ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS AT THE AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU STATE MUSEUM

by Teresa Świebocka
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At the suggestion of former prisoners, the Polish government established the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in 1947. Its most important task was, and still is, to preserve for all time everything that remains from the camp, to collect all evidence of the crimes that the Nazis committed, to study the history of the camp and the buildings and objects there in a scholarly way, and to make the site of the concentration camp and everything there accessible.

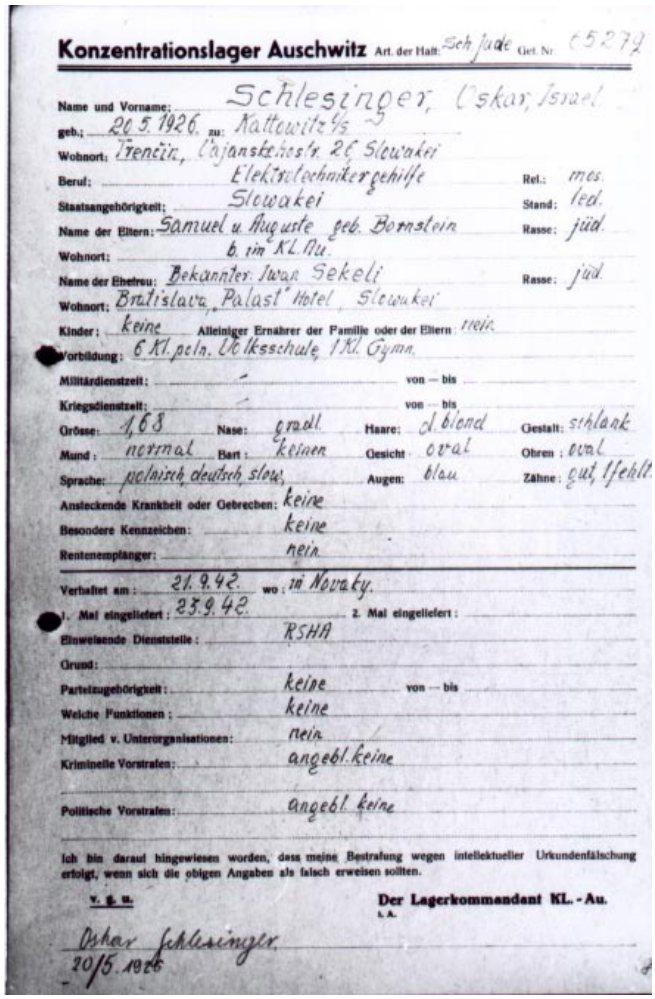
All these tasks are important and carry a great responsibility. We feel, furthermore, that our priorities extend further than preserving this unique and hallowed place as a warning against what racism, anti-Semitism, and the disregard of human rights can lead to. It is equally important to preserve the memory of the people who were deported to Auschwitz. For this reason, the Museum makes every attempt in its publications, exhibitions, and educational activities to go beyond presenting these people as anonymous victims, or as nothing more than camp numbers or dry statistics. We are trying to restore names, faces, and personal life stories to the people who were murdered. We want to show them not only as people behind barbed wire, dressed in identical, ragged, striped camp uniforms, or crowded into the gas chamber. We want the people who come to the Memorial today to be aware of who the victims were and to show them not as dead bodies or fields strewn with human ashes, but rather as people in all their diversity, in their spiritual and cultural fullness. The Nazis, after all, wanted to destroy not only various peoples, but also their history, culture and heritage

In this type of approach to preserving the memory of the victims, the Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum play a crucial role.

The Archives became an independent department in 1957. In the first years after the war, the Kraków Regional Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes collected the camp records that the Nazis did not manage to destroy in their effort to erase the evidence of their crimes, or to carry into the depths of the Third Reich. The Commission was busy preparing material for the two trials of the camp SS garrison that were held in Poland, in Warsaw and Kraków in 1946 and 1947.

The first trial was the case of the original Auschwitz Concentration Camp commandant, Rudolf Hoess, who held that post from the founding of the camp in 1940 through November 1943. Forty SS men from the Auschwitz Concentration Camp garrison, including the Hoess's successor, Arthur Liebehenschel, were the defendants in the second trial. The majority of them, including both commandants, received the death sentence. In 1950, the camp records and material from the trials were transferred to the Museum in Oświęcim, where they became the cornerstone of the Archives.

