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# MEMORIA

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## FELLOWSHIPS AT AUSCHWITZ FOR THE STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS (FASPE) PARTNERS WITH "MEMORIA"

SINTI AND ROMA  
GENOCIDE  
REMEMBRANCE DAY.  
80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE LIQUIDATION  
OF THE ROMA CAMP  
AT AUSCHWITZ

TREBLINKA IS A  
CEMETERY.  
81<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE REVOLT OF  
THE TREBLINKA II  
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PRISONERS

„THEY WERE  
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FROM THE MAISON  
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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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# SINTI AND ROMA GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY. 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIQUIDATION OF THE ROMA CAMP AT AUSCHWITZ

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80 years ago, some 4,300 children, women, and men - the last Roma prisoners in section BIIe - were murdered in the gas chambers of the German Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp. The so-called Zigeunerfamilienlager ("Gypsy family camp") was liquidated on the night of 2 - 3 August 1944. 2 August is commemorated as Sinti and Roma Genocide Remembrance Day.

The anniversary commemorations, which took place by the monument commemorating the extermination of the Roma and Sinti at the section BIIe site of the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp, were attended by ca. 1,000 people, including Roma Survivors, as well as Auschwitz and Holocaust survivors, representatives of state authorities, international organisations, ambassadors and diplomats, politicians, representatives of several Roma and Jewish organisations and communities, representatives of local authorities, institutions and museums.

Among the guests in attendance were, the Speaker of the Polish Senate Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland Hanna Wróblewska, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Theodoros Rousopoulos, the President of the German Parliament Bärbel Bas, the Deputy Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament Žygimantas Pavilionis, the Director of Yad Vashem Dani Dayan and the President of the IHRA during the British Presidency Lord Eric Pickles.

At the commemorative ceremony, two Survivors delivered speeches.

Alma Klasing lost several members of her family in Auschwitz. She survived by hiding in the forests of Baden-Württemberg.

'During the day we would lay low in pits and cover ourselves with leaves. At night we would move and look for another shelter. We had to do all this as quietly as possible, always in fear of being discovered and deported to extermination and concentration camps. We could only feed on berries and other edible plants,' she said.

'We were very fortunate that all our close relatives survived the camps, but unfortunately we also had to mourn the many victims of Nazi racial policies among our relatives and friends,' she added.

'I would like to warn young people in particular against these false prophets and ask you from the bottom of my heart: defend our democracy and protect us, minorities from antisemitism, antigypsyism and racism,' Anna Klasing stressed.

Bolesław Rumanowski, along with his family, was deported to the Kielce ghetto by the Germans when he was just a child. In the final period of the war, Bolesław Rumanowski and his family managed to escape from the ghetto and hid in the nearby forests, thus ensuring their survival until the end of the war.





'In conclusion, I would like to stress that our memory of the past and struggle for the future are inextricably linked. To build a better future for us all, we must remember the tragedy of 80 years ago,' said Roman Kwiatkowski.

The Speaker of the Polish Senate, Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska, also spoke at the commemoration. 'The reason why the German Nazis were able to embark on the genocidal eradication of entire populations in Europe, almost bringing it to fruition 80 years ago, was primarily due to Europe's absence of a "solidarity instinct" - an immediate unified response to international aggression, violence, and human rights violations,' she said.

'If we truly remember the genocide, our response in defence of freedom must be steadfast. If our memory is to be of any use, we must show practical solidarity today to all nations that are victims of war, hatred, and the ideology of superpower insanity,' added Kidawa-Błońska. During her speech, Bärbel Bas, the President of the German Bundestag, stated that "Auschwitz represents the greatest atrocity ever committed by humans against their fellow beings".

'It symbolises the breakdown in the history of civilization perpetrated by Germany. It symbolises the intention to exterminate the European Jews. It symbolises the genocide committed against the Sinti and Roma. Here at Auschwitz, the racist madness of the Nazis ended in the cruel annihilation of human life,' she said.

'Auschwitz is inextricably linked to the German war of extermination directed first against Poland. Tens of thousands of Polish women and men were murdered here,' she added.

'If we want to eradicate evil at its inception today, we need to understand what this emerging evil consists of. Even then, it consisted of a desire for simple solutions, a contempt for



crucial role in both the present and the future. When discussing memory and an extremely traumatic experience of one of the most marginalised minorities in Europe, it is essential to not only reflect on the past but also consider the present circumstances,' he said.

'Several times today, we shall hear terms like discrimination, inequality, and limited access to basic necessities for the Roma community in our 21st century Europe. I wish to draw attention to the fact that the problem encompasses a much broader context. We are currently experiencing instances of language or actions that suggest dehumanisation, particularly amidst the growing tide of populism. Dehumanisation is generally the final phase preceding the direst consequences,' he stressed.

In his speech, Auschwitz survivor Marian Turski







## **The history of the Roma and Sinti in Auschwitz**

The Nazis regarded them as a "hostile element" with a 'hereditary' propensity to commit crime and antisocial behaviour. From 1933, they and the Jews were persecuted on racist grounds, starting with registration, followed by a ban on specific occupations and mixed marriages, then compulsory labour, and finally, confinement in concentration camps.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, a decision was taken to resettle German Roma in occupied Poland. The German police authorities initiated the arrest and execution of Roma in the occupied territories, including the rear of the Eastern Front, where they were brutally killed alongside Jews by the Einsatzkommandos.

