in orphanages and boarding schools within the Warsaw Ghetto is the subject of Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych's book, which is the first of its kind to discuss this topic comprehensively, thus contributing to our knowledge of the tragic fate of Warsaw's Jews.

– "My utmost concern was to recognise the educators, directors, doctors, and nurses who were with the children - they formed the initial group that I sought to bring into the limelight. The second group consisted of the children, which presented greater difficulty due to the limited availability of names and micro-histories" – stated Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych.

Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych works at the Jewish Historical Institute and the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw. Her research focuses on the history and culture of Warsaw's Jews.

Award in the category "Historical Reportage"

The International Pilecki Award for the best book in the category "Historical Reportage" was awarded to Bartłomiej Noszczak, author of the book "Orient of the Exiles. The Middle East through the Perspectives of Poles Evacuated from the Soviet Union (1942-1945)", published by the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN).



Agnieszka Witkowska-Krych

Dziecko wobec Zagłady

INSTYTUCJONALNA OPIEKA NAD SIEROTAMI
W GETCIE WARSZAWSKIM

Bartłomiej Noszczak

Orient zesańców



ŚNIADANIE PACHNIE TRUPEM

UKRAJNA
NA WOJNIE

ZBIGNIEW PARAFIANOWICZ



MANDA

Porywająca reporterska opowieść
nacznego świadka o narodzie,
który nie chciał dać się rozstrzelać.

MARCIN MELLER

– Descended mainly from the Eastern Borderlands, his compatriots – victims of Soviet deportations - positively verified their generally superficial perceptions of the Orient. The exploration of the region, with all its charms and exotic mysteries, was undertaken devoid of any burden of chauvinism or cultural superiority. Although the Polish refugees lost almost every material possession, they regained the sense of freedom lost in the Soviet Union and embarked on a vibrant “journey of life” through the Middle East, where they felt they could count on the selfless help of another human being – a seemingly “stranger” – says Bartłomiej Nosszack about his book in an interview with the Pilecki Institute.

Bartłomiej Nosszack works at the Institute of National Remembrance. His research focuses on the Polish experience of confronting communism.

Award in the third category, “special award”

The special award for the best book on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine since 2014 or the ongoing protests in Belarus since 2020 and the related repression was awarded to Zbigniew Parafianowicz for “Breakfast Smells Like a Corpse: Ukraine at War” (Mando Publishing House).

On 24 February 2022, Zbigniew Parafianowicz was in Kiev. He witnessed the Ukrainian resistance against the Russian invasion and the initial disorientation of Western nations towards Russia's actions. Through interviews with diplomats, soldiers, artists, and ordinary citizens, he constructs a narrative of a society that evaluates itself in the context of the war and endeavours to comprehend the origins of the Ukrainians' determination.

– Since 2003, he has dedicated his journalism career to reporting on Ukraine. That is, from the post-Kuchma era onwards. I had planned to write a political profile on Volodymyr Zelensky. The outbreak of war changed the optics. The report was written by events. I followed these events - Zbigniew Parafianowicz explained in an interview with the Institute.

– From my perspective, Zbigniew Parafianowicz's book illustrates the unfortunate reality that, after over 70 years, the war has

returned to Europe and become an integral aspect of our existence. Perhaps also part of our future. And this is not a pleasant observation. Many would like to distance themselves from it, while others would like to look the other way. I think the book “Breakfast Smells like a Corpse” does not allow us to look the other way - said Prof. Marek Cichocki, a Pilecki Prize award committee member, in his laudation of the awarded book.

Zbigniew Parafianowicz is a journalist at “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna” and co-author of books on Petro Poroshenko and Viktor Yanukovich. – He has been covering topics related to Ukraine since 2003.

About the Pilecki Award

In 2021, the Witold Pilecki Institute for Solidarity and Valour, in cooperation with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim, inaugurated the Witold Pilecki International Award to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the birth of Rotmistrz Pilecki. He became the patron of the award because his reports from Auschwitz-Birkenau reported on the crimes committed by the Germans, described the events and contained in-depth analysis and humanistic reflection on the situation in the camp.

The Witold Pilecki International Award is granted to authors of the best scholarly and reportage books published in Polish or English in a given year that touch on the Polish experience of two totalitarian regimes.