The Museum's collection includes original documents of German provenance created in Auschwitz Concentration Camp or in offices that cooperated with the camp administration; copies of documents obtained from other institutions;



Konzentrationslager Auschwitz Art. der Haft: Sch. Jude Gef. Nr. 65279

Name und Vorname: Schlesinger, Oskar, Israel
geb.: 20.5.1926 zu: Kattowitz O/S
Wohnort: Trenčín, Čajanskehostr. 26 Slowakei
Beruf: Elektrotechnikergehilfe Rel.: mos.
Staatsangehörigkeit: Slowakei Stand: led.
Name der Eltern: Samuel u. Auguste geb. Bornstein Rasse: jüd.
Wohnort: b. im KL. Au.
Name der Ehefrau: Bekannter: Iwan Sekeli Rasse: jüd.
Wohnort: Bratislava, „Palast" Hotel, Slowakei
Kinder: keine Alleiniger Ernährer der Familie oder der Eltern: nein
Vorbildung: 6 Kl. poln. Volksschule, 1 Kl. Gymn.
Militärdienstzeit: – von – bis
Kriegsdienstzeit: – von – bis
Grösse: 1,68 Nase: gradl. Haare: d. blond Gestalt: schlank
Mund: normal Bart: keinen Gesicht: oval Ohren: oval
Sprache: polnisch, deutsch, slow. Augen: blau Zähne: gut, 1 fehlt.
Ansteckende Krankheit oder Gebrechen: keine
Besondere Kennzeichen: keine
Rentenempfänger: nein
Verhaftet am: 21.9.42 wo: in Novaky.
1. Mal eingeliefert: 23.9.42 2. Mal eingeliefert:
Einweisende Dienststelle: RSHA
Grund:
Parteizugehörigkeit: keine von – bis
Welche Funktionen: keine
Mitglied v. Unterorganisationen: nein
Kriminelle Vorstrafen: angebl. keine
Politische Vorstrafen: angebl. keine

Ich bin darauf hingewiesen worden, dass meine Bestrafung wegen intellektueller Urkundenfälschung erfolgt, wenn sich die obigen Angaben als falsch erweisen sollten.

v. g. u. Der Lagerkommandant KL.-Au.
i. A.

Oskar Schlesinger
20/5.1926

Example of personal questionnaires (cards) for each prisoner registered at the camp, containing specific information, including a description of the prisoners.

documents created in the camp by individual prisoners and by the resistance movement in and around the camp; source materials that originated after the war; illustrative material from before, during, and after the war; and mechanical records. Unfortunately, as it was mentioned before, a large part of the original records were destroyed by the SS as they abandoned the camp. Some were burned on the spot and some were removed into the depths of the Third Reich. Some document collections were carried off to Russia immediately after the liberation of the camp.

This is why, almost from the very beginning, we have been engaged in a wide-ranging search operation, which is constantly expanding. We enrich our collections thanks to cooperation with other institutions, searches of other archives, and campaigns among former prisoners and their families.

At present, the very considerable resources in the Museum Archives include:

- 246 meters of shelves containing various sorts of documents;
- 26 meters of photographic negatives;
- 35 meters of camp photographs of prisoners;
- 450,000 frames of microfilm;
- 707 video cassette titles;
- 543 audio cassette titles; and
- 128 films.

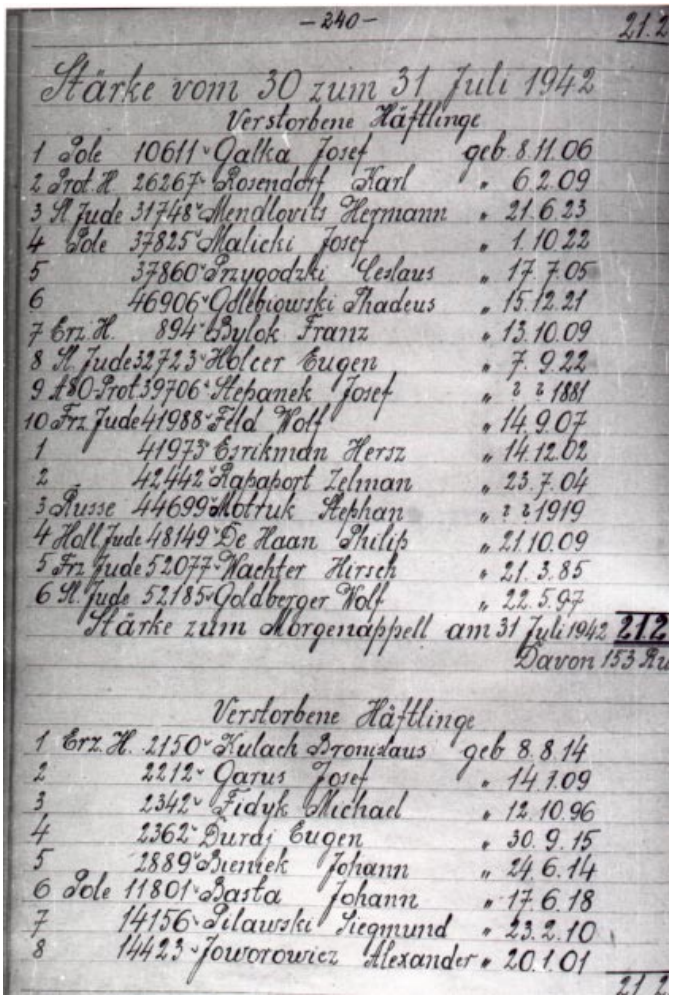
In addition, the Archives hold the following collections of documents:

- 152 volumes of "Statements" by former prisoners about their time in the camp;
- 223 volumes of memoirs by former prisoners;
- 60 volumes of original camp correspondence'
- 76 volumes of records from the trials of commandant Hoess and the camp garrison;
- Records of the camp resistance movement including correspondence and secret messages smuggled out of the camp, lists of prisoners murdered in the camp, profiles of SS men, and others;
- "Death Books" containing death certificates for approximately 69,000 prisoners, and
- 248 volumes of camp construction board documents.