From 1943, following Heinrich Himmler's order, the Sinti and Roma mainly from Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland were deported to Auschwitz. In total, the Germans deported some 23,000 Roma to Auschwitz, two thousand of whom were murdered without registration in the camp. 21,000 were registered in the camp, of which 19,000 died of starvation and sickness, or were murdered in the gas chambers upon liquidation of the "Gypsy camp".

# TREBLINKA IS A CEMETERY. 81<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLT OF THE TREBLINKA II DEATH CAMP PRISONERS

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During a ceremony organized on August 2 together with the Treblinka Museum. The Nazi German Extermination and Forced Labour Camp (1941–1944), we honoured the victims of the Treblinka II extermination camp on the 81st anniversary of the revolt of its

Before the official celebrations began, the deputy director of the Jewish Historical Institute, Zuzanna Schnepf-Kończak, together with the director of the Treblinka Museum, Edward Kopówka, laid wreaths at the Monument to the Victims of the Treblinka I Labour Camp and the monument commemorating the Roma and Sinti murdered in Treblinka at the execution site near the Treblinka I forced labour camp.

“We are gathering here not only to commemorate this uprising but also to testify to our memory of all the victims of the Holocaust. About over 800,000 murdered men, women and children. It is important to consolidate knowledge of what the Nazi extermination camp was. First of all, it is a material testimony of what the Holocaust was, i.e. a planned, systematic attempt to murder European Jews carried out with ruthless cruelty. This place tells us about their suffering, feeling of loneliness and emptiness. About the loss of hope,” said Dr. Michał Trębacz, the director of the JHI at the beginning of the official ceremony.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the highest state authorities, local government authorities, cultural and Jewish institutions, as well as the diplomatic corps and a special guest – Ada Willenberg, widow of the camp survivor Samuel Willenberg, who miraculously survived the Holocaust thanks to the help of Polish families.

“I haven’t been to Treblinka, but for me, Treblinka is a cemetery. My mother is here, many members of my family are here, my husband’s two sisters are here, and here are the memories of my husband who has been remembering this place all his life,” said Ada Willenberg during her speech.

“For me, a representative of the German government and for Germans, it is very important that I can be here with you and honour the memory of the murdered. It is important to remember German crimes and their victims, but also to remember the courage of those people in the Treblinka extermination camp who rose against the German occupiers and murderers. I would like to pay tribute to all the victims and insurgents. The responsibility for the crimes of the German Nazis will not fade. Never again,” said Dr. Lorenz Barth, the Head of the Cultural Affairs Department of the Federal Republic of German Embassy, in his speech.



# ROMA IN THE WARSAW GHETTO

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Reconstructing the history of the Roma in the Warsaw Ghetto is akin to detective work. This group did not leave behind any written records, and Jewish accounts rarely mention them, and even when they do, it is only in passing and brief remarks. Reconstructing the situation of the Roma minority in the ghetto is challenging due to the numerous assumptions, uncertainties, and lack of specific information. Basic details such as the number of Roma in the ghetto and their arrival and departure dates from the "Jewish quarter" remain unknown.

In 1941, the occupation authorities commenced the process of placing Roma individuals into Jewish ghettos established in the General Government. During that stage, these actions were undertaken without a top-down plan. Individual district governors decided to forcibly settle the captured Roma groups in a ghetto within a particular district. Stanislaw Borkowski described one such action: "With the establishment of the Radzymin ghetto in 1941, a plan was put in motion to relocate gypsies into the ghetto, where they would face the same fate as the Jews. These residents lived in the ghetto briefly, as they vanished or escaped within a few days". Similarly, in other locations, the Roma, who were used to living a nomadic lifestyle, frequently left their forced residences and relocated to nearby counties where the order for ghetto settlements had not yet been implemented.

With the onset of the "Aktion Reinhardt" in the spring of 1942, which aimed at the complete extermination of Jews in the General Government, there was also a shift in official views towards the Roma. During this period, the German authorities embarked on a comprehensive ghetto resettlement campaign. Simultaneously, they issued multiple orders that prohibited individuals from remaining outside of these districts, with the threat of fines and incarceration for those who violated the restrictions. In April 1942, Roma communities were forcefully moved to the Warsaw Ghetto. Most of them were referred to the Central Detention Centre at the intersection of Gęsia and Zamenhofa Streets. Although they were not officially charged with any crimes, they were essentially held as detainees. The living conditions of the Roma in the Central Detention Centre were tragic. At the time, the building, originally designed for approximately 300 inmates, housed an overwhelming population of around 1,400 to 1,550 prisoners. The detainees were malnourished, and the overcrowded conditions made it impossible to maintain hygiene, resulting in the outbreak of diseases among them.