The award committee comprises Piotr Cywiński, PhD (chairperson), Łukasz Adamski, PhD, Prof. Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski, Prof. Marek Cichocki, Prof. Magdalena Gawin, Prof. Patrycja Grzebyk, Prof. Marek Kornat, Wojciech Stanisławski, PhD, Prof. Claudia Weber, war correspondent Jack Fairweather, and Krzysztof Kosior, Witold Pilecki's great-grandson, representative of the award patron's family.

The competition winners will receive a prize of PLN 40,000 and a commemorative statuette. The authors of recognised books will receive a prize of PLN 15,000.

DECODING DICTATORS

The Ukrainian Institute and the creative agency Bickerstaff.932 have developed a project for monitoring genocidal rhetoric – the Genocide Speech Monitor. This AI tool facilitates the assessment of public statements by leaders of various countries, focusing on their use of language that may advocate for, imply, or warn of genocidal actions.

The project is dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine and once again demonstrates the cyclical nature of history:

In 1932, Stalin stated, "If we do not start correcting the situation in Ukraine, we may lose Ukraine." These were not just words; they were followed by specific actions – a man-made famine in the territory of Ukraine, resulting in the deaths of over 4 million Ukrainians and the loss of 1 million unborn.

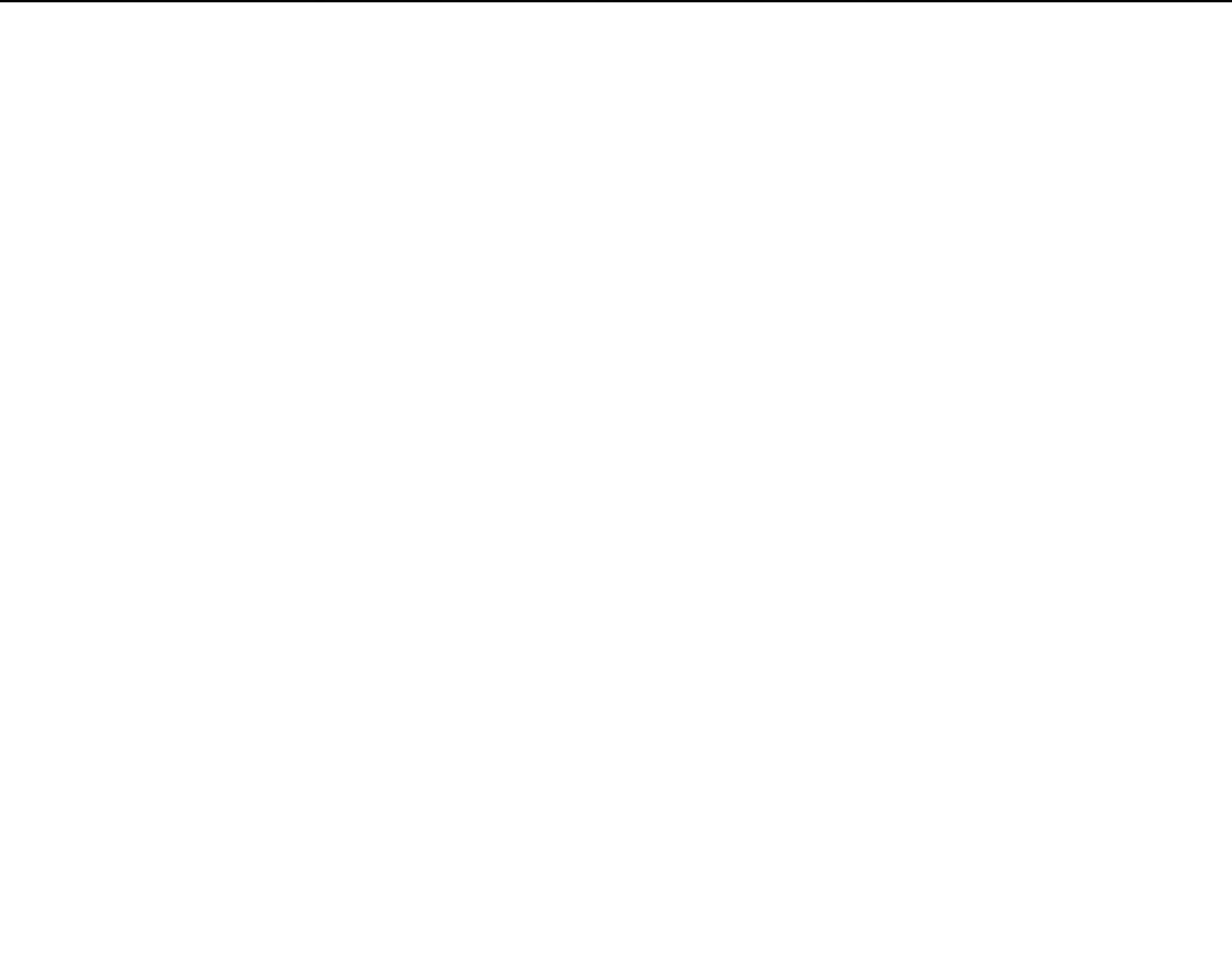
90 years later, on February 21, 2022, we hear from Putin – "modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia, more precisely, by Bolshevik, communist Russia". Three days later, Russia began a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Andrew Beckwith, Editor at JHEPGC, Associate Editor in Galaxies, and Visiting Professor in Chongqing University, Houston, USA, reflects on the project, stating, "The Russians wield genocide like a sword. It's unsettling. Hybrid narrative warfare that bites. This has been their modus operandi for over 300 years. It's painful to witness, but a profound understanding of history is crucial."