It can be seen that the Archives hold material on the operation of the camp, its founding, construction and expansion, plans for its future, and the people who were deported there. These resources are the basis for knowledge about living conditions in the camp, labor, punishments, experiments, and death on an individual scale and through mass-extermination.

Researchers in various fields, including historians, lawyers, physicians, and architects etc., can make use of the archival records. In view of the subject of the conference, I will focus my report on the collections that contain the names of the victims of Auschwitz.

The records created in the chancellery of Auschwitz Concentration Camp make up a fundamental part of the archival resources on this subject. Of basic importance for the creation and scope of this documentation is, above all, the fact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Stärke vom 30 zum 31 Juli 1942

Verstorbene Häftlinge

1 Pole 10611 Galka Josef geb 8.11.06
2 Prot. R. 26267 Rosendorf Karl „ 6.2.09
3 R. Jude 31748 Mendlovits Hermann „ 21.6.23
4 Pole 37825 Malicki Josef „ 1.10.22
5 37860 Przygodzki Ceslaus „ 17.7.05
6 46906 Odlebiowski Thadeus „ 15.12.21
7 Erz. R. 894 Bylok Franz „ 13.10.09
8 R. Jude 32723 Holcer Eugen „ 7.9.22
9 180-Prot 39706 Stepanek Josef „ 2.2.1881
10 Erz. Jude 41988 Feld Wolf „ 14.9.07
1 41973 Erikman Hersz „ 14.12.02
2 42442 Rapaport Zelman „ 23.7.04
3 Russe 44699 Mottuk Stephan „ 2.2.1919
4 Holl. Jude 48149 De Haan Philip „ 21.10.09
5 Erz. Jude 52077 Nachter Hirsch „ 21.3.85
6 R. Jude 52185 Goldberger Wolf „ 22.5.97

Stärke zum Morgenappell am 31 Juli 1942 212
Davon 153 Ru

Verstorbene Häftlinge

1 Erz. R. 2150 Kulach Bronislaus geb 8.8.14
2 2212 Garus Josef „ 14.1.09
3 2342 Fidyk Michael „ 12.10.96
4 2362 Durda Eugen „ 30.9.15
5 2889 Bienek Johann „ 24.6.14
6 Pole 11801 Basta Johann „ 17.6.18
7 14156 Silawski Siegmund „ 23.2.10
8 14423 Joworowicz Alexander „ 20.1.01

Page from the daily count book which contained nationality, numbers, names and dates of birth of the prisoners who died in the camp on that day.

that precise records were not kept on many of the deportees, because the camp administration was not interested in them. For more than half of the time it was in operation, the Auschwitz camp had two parallel functions:

1. From 1940 to 1945, Auschwitz functioned as the largest Nazi concentration camp, holding 400,000 prisoners of various ethnic and national origins: Jews, Poles, Roma, Soviet prisoners of war, and others.

These prisoners were scrupulously registered and given camp numbers. Extensive documentation was created in the camp SS offices on each of them, beginning with the date of their arrival in the camp, through various stages of camp existence, up to their death or transfer to other camps in the depths of the Third Reich.

2. From 1942 to 1944, Auschwitz also functioned as the largest center for the mass murder of the European Jews.

After selection on the railroad unloading platform, or "ramp," the majority of the more than one million newly-arrived Jews, classified as unfit for labor, were sent to their immediate deaths in the gas chambers in Birkenau—that is,

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Konzentrationslager Auschwitz
Abteilung II

Zugänge an 13.und 14.December 1941:

Kart	H.Nr.	Name	Vorname	Geb.Dat.	Geb.Ort	Beruf
		Zugang an 13.December:				
		Landratsamt Krosno:				
	24471	Pietek	Kazimir	18.10.10	Trzebinia	Arbeiter
		Zugänge an 14.December 1941:				
		Landratsamt Toschow:				
	24472	Luka	Josef	26. 8.22	Ventrin	Arbeiter
		Staatspolizeistelle Kichenen/Kohrbitzerburg:				
	24473	Pilitowski	Stanislaus	22. 3.96	Chudzyno	Lehrer
	24474	Szymanski	Thadeus	20.10.14	Wyrschen	Gärtner
		Staatspolizeistelle Graudenz:				
	24475	Buchlinski	Johann	22. 6.02	Eichenberg	Büroangestellt.
	24476	Majenka	Egmund	1. 1.18	Graudenz	Büroangestellt.
		Staatspolizeistelle Tilsit:				
	24477	Sidatkauskas	Wenzel	10. 4.93	Saaldynie	Diplomat
		Kriminalpolizeileitstelle Königsberg:				
	24478	Kymann	Alois	23. 4.12	Oetrode	Maurer
		Staatspolizeistelle Hohensalza:				
	24479	Koniecka	Anton	4. 3.20	Gnesen	Buchhalter
	24480	Kobus	Johann	14. 7.11	Kutno	Schlosser
	24481	Kaczorowski	Kazimir	27. 6.22	Lesien	Dachdeckergehilfe
	24482	Rupnek	Walter	4. 2.11	Neuhausen	Molkereiverwalt
	24483	Roland	Heinrich	26.12.05	Lochedow	Landwirt
		Staatspolizeileitstelle Posen:				
	24484	Toperek	Michael	5. 9.98	Marschfelde	Schlosser-Inst.
	24485	Vistrak	Lorenz	1. 8.96	Rosopole	Zimmermann
	24486	Plucinski	Anton	3. 5.09	Kosten	Kaufmann
	24487	Sarecki	Leo	26. 3.14	Gr.-Lenken	Landarbeiter
	24488	Jastrzebski	Eduard	10. 8.01	Chotowo	Schlosser
		Staatspolizeileitstelle Prag:				
	24489	Barth	Richard	4. 2.22	Schittenhofen	Hilfsarbeiter
	24490	Jolinek	Bernard	7. 1.90	Datschitz	Gerber
	24491	Reich	Friedrich	29. 4.99	Trebitsch	Gerber
Prot.	24492	Klimes	Wladislaus	3.12.03	Prag	Rechtsanwalt
	24493	Sochor	Josef	5. 9.00	Kbhlginhof	Fabrikangest.
	24494	Felbertaum	Wilhelm	18.10.04	Wien	Handelsangest.
		Gendarmerieposten Osiek:				
	24495	Zaremba	Andreas	15.11.19	Osiek	Schneidergehilf

Der Leiter der Abteilung II
I.A.

SS-Untersturmführer.

List of newly arrived prisoners of various nationalities including category of prisoner, camp number, name, date and place of birth, profession.

the second, largest part of the Auschwitz complex—without ever becoming prisoners in the camp. Therefore, these people were not entered in the camp records, and the SS attempted to remove all trace of them, along with the evidence of the crime.

The records connected with the deportation of mass Jewish transports were created mostly outside the camp. They were prepared in several copies by the local office that dispatched the transports or helped to organize them. This documentation was made up of the transport letters and various sorts of correspondence, card files, and lists of the deportees.

The commander of the guards on the train turned one copy of the transport letters, containing a list of the names of the deportees, over to the reception office of the camp political department. On these lists, the names of the Jews classified as fit for labor during the selection and sent to the camp were circled in red. These lists, which were in the possession of the political department in Auschwitz, were burned by the SS—probably in September 1944. In France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bohemia and Moravia (today's Czech Republic), Norway and, in part, in Germany and Slovakia, there are copies of the lists of deported Jews preserved in the local archives. This has made it possible to compile partial files and lists of the names of the victims of the Holocaust.

In Auschwitz Museum there are some documents informing about the number of Jews, who were sent to Auschwitz, but mainly without their names. For example Radiogram of February 20, 1943, from the director of the employment division at KL Auschwitz Schwarz to Administration Departament at the SS Main Administration Office, reporting the results of the selections conducted on 5,002 Jews brought to Auschwitz from the Theresienstadt ghetto (three transports). From 5,002, 4,092 were murdered in the gas chambers and only 930 were kept alive for slave labor.

Also in the other documents we can read how many Jews were sent to Auschwitz. For example in telegram of the German ambassador to Hungary Veesenmayer, to the German Foreign Office there is information on about 437,402 Jews who were deported to Auschwitz.

As to the prisoners registered in the camp, relatively wide ranging—although not complete—records have been preserved, testifying to the fact that the bureaucracy in the camp was very highly developed. Among other things, this was connected with the fact that the prisoners were exploited as slave labor and, apart from their employment in SS factories, their labor was sold by the SS to various enterprises, both industrial and agricultural, outside the camp. Unfortunately, the destruction by the Nazis of camp records, as mentioned above, also led to the loss of some of the records on registered prisoners. As a result, we possess a wealth of records, often consisting of a dozen or more documents, including photographs, on some persons—while on others, nothing remains but their serial number and date of arrival.

Among the extant records on prisoners, the most important are:

- The personal questionnaires (*Haftlingspersonalbogen*) of more than 7,000 prisoners, Jews and non-Jews. These forms were filled out by persons working in the camp political department at the time of the registration of new prisoners, on the basis of spoken statements by the new arrivals. They contain detailed information on specific prisoners, including their first and last names, date and place of birth, nationality, occupation, religious denomination, names of parents, place of residence, number of children, education, height, hair color, eye color, and the languages they spoke. This form also listed the category in which the prisoner was placed, and the camp number assigned to him or her. The name of the local Nazi office that had sent the prisoner to Auschwitz was also noted on this form. An order for protective imprisonment (*Schutzhaftbefehl*), on the letterhead of the Geheime Staatspolizei (Gestapo), was attached to the personal records of political prisoners. In the case of persons deported from prisons, the forms were annotated with the names of the Nazi office that dispatched the prisoner to Auschwitz. In the case of Jews sent to Auschwitz in mass transports, "RSHA IV B 4a," along

with the number of the transport, was entered in the space for the "*Einweisende Dienstelle*." This designation referred to the bureau in the Reich Main Security Office headed by SS-Sturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann which was responsible for the mass deportation of Jews from the occupied countries to the death camps.