The first reference to the arrival of Roma at the Detention Centre is an entry from the diary of the chairman of the Jewish Council, Adam Czerniakow, dated 22 April: "10 Gypsy men and women were transferred to the Jewish prison under the leadership of <<King>> Kwiek", with a further group to arrive in the following days - a total of 38 Roma were to be housed at the Detention Centre in April. By the way, it must be stated the presence of 'King Kwiek' is unverified. As Marta Janczewska wrote: "Janusz Kwiek, Gypsy King from 1937 to 1939, disappeared in the first days of the war and his fate is unknown. His pre-war rival for the throne, Rudolf Kwiek, appointed himself king after the war, in 1946."

Another group of Roma entered the ghetto after 25 May 1942, with the coming into force of

- Warschau ausserhalb des jüdischen Wohnbezirks angetroffen werden, werden in den jüdischen Wohnbezirk in Warschau eingewiesen. Ihr Aufenthalt wird für dauernd auf diesen Wohnbezirk beschränkt. Die Einweisung von arbeitsfähigen männlichen Zigeunern in ein Arbeitslager bleibt vorbehalten.
2. Bei der Einweisung der Zigeuner in den jüdischen Wohnbezirk kann angeordnet werden, dass sie ihren Hausrat und ihre Fahrzeuge, Pferde und sonstige Habe ohne Entschädigung zurückzulassen haben.
  3. Zigeuner, die den jüdischen Wohnbezirk nach ihrer Einweisung wieder unbefugt verlassen, werden gemäss den Vorschriften der eingangs genannten Verordnungen mit Gefängnis und Geldstrafe bis Zl. 10.000,— oder mit einer dieser Strafen, in schweren Fällen auch mit Zuchthaus, bestraft.
  4. Die Anordnung tritt am 25. Mai 1942 in Kraft.
- Warschau, am 20. Mai 1942.

**Der Stadthauptmann in Warschau  
Polizeidirektor  
gez. Dr. Bethke**

#### **BEKANNTMACHUNG**

**betr. Wohnungstausch zwischen Personen deutscher und polnischer Volkszugehörigkeit.**

In Ausführung der Anordnung des Herrn Stadthauptmanns vom 11. V. 1942 gebe ich folgendes bekannt.

Im Zusammenhang mit der Bildung des deutschen Wohnviertels sollen alle Personen polnischer Volkszugehörigkeit, Hausbesitzer und Hausverwalter nicht ausgenommen, nach und nach ins polnische Wohnviertel umgesiedelt werden. Die Umsiedlung wird durchgeführt je nach Anmeldung des Bedarfs auf betreffende Wohn- bzw. Nutzräume für Personen deutscher Volkszugehörigkeit.

Um die Umsiedlungsaktion und Durchführung des

- dzielnicy mieszkalnej w Warszawie. Ich pobyt będzie ograniczony na stałe do tej dzielnicy.
- Zastrzega się kierowanie zdolnych do pracy Cyganów-mężczyzn do obozu pracy.
2. Przy kierowaniu Cyganów do żydowskiej dzielnicy mieszkalnej może być zarządzane pozostawianie przez nich bez odszkodowania swego sprzętu domowego i pojazdów, koni i innego majątku.
  3. Cyganie, którzy po swym skierowaniu do żydowskiej dzielnicy mieszkalnej opuszczą ją znów bez pozwolenia, będą karani stosownie do przepisów wymienionych na wstępie rozporządzeń więzieniem i grzywną do zł. 10.000,— lub jedną z tych kar, w ciężkich wypadkach również więzieniem karnym.
  4. Zarządzenie wchodzi w moc obowiązującą 25 maja 1942 r.

Warschau, dnia 20 maja 1942 r.

**Starosta Miejski w Warszawie  
Dyrektor Policji  
(—) Dr. Bethke**

#### **OBWIESZCZENIE**

**w sprawie zamiany lokali pomiędzy osobami narodowości niemieckiej i osobami narodowości polskiej.**

W wykonaniu zarządzenia Pana Starosty Miejskiego z dnia 11. V. 1942 r. podaję do wiadomości, co następuje.

W związku z utworzeniem niemieckiej dzielnicy mieszkaniowej wszystkie osoby narodowości polskiej, nie wyłączając właścicieli i administratorów nieruchomości, mają być stopniowo przesiedlone z tej dzielnicy do polskiej dzielnicy mieszkaniowej. Przesiedlanie będzie następowało w miarę zgłaszania zapotrzebowań na poszczególne lokale mieszkalne lub użytkowe dla osób narodowości niemieckiej.