Volodymyr Sheiko, Director General of the Ukrainian Institute, about the goals of the informational project: "Honoring the 90th anniversary of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine, we tell the world the truth about this tragedy, its precursors, and consequences. Genocide does not come suddenly; it is planned and systematic terror, accompanied by the genocidal rhetoric of its ideologues. We created the Genocide Speech Monitor – a practical tool for foreign audiences that allows tracking such rhetoric in the context of the Holodomor as well as current events."

Natalia Silenska, a journalist from Slovakia and an enthusiast in Foreign Affairs & Eastern Europe, remarks, "Just like in Stalin's case, Putin has chosen death, pain, and suffering as his legacy. My country has unfortunately fallen victim to Russian propaganda, and many struggle to discern truth from lies. This project is a vital initiative to combat narratives that bring death and ensure history does not repeat itself."

Every tragedy has its own identifiable indicators. In the case of genocide, it's the words of dictators and government officials that can indicate their future intentions. "We can draw clear parallels between the rhetoric and actions of the Kremlin in 1932-1933 and today. This unpunished evil has returned to Ukraine. With this project, we urge other countries to pay attention to the statements of their leaders and the leaders of neighboring countries," explains Mariia Kochurenko, strategist at



POSTWAR “DOCUMENTATION CAMPAIGN” (DOKUMENTAČNÍ AKCE) IN PRAGUE

“We are leaving Theresienstadt. 5000 men are crowded together in the train. Bauschowitz sinks behind them. The dream of being able to stay together with the family is over. They are going, everyone feels, into the unknown. Squeezed in between rucksacks, suitcases and all sorts of luggage, they begin the recurring debate: where to?”

This is how Holocaust survivor Otto Kalwo described his experience with deportation from the Terezín Ghetto to Auschwitz-Birkenau immediately after his liberation. He submitted his testimony within the framework of the so-called “Documentation Campaign” in Prague (*Dokumentační akce*), one of the earliest postwar projects to document the events of the Shoah, collecting evidence, documents, and witness testimonies. Most protocols were compiled in 1945 and 1946 in either Czech or German language.

In contrast to the often invoked trope of the silence of survivors, the documents contained in this edition provide immediate and often chilling accounts of deportation, suffering and death. Survivors made their statements while their reintegration into society was still unfinished and the trauma fresh, in the hope of establishing facts and bringing perpetrators to justice. This new online edition joins the growing research on the early documentation of the Holocaust and adds to the EHRI Edition of Early Holocaust Testimony.

The new EHRI online edition makes available 68 protocols gathered during this unique campaign. These documents are safeguarded in the Jewish Museum in Prague, Czech Republic and in Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem, Israel, out of which 41 were recorded in Czech and 27 in German. The edition contains over five hundred pages of transcripts in original languages, which are provided with English translations and scans of archival materials.

The editions are empowered by EHRI tools for digital editing and use and improve upon the EHRI vocabularies and descriptions to generate contextual information displayed to users. The annotated online editions links to information about collection holding institutions and collection-level descriptions in the EHRI Portal.

Compared to analogue editions, the freely accessible online editions enable new research approaches and a different reading of the documents. Through metadata-tagging and geo-referencing, the editions are searchable, can be filtered for specific thematic or spatial interests at any time and are contextualised through interactive maps.





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