- The lists of newly arrived prisoners of various nationalities (*Zugangslisten*) are highly important for the recovery of names. They were drawn up in the same camp Gestapo office, on the basis of the personal questionnaires. They contained the following information: the prisoner's camp number and category, first and last names, date and place of birth, and occupation. Unfortunately, only some of these lists are extant. We have 17,000 entries (mostly Poles) from 1941, 10,117 entries (mostly Jews) from 1942, and 960 entries (prisoners of various nationalities) from 1943.

Prisoners assigned to labor in the Political Department were able sometimes to make copies of some of these records and smuggle them out of the camp.

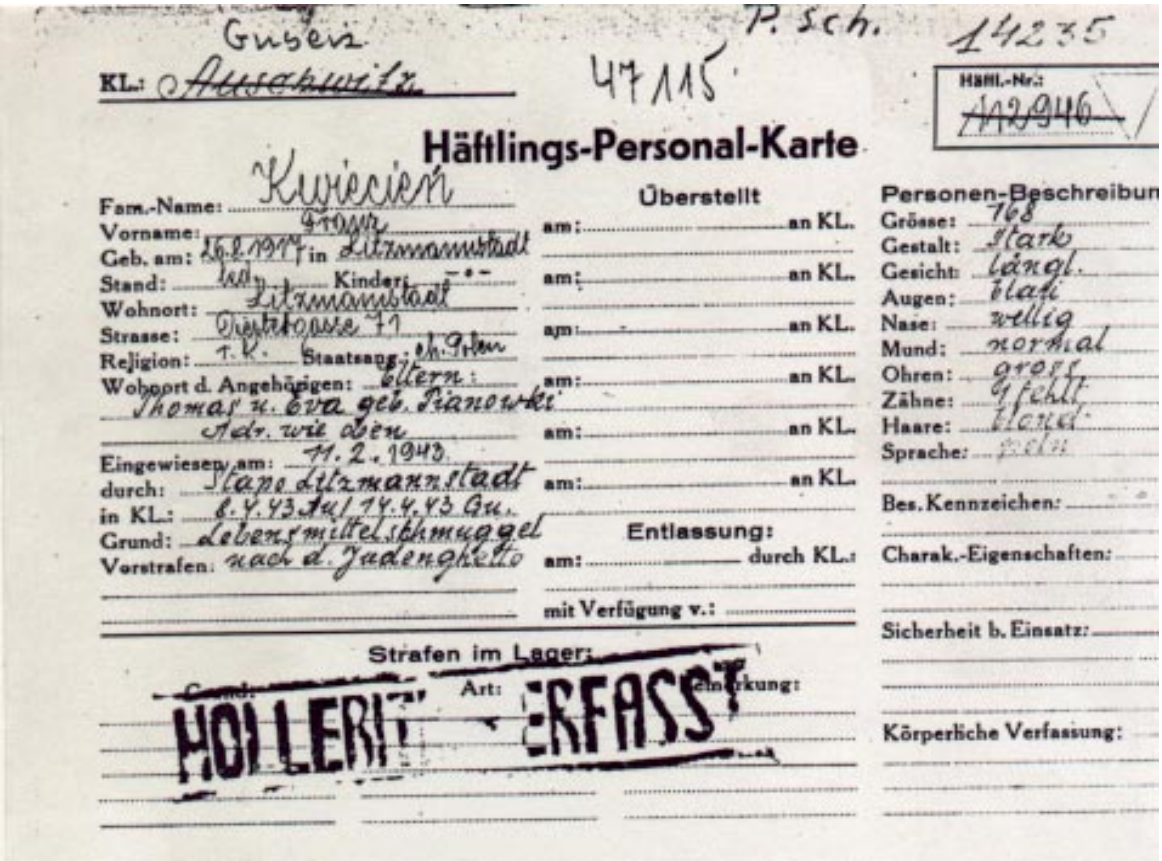
- Another important resource for the identification of prisoners is the collection of photographs from three angles, taken during registration (some 39, 150 photographs).

The majority of these photographs show Polish political prisoners. This results from the fact that most of them were taken in the first phase of the camp's operation (until 1942), and thus at a time when the majority of the prisoners were Polish. This was a time when Jews were generally sent to the ghettos, and only those arrested along with political prisoners or others were deported to the camp and put through the normal registration procedure. This is why there are photographs of only about 1,600 Jews in this collection.

The Jews arriving in mass transports and selected for labor on the ramp were usually not photographed. The tattooing of numbers on the left arm was introduced for them. Roma and Soviet prisoners of war were not photographed after arrival too. They were also tattooed. In the second part of the existence of the camp the SS stopped taking the photographs most of new arrivals, using for identification only numbers tattoed on the arms.

Some of the negatives of the prisoner photographs were saved from destruction by Polish prisoners at the time when the SS was liquidating the camp and removing evidence of their crimes. The SS men themselves burned a large part of the documentation. In the case of the prisoner photographs, the SS ordered prisoners to burn the negatives in a coal stove. The prisoners pretended to do so, but wrapped wet cloths around the negatives before pushing them into the stove. Only the edges of an outer layer of paper wrapping burned.