Celem usprawnienia akcji przesiedleniowej i prze-

Order regarding the restriction of the stay of Roma people in Warsaw of May 20, 1942



Roma Women in Lublin ghetto  
(Yad Vashem)

As one official wrote, the arrival of the Roma in the ghetto "sparked a widespread sensation". I saw two gypsy women being followed by a large group of children and, later on, a few more gypsies surrounded by a crowd of curious onlookers". Many Jews looked down on the Roma with prejudice. Hebrew teacher Chaim Aron Priest reflected after their release from detention: "How will the gypsies support themselves? Men will trade horses; women will predict the future; in a nutshell, doing what they have always done. And most importantly, they will help Jews with smuggling. Until they settle down, their activities will include robbing Jews - their brothers in the ghetto. Today a gypsy stole a jacket from a Jew in front of thousands of passers-by". Emanuel Ringelblum, in turn, noted the mood in the street: "People are afraid of them. They will rob, steal, break windows and take bread from the displays," treating the arrival of the Roma as a misfortune for the whole ghetto. Samuel Puterman wrote that Ringelblum's fears turned out to be correct, but he justified this in part by the tragic situation faced by "a small handful of destitute people whose only wealth was freedom". Others, on the other hand, were ambivalent in their thoughts - Abraham Lewin criticised the removal of additional bread rations for officials, writing: "It goes to the gypsies. The Jews will have to starve more, but the gypsies will not be any more satiated from it". At the same time, he praised Centos' decision to grant aid to Roma children: "The CENTOS board did the right thing and acted humanely". In turn, Adam Czerniaków, the chairman of the Jewish Council,



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# FELLOWSHIPS AT AUSCHWITZ FOR THE STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS (FASPE) PARTNERS WITH MEMORIA

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For over a decade, Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) has awarded fellowships to young professionals to study, converse, remember, and even to look to the future, at the sites where the Holocaust was conceived, planned, and carried out.

Whether at the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin or standing with consummate sadness inside the latrine barracks at Birkenau, wondering nearby at the giant cisterns who the engineers were who designed the complex sewage system, we bring our Fellows to these sites because we believe in the fundamental power of place. By examining Nazi atrocities where the Nazi-era professionals worked, we have confidence that young professionals—physicians, lawyers, technologists, businesspeople, religious leaders, and journalists—will learn from the tragic decision-making of the past. With now close to 1000 alumni, each year we return to Auschwitz in the hope that those who most influence society, its early-career leaders, may come to understand the forces—big and small—that make complicity possible and their responsibility to do better. Place is an indispensable part of our vision.

As survivors pass away and generations lose certain physical, tangible connections to the Holocaust, FASPE seeks a new, complementary way to remember and to make productive use of that memory. How do we continue to learn these essential lessons in a changing world? How are today's young people, especially its future leaders, to come to grips with these atrocities? Our answer is that young professionals must study the perpetrators. They must be able to put themselves in the minds of those who, all too often for the most mundane, career-oriented reasons, became complicit with evil. Why did Topf & Sons build the ovens? What led otherwise well-respected doctors to engage in human experimentation? Why did pastors remain silent in the face of hate? Through our Fellowship experience, FASPE asks our Fellows to consider these questions and to see their own potential to ethical complicity in past decisions.

It is because of our proud commitment to ethical leadership that we have gratefully partnered with Memoria to bring regular pieces to its readers. We are thankful for this opportunity to share our Fellows' work with you. Many





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# THREE LESSONS FROM THE HOLOCAUST FOR YOUNG TECHNOLOGISTS

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We are three researchers in various fields of technology who had the privilege of participating in a two-week-long fellowship in Europe on the topic of professional ethics. This FASPE (Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics) fellowship exposed us to the history of the Holocaust from the perspective of the perpetrators (especially the professional class of doctors, lawyers, and scientists) and asked us to reflect on ethics in our fields today.

From large language models to quantum computers, genome editing, autonomous vehicles, and virtual reality, we live in a time characterized by many and diverse innovations. While there exists potential for positive social outcomes, with complexity comes unpredictability. The unintended consequences stemming from our innovations may leave us wishing we had never invented such new technology in the first place.

History is filled with lessons for those willing to listen. By reckoning with the role of scientists and engineers in enabling the ultimate tragedy of our time at these historical sites, we heard more than just lessons: a heartrending wail echoed through the camps, towns, and ruins. Although we will be reflecting on these cries for a lifetime, we feel the responsibility to share a condensed version of our collective experience in the form of in-progress lessons for modern technologists.

## **Lesson 1: Don't let the title "technologist" fool you—our jobs are just as social as they are technical.**

As we design new hardware and software, so too we design new ways for people to interact with each other both digitally and physically. By way of social connections in the workplace, even the professional norms that we develop as we work through R&D impose themselves on future researchers and projects.

When studying the Holocaust, the inescapable connection between the technological and the social is visible in essentially every case study. One, however, stands out: the company responsible for enabling the large-scale burning of bodies at concentration camps.

As cremation gained popularity in the early twentieth century, Topf and Sons depicted the development of crematoria as a means of bringing "dignity to death."<sup>1</sup> When tasked by the Nazi regime in 1939 with providing ovens for their camps, the company went above and beyond. They offered redesigned crematoria capable of much more efficient operation, going so far as to provide unsolicited advice on how to improve the venting of the gas chambers to speed up the killing process.

This was the corporate culture of Topf and Sons, emphasizing innovation and technological perfection above all else. In a 1938 letter from the Topf Brothers to their employees (a year before the company would begin testing and installing crematoria in concentration camps),



skyscrapers, global communications networks, and highly automated assembly lines.

Recently, many have lauded large language models for their broad applicability, which promises widespread growth and more efficient task completion. In a world that seems to strive for bigger and faster everything, scale and efficiency have become key measures of performance.