- Throughout the period that the camp was in operation, the main scribes' chamber (secretarial pool) kept


Gusen P. Sch. 14235

KL.: Auschwitz 47115 Häftl.-Nr.: 112946

Häftlings-Personal-Karte

Fam.-Name: Kwiecień
Vorname: Franz
Geb. am: 26.8.1917 in Litzmannstadt
Stand: led. Kinder: -.-
Wohnort: Litzmannstadt
Strasse: Dietrichgasse 71
Religion: r. K. Staatsang.: ch. Polen
Wohnort d. Angehörigen: Eltern: Thomas u. Eva geb. Pianowki Adr. wie oben
Eingewiesen am: 11.2.1943
durch: Stapo Litzmannstadt
in KL.: 8.4.43 Au / 14.4.43 Gu.
Grund: Lebensmittelschmuggel
Vorstrafen: nach d. Judenghetto

Überstellt
am: an KL.
am: an KL.
am: an KL.
am: an KL.
am: an KL.
am: an KL.

Entlassung:
am: durch KL.:
mit Verfügung v.:

Strafen im Lager:
Grund: Art: Bemerkung:
HOLLERITH ERFASST

Personen-Beschreibun
Grösse: 168
Gestalt: stark
Gesicht: längl.
Augen: blau
Nase: wellig
Mund: normal
Ohren: gross
Zähne: 4 fehlt
Haare: blond
Sprache: poln
Bes. Kennzeichen:
Charak.-Eigenschaften:
Sicherheit b. Einsatz:
Körperliche Verfassung:

Personal file of the prisoner who was sent together with this document from Auschwitz to Gusen. In this camp, his name was introduced into the Hollerith register and the document received the confirmation "Hollerith Erfasst." It was the first computer used by the Nazis in Germany.

full records on prisoners and noted all changes in the camp population. Reports on the number of prisoners in the camp were initially filed three times a day, and later twice daily.

One of the most important set of documents making it possible to recover the names of some victims is the daily count books (*Starkebuch*), in which all changes in the camp population were noted. These books covered men in the Main Camp and in Birkenau. They contained numbered lists of the following data: the prisoner's category and camp number, first and last name, and date of birth. The number of prisoners in the camp at a given time was entered at the top of the page. This was followed by the names of prisoners who had died and of those who escaped. Only a part of the book, covering the period from January 19, 1942 to August 19, 1942, is extant. During these seven months, the deaths of 22 169 prisoners of various nationalities were recorded.

- Names or the numbers of the prisoners were also placed in the other documents, for example the Bunker Book/ the camp jail in Block of Death/ and Morgue Book. The first contained categories of the prisoners, their numbers, names and surnames, dates and place of birth, dates of incarceration in the jail with notes on their subsequent fates / for example date of death, information about sending to the Penal Company etc./. In the first half of 1944 the Bunker Book was illegally sent outside the camp to Kraków, where it survived. The Morgue Books lists the numbers of the prisoners who died in the camp or were murdered by the Nazis. This Book was also smuggled outside the camp and survived.

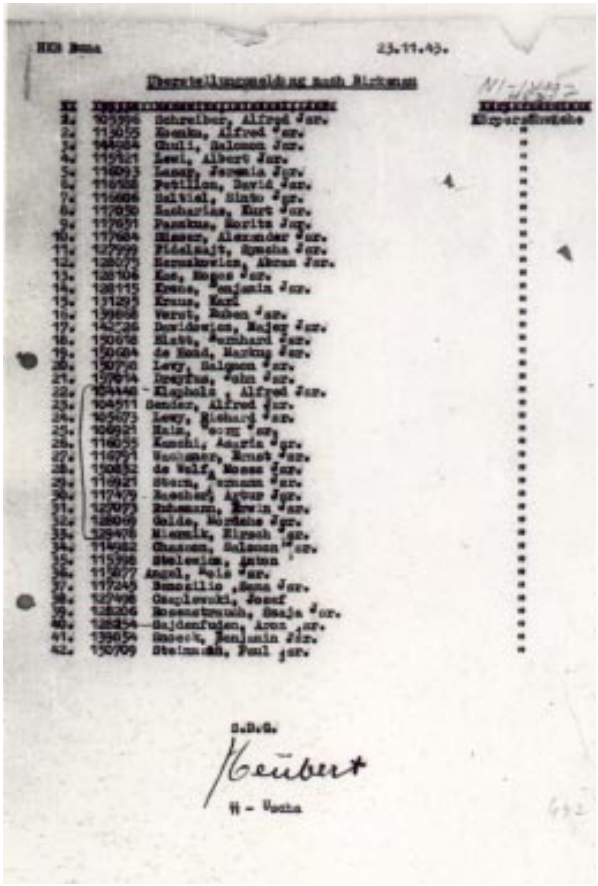
The Book of Penal Company from May 1942 to November 1944 contained numbers and names and date of birth of the prisoners who were punished by the camp authority by sending them to this company with the notes on term of the punishment and subsequent fates.