Yet while we celebrate these achievements, we often seem to overlook the capacity of technology to enable large-scale harm also.

Technology did not create Nazi prejudice. But it did allow for atrocities at scales hitherto unfathomable.

On January 20, 1942 in a Berlin suburb, fifteen Nazi party officials discussed how to handle the approximately 11,000,000 Jews in Europe. This cold bit of calculation formed part of what is now referred to as the Wannsee Conference.<sup>6</sup> Different officials in attendance raised concerns about the logistical difficulties of “evacuating” (a euphemism for murder) such a large number of people. The Nazis had a problem. Technology promised a “solution” in the form of gas chambers. While the Nazis were already committing mass murder prior to the Wannsee Conference, the subsequent scale of murder was made possible in large part due to new, fiendish technologies.

What, then, is good about scale and efficiency?

Moreover, these questions not only apply to how we might think about technology design but also to how we might reflect on our own individual roles as technologists. Raised on rhetoric about engineers saving the world, many of us set out to create large-scale change







the misuse of pesticides for industrial mass extermination [...A]s the war progressed, more and more people were housed in camps so it was to be expected that the demand would rise for pediculicides and other special pesticides.”

If Wurster truly did not know that his company’s most profitable product was used for mass murder, would he have put an end to the production of Zyklon B if he had been aware? Would the engineers designing Zyklon B have chosen not to design a stronger pesticide if they had known what its intended use was? Regardless of whether they knew the true and horrifying impact of their product, both the leaders and the engineers of Degesch had the power to slow down, or even prevent, the development of Zyklon B. Such resistance would have had the potential to save countless lives.

By investing time and resources into learning about how technology can be used and who can be affected by it, we can acquire the knowledge needed to prevent harmful outcomes. By exploring the experiences of people who are directly and indirectly affected by an innovation, we can better understand the breadth of its impact. By listening to those who are historically excluded, we can predict and prevent unintended consequences.

It can take time and resources to collect a variety of experiences but designing for minority and excluded populations can improve outcomes for everyone. Curb cuts, for instance, were originally created to make sidewalks accessible to people with mobility devices like wheelchairs. They now, however, make it easier for everyone to move onto sidewalks, especially when toting suitcases, strollers, and other items with wheels.

We can improve the design process and prevent harm if we keep underrepresented peoples informed, interview them, and consult with them. Just talking to people, however, is not

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# FASPE

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Auschwitz  
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Professional Ethics

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# THEY WERE CHILDREN. FROM THE MAISON D'IZIEU COLLECTIONS

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**They were children! is the fourth temporary exhibition in the Zlatin Gallery that is available for visitors of Maison d'Izieu until 22 September 2024. After the children's drawings and Georgy's letters and photos, "The Year 1943 in the House" took us back 80 years to when Sabine and Miron Zlatin moved to Izieu, and told us about the lives of the House's inhabitants during 1943.**

They were children! naturally follows the course of History. Original documents and never-before-seen objects take visitors back to the beginning of 1944. The serenity of the children's daily lives at the House contrasts with the fear of imminent danger and the violence of the round-up. The first outlines of memory followed, sketched out by the requests of families and the testimonies of relatives. The most tenacious commitment not to forget led to the inauguration of the memorial in 1994.

## **Life is nearly ordinary**

Although the House of Izieu was a place of passage, the adults tried to create a kind of cocoon around the children. They wanted them to have an ordinary rhythm of life, to find their bearings, no matter how long they stayed.

The children help prepare meals, go to class with teacher Gabrielle Perrier or to the Collège in Belley. They draw and organise shows. They take every opportunity to celebrate. They make the surrounding countryside their own playground. They regularly write to their families.

They laugh, sing, dance or make friends... they live their lives as children. Of course, not everything is rosy; we are in a time of war. The moments of joy do not erase the suffering of the children: they are separated from their parents and have lost their homes. Some manage to leave the House to find refuge with family or friends.

After the cold of winter, the children still living at the House are excited about the arrival of spring. They look forward to the future, working hard at school to make their parents proud and dreaming of their future.

## **The danger approaches**

Italy has surrendered. In september 1943, the Germans take control of the zone previously occupied by the Italians. Four months later, the tension is palpable. The rules have changed : the few exceptions to the antisemitic laws do not work anymore. On 7 january 1944, Dr Ben Drihem, the doctor who previously took care of the children is arrested and deported. Just over a month after, on 8 february, the offices of the children's aid society OSE-UGIF in Chambéry, around 40km from Izieu are raided; ten people are arrested and are sent to Auschwitz. The unwavering support, sub-prefect Pierre-Marcel Wiltzer is transferred. The





On the back of the envelope before it is returned to sender is a note saying 'The recipient could not be contacted', here Sérafine Halpern, Georgy's mother.

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# 85 YEARS OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT TO GREAT BRITAIN

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In 1939, Ferdinand Brann gave his daughter Ursula a prayer book before she departed from Germany on a Kindertransport to England. On its first page, he had written ten guiding principles for her to begin her new life with. The principles offered Ursula guidance on remaining hopeful as she began her new life far from home. They also advised her to never forget Germany, her family's home.