- There were also files of prisoners both in alphabetical order, and according to their camp numbers and register books from some barracks / only books for block nr 4 and 16a survived / from Auschwitz nr I/ and nr 22 from /BIb from Birkenau/.

Unfortunately, only part of these records are still in existence, namely the number book for men from the Auschwitz I camp with the numbers from 150,000 to 200,000. Notes beside some of the numbers indicate the prisoner's assignment to Birkenau or one of the sub-camps.

- An exceptional, and indeed unique document referring in its totality to a single ethnic group is the "Gypsy Book" containing over 20,000 entries with the names and other personal information on "Gypsy," or Roma, families placed in the special "family camp" in Birkenau. They were not sent to Auschwitz for political reasons but rather, like the Jews, solely for racial reasons. However, they did not have to pass through the sort of selection to which SS physicians subjected Jews arriving in mass transports. The Roma were placed in a separate Birkenau sector, known as the "family camp," and meticulously registered and tattooed. The majority of the Roma perished in the camp as a result of sickness, epidemics, or starvation, but they were also killed in the gas chambers. The record book containing their names was stolen by the Polish prisoners assigned to help register them, and buried in a bucket on the grounds of Birkenau. It was found after the war and placed in the Archives. We are therefore in a position to state not only the number of prisoners placed in the "family camp," but also all of their names and other information about them.

- A wealth of material on the fate of individual prisoners is found in the 46 volumes of the "Death Books" (*Sterbebucher*). They contain almost 69,000 death certificates from the period from July 27, 1941, to December 31, 1943. The certificates were issued by the civil registry office within the political department. As I have already mentioned, these books were taken to the Soviet Union in 1945, and not recovered until 1991. In 1991/1992 the decuments returned to Auschwitz Museum. The death certificates contain the following information: date and place of issue of the certificate, first and last name, religious denomination and place of residence of the deceased, and the date and time of death. The name of the deceased's parents, their address, and the cause of death are also listed.



23.11.43.

Überstellungsmeldung nach Birkenau

Nr	Name	Bemerkungen
1.	105996 Schreiber, Alfred Jgr.	-
2.	113055 Koenka, Alfred Jgr.	-
3.	144084 Gruli, Salomon Jgr.	-
4.	115521 Lewi, Albert Jgr.	-
5.	116093 Lenzy, Jeremia Jgr.	-
6.	116508 Petillon, David Jgr.	-
7.	116606 Zeitlel, Blato Jgr.	-
8.	117850 Zacharias, Kurt Jgr.	-
9.	117851 Pasmus, Moritz Jgr.	-
10.	117604 Blauer, Alexander Jgr.	-
11.	127999 Fidelsalt, Symche Jgr.	-
12.	128073 Herzenkovics, Abram Jgr.	-
13.	128104 Ens, Hugo Jgr.	-
14.	128115 Krems, Benjamin Jgr.	-
15.	131295 Kruus, Karl	-
16.	139868 Verut, Ruben Jgr.	-
17.	142236 Davidowics, Hajey Jgr.	-
18.	150078 Klatt, Bernhard Jgr.	-
19.	150084 de Bold, Markus Jgr.	-
20.	150720 Levy, Salomon Jgr.	-
21.	150814 Dreyfus, John Jgr.	-
22.	154440 Klapholz, Alfred Jgr.	-
23.	164511 Sender, Alfred Jgr.	-
24.	165073 Levy, Richard Jgr.	-
25.	166921 Hain, Leon Jgr.	-
26.	116059 Kanchi, Angrin Jgr.	-
27.	116751 Wachmann, Ernst Jgr.	-
28.	150832 de Wolf, Moses Jgr.	-
29.	119921 Stern, Hermann Jgr.	-
30.	117479 Rosshof, Artur Jgr.	-
31.	120073 Ruhmann, Erwin Jgr.	-
32.	128049 Gelde, Moritz Jgr.	-
33.	129478 Mlamik, Hirsch Jgr.	-
34.	114082 Chazan, Salomon Jgr.	-
35.	115998 Stelewics, Anton	-
36.	119077 Angel, Max Jgr.	-
37.	117245 Benedikt, Hans Jgr.	-
38.	127478 Gaglewski, Josef	-
39.	128206 Rosenbrunn, Shaja Jgr.	-
40.	128254 Sajdenfajen, Aron Jgr.	-
41.	139854 Sasek, Benjamin Jgr.	-
42.	150709 Steinmann, Paul Jgr.	-

S.D.G.

Keubert

H - Uscha

List containing the numbers and names of prisoners who were transferred from Buna camp to Birkenau signed by the SS orderly. In this document, there is information that all the prisoners were in a state of an extreme exhaustion (which means they were murdered in the gas chamber as being usless).

The place of death was listed as "Auschwitz, Kasernestrasse," and not Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The Gestapo wanted it to seem that the person had died in the city of Oświęcim, on what is now ulica Koszarowa. A comparison of the names on the death certificates with the camp records—even those that are only partially extant—leaves no doubt that these people were prisoners in the concentration camp.