Ferdinand never saw his daughter again. Ursula's parents and older sister did not escape Nazi persecution and were deported to Auschwitz and murdered. The Kindertransport saved Ursula's life.

The Kindertransport was one of the most significant efforts to protect Jewish children from persecution. In response to the antisemitic violence of the November pogroms of 1938, the British government agreed to a rescue operation initiated by Jewish and other aid organizations. From December 1938 to September 1939, more than 10,000 mostly Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were brought to Great Britain. The children were placed in English foster families, residential homes, and schools. They began life in a new country, with a new language, and in a foreign environment. As the Second World War began, communication between the children and their parents became difficult. Many waited years before learning of their parents' fate, most of whom struggled to escape their home countries. Most of them did not survive the Holocaust.

The Kindertransport children were often the only Holocaust survivors in their families. The letters exchanged between Ursula and her parents are featured in the exhibition "I said, 'Auf Wiedersehen' – 85 years since the Kindertransport to Britain." Commissioned by the Berthold Leibinger Stiftung and curated by Ruth Ur, the Director of the German Friends of Yad Vashem, the exhibition commemorates the rescue of over 10,000 children from Nazi-controlled territories to Great Britain between 1938 and 1939. It presents selected letters from five Jewish families, reflecting their hopes of reunion and their fears of permanent separation.

The exhibition is a significant step forward in understanding the Kindertransport experience and the suffering endured by Jewish families during the Holocaust.

The exhibition will be presented from 25 October 2024 to 25 January 2025 in Württemberg State Library in Stuttgart

Abschied: The story of Ursula Brann

In 2007, Ursula recited Ferdinand's ten guiding principles from her prayer book during a three-hour interview with Dr. Bea Lewkowicz from the AJR Refugee Voices Archive. When asked to say her name at the beginning of the interview, she first pronounced it "Oor-sula" in the German way, before switching to "Er-sula" in English. Ursula embodied the strong sense of identity expressed in her father's principles.

After Ursula's death in 2015, her prayer book went missing. In the search for the original book, Ruth Ur discovered that Ursula's two sons had inherited a set of boxes filled with



adopted the name Henry Foner and almost entirely lost his mother tongue within months.

In the postcards, Max wrote about Henry's toys and his hopes for his son's well-being. The postcards also reflect Max's growing fear that he might never see Henry again. In December 1942, Max Lichtwitz was deported to Auschwitz and murdered.

Henry Foner, now 90 years old, lives in Jerusalem.

### Sehnsucht: The story of Gerda Stein

"At exactly twelve o'clock midday, we will all look at the sun at the same time from Prague, London, and Lemberg, and hope that one day we can be together, hand in hand."

Gerda received this message from her father for her birthday. He sent her a detailed letter with a colorful, hand-drawn illustration of herself, her father, and her mother, each in different countries, all looking at a bright yellow sun. In another letter, her mother wrote her a poem with miniature illustrations next to its verses, bringing her happiness and hope. Gerda fled on a Kindertransport from Prague to England in March 1939. She was 11 years old.

She lived with Trevor Chadwick, a Kindertransport organizer who rescued many other children from former Czechoslovakia. The letters she received, including a colorful postcard, reflected her parents' deep longing for her.

Despite their efforts to reunite with their daughter, Arnold and Erna Stein could not bring their family back together. Neither of them survived the Holocaust.

Gerda died in 2021. She was a well-known poet.

### Ungewissheit: The story of Hannah Kuhn

In 2023, Ann Kirk sat with Ruth Ur in her London home, looking at a photograph of herself

Ilse's Czech passport issued on January 18, 1939.





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# 'PICTURING THE UNIMAGINABLE'

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Ten talented cartoonists from different backgrounds and ages from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium created a story from their own perspective in the context of three former Nazi concentration camps in these countries: Gedenkstätte Neuengamme in Germany, the Dossin Barracks in Belgium and Westerbork Memorial.

Their work is now being exhibited and simultaneously published in the graphic novel *Picturing the Unimaginable* in four languages (German, English, French and Dutch).

## **Eighty-year-old comic book**

The project got underway when Bas Kortholt, a researcher at Remembrance Centre Camp Westerbork, cartoonist Erik de Graaf and NIOD researcher Kees Ribbens were inspired by a comic strip Ribbens discovered some time ago in the United States. In an attempt to make somewhat imaginable what was going on in the heart of Europe, August M. Froehlich depicted what happened after the arrival of a deportation train as early as 1944. His comic was published in early 1945 while most of the German death camps were still in full operation.

## **'Picturing the Unimaginable'**

After the discovery of the American comic strip, the idea arose to explore how contemporary cartoonists would depict the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes today. The result is ten comic strips, which form the heart of the project. In the exhibition, which after Westerbork travels on to Kazerne Dossin in Belgium and then to Gedenkstätte Neuengamme in Germany, the cartoon drawings are contextualised by historical artefacts, special audio-visual excerpts from both experts and eyewitnesses of the horrors, information about the creative process and the motivation of the cartoonists.

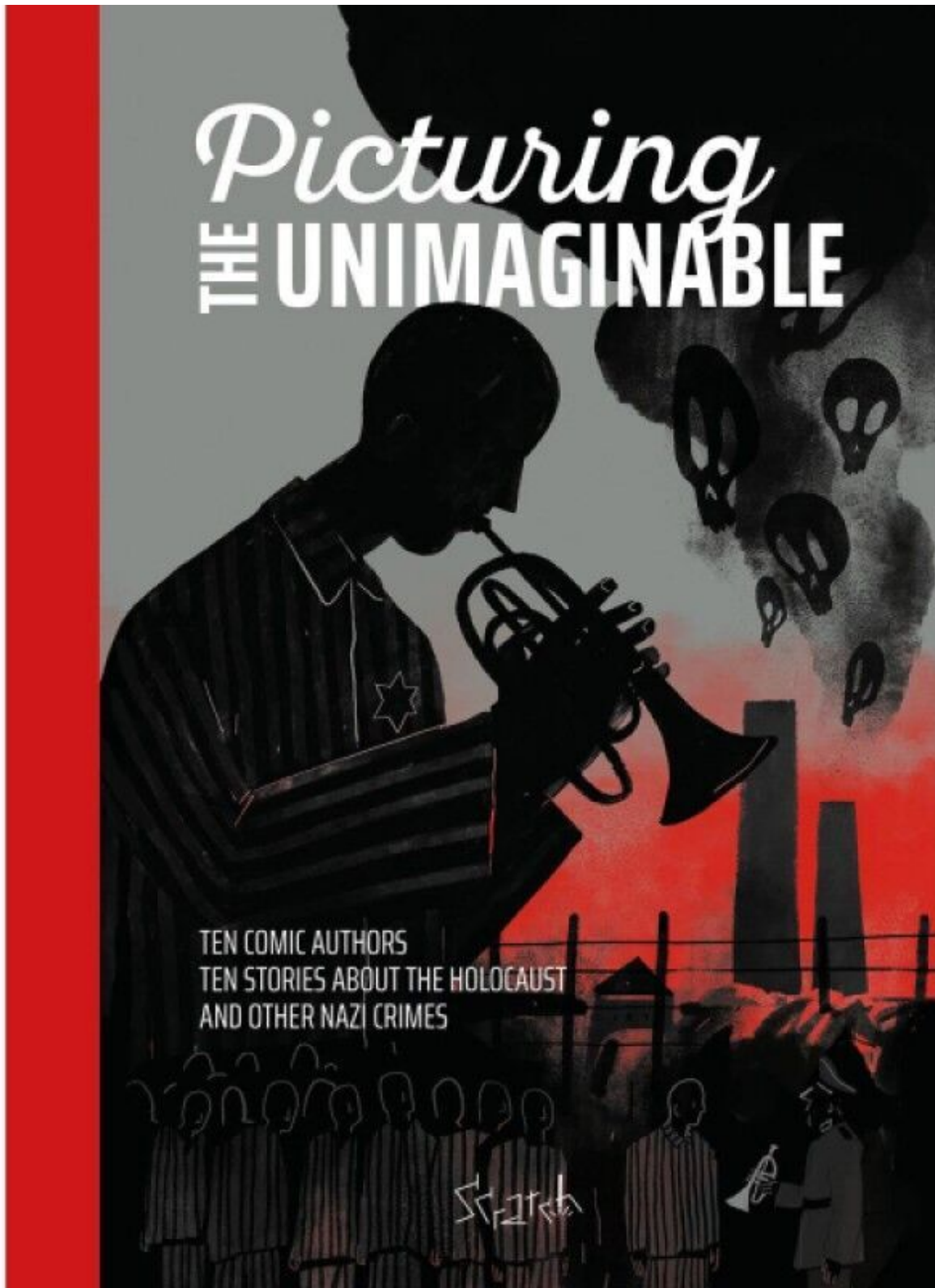
As this is an international collaboration, the graphic novel will be published in four languages by publisher Scratch Books.

The exhibition will be on display at Westerbork Memorial until 1 September.

# *Picturing* **THE UNIMAGINABLE**

TEN COMIC AUTHORS  
TEN STORIES ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST  
AND OTHER NAZI CRIMES

Sketch



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# MIKOŁAJ GRYNBERG AND WILHELM SASNAL PERMANENTLY AT THE POLIN MUSEUM

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The Postwar Gallery - the last of the POLIN Museum's permanent exhibition galleries - has acquired a new space telling the story of Jewish life after 1989. It brings together works by two acclaimed Polish artists: Wilhelm Sasnal and Mikołaj Grynberg. The new arrangement, designed by the WWAA architectural studio, is open to the public from 11 July. With this symbolic meeting, the POLIN Museum heralds its 10th birthday, which it will celebrate in the autumn of 2024.

1000-year long history of Polish Jews did not end with the Holocaust, or with the waves of postwar emigration.