In 1995, the Auschwitz Museum and Sauer Verlag jointly published a detailed analysis of these certificates. These are three volumes titled *Death Books from Auschwitz*.

There is a table in this publication providing a precise analysis by religious denomination of the persons for whom the death certificates were issued: 29,125 of them were listed as "of the Mosaic faith" (*mossaich*), 31,814 of them were Roman Catholic, 1,086 Greek Catholic, 2,424 Greek Orthodox, and 2,297 Evangelical-Lutheran. Denomination is not specified on 1,275 death certificates. The causes of death most frequently given by the German physicians are: acute gastritis, pneumonia with accompanying heart failure, heart failure, and heart and circulatory failure. The majority of these causes of death have nothing to do with the truth. Prisoners assigned to the scribes' chamber report that there was a special list drawn up by an SS physician, from which the causes of death noted on each certificate were copied. Fictional causes of death are entered for many people whom we know to have been shot, killed by lethal injection of phenol or in the gas chamber.

- The names and numbers of more than ten thousand prisoners are also found in the records of the camp hospitals, including the hospital block books from Auschwitz I, Birkenau, and Monowitz.

The camp medical service also supplied the political department with reports on the removal of gold teeth from the corpses of prisoners who died or were murdered in the camp. This was done prior to the cremation of the corpses. There are 1,600 such reports dated from May 16 to December 10, 1942. They list the first and last names of the prisoners, their camp numbers, and nationality, or, in some cases, only the camp numbers.

The death book from Auschwitz III Concentration Camp (Buna) contains the names of 1,600 prisoners of various nationalities who died there. This document survived because an unknown prisoner dropped it (in a tin can) into a latrine on the grounds of the Buna-Monowitz sub-camp.

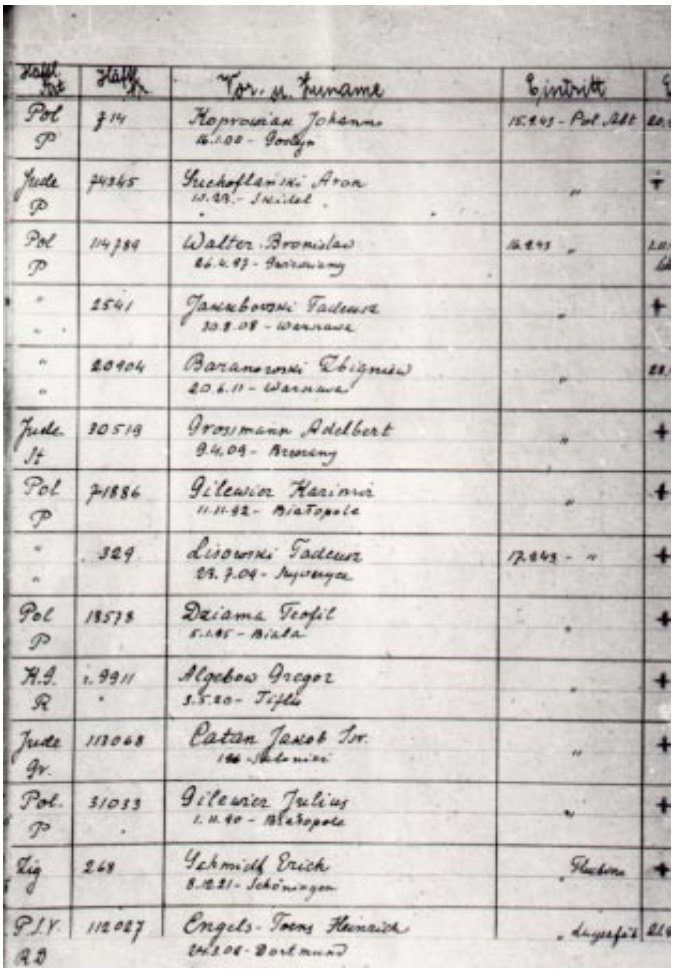
The death book for Soviet prisoners of war was kept from October 7, 1941 to February 28, 1942. This was the period when the so-called "Soviet POW camp" existed in Auschwitz Concentration Camp. A total of 8,320 names or camp numbers are entered in this book. Also extant is a card file on Soviet prisoners of war. Of the 7,641 cards, 5,953 include an annotation giving the date of death.

Additionally, the names of Jewish and non-Jewish prisoners and other information about them, often quite detailed, is found in telegrams about the death of prisoners, and death certificates sent to their parents; in the register of the prisoners placed in the camp jail, the so-called "Death Block"; in the penal company book; in punishment reports and rulings; in the prisoner record books of some of the blocks where men and women were quartered; in the files of the labor office; in material from other camps to which prisoners were transferred; and also in lists and doicuments drawn up illegally by prisoners who were active in the resistance movement. With the help of local civilians, these lists were sent to the outside world, for instance to Kraków.

For several years, the Museum Archives have been using computer analyses to study and preserve the archival resources. Aside from preservation considerations, this means that all available source information is compiled in an integrated data base. This will make it possible to access all available information, from various sources, on a given prisoner.

Finally