"When we were opening the Core Exhibition, it seemed that, post-1989, a bright and safe future awaited the Polish society, along with all the minorities that constitute it. Is that still true today? What do Polish Jews think, how do they feel about it? We strive to answer this question in the new arrangement of the last section of POLIN Core Exhibition which deals with the Jewish life in today's Poland," says Joanna Fikus, head of the POLIN Museum's exhibition department, responsible for work on the new museum space.

Designers from the WWAA studio created a symbolic house where the visitors to the Core Exhibition will be able to watch Mikołaj Grynberg's film titled Who We Are. The director asks Polish Jews who they are and what kind of a home Poland is for them.

'The subtle interplay of colour is of major importance—blue refers to the natural dye used in the Antiquity to produce a talit—Jewish prayer shawl,' says Natalia Paszkowska, from the WWAA studio responsible for the design of the new space. 'The dye was obtained from a Mediterranean snail called chilazon in Aramaic. Silver is the second dominant colour. Silver walls of the house reflect the clouds, echoing the painting by Wilhelm Sasnal visible through the window," she added.

We look at the Polish landscape with a disturbing element in it—a concentration camp tower. Debates on the memory of the difficult Holocaust history and the postwar period continue to affect contemporary Polish-Jewish relations. In his painting, Wilhelm Sasnal points to the traces of this past in the Polish landscape and its impact on the awareness of the country's residents. Following in the artist's footsteps, we want to ask to what extent does the memory of the past shape our present, and what will the landscape of Polish-Jewish relations look like in the future?

The new arrangement of the last section of the Core Exhibition is an element of the program for POLIN Museum's 10th birthday, which we will celebrate in the fall.





# OLDER JEWS AND THE HOLOCAUST

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We're pleased to announce a public symposium at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, co-convened by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany and EHRI partners the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and The Wiener Holocaust Library (London, UK).

The symposium will take place on Monday 9 September, and you can register to attend in person or online.

During the Holocaust, older Jews were among the first to be targeted for death or deportation to killing centers. Some wrote about their experiences in diaries and letters, and information can be found in other documentation and post-war testimony. Still, little is known about how older Jews endured persecution, how they responded, and their survival strategies.

This symposium will explore new research on the experiences of the elderly during and after the Holocaust, preceding the publication of an edited volume on the same topic. Instead of focusing solely on their vulnerability and death, the speakers will discuss how older individuals lived through genocide and navigated its aftermath, as well as how others reacted to the needs of older Jews.

## **Introductory and Closing Remarks/ panelists**

**Elizabeth Anthony**, Director, Visiting Scholar Programs, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Christine Schmidt**, Deputy Director and Head of Research, The Wiener Holocaust Library, London

**Joanna Sliwa**, Historian and Administrator of the Saul Kagan Fellowship in Advanced Shoah Studies and the University Partnership in Holocaust Studies, Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany.

The program will be divided into four panels:

**Panel I:** Contexts of Persecution

**Panel II:** Older People and Migration

**Panel III:** Older Jews among the "Displaced"

**Panel IV:** Older Jews after the Holocaust

This program is free and open to the public, but registration is required.



Portrait of an elderly Holocaust survivor in France, circa 1946–48.  
US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Andre Limot

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# DEVELOPMENT OF EHRI AS A PERMANENT FACILITY

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**On 11 July, the Dutch government sent a formal request to the European Commission (EC) to set up the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) as a permanent facility, on behalf of all the countries involved. This request includes an elaborate plan with important details, such as the location of the headquarters of EHRI in the Netherlands, the content of the legal entity to be set up and the agreed draft statutes.**

EHRI is transforming from a series of projects into a permanent organisation in the form of an ERIC – a European Research Infrastructure Consortium, a legal entity set up by the EC with legal personality and full legal capacity. This transformation is an initiative of the many research institutions, archives and museums worldwide that have participated in EHRI projects since 2010.

The first participating countries of the new international Holocaust Research Infrastructure are expected to include, in addition to the Netherlands: Belgium, Germany, Israel, Croatia, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom.

The set-up of this new Holocaust research infrastructure and the required staff are paid for by the member states themselves. The Netherlands is the hosting country and will house the central office of EHRI within the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam. In all member countries of this new EHRI organisation, national nodes will be established, involving a number of Holocaust related institutions that will work together with one acting as coordinator.

It may take several months before the European Commission formally approves the plans, but the joint aim is to launch the new EHRI facility in January 2025, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

After the launch, EHRI will be able to continue many of its current activities, building on the previous European projects. In these projects (EHRI 1-3, PP and IP), the participating research institutions have already developed a solid foundation for transnational online Holocaust research and training facilities. These resources, such as the EHRI Portal that offers access to information on Holocaust-related archival material held in institutions across Europe and beyond, will now be consolidated. Furthermore EHRI in its new organisational form will be able to expand and improve its support for transnational Holocaust research.

As the Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science, Eppo Bruins, stated: "If you want to improve your future, you have to know your past. We are seeing an increase in the number of antisemitic incidents across Europe. I find this unacceptable and a major concern. The EHRI collects public information about the Holocaust, making it more accessible to researchers and other interested parties. This is important because more knowledge and research of our past is of great importance for



A permanent European  
Holocaust Research Infrastructure...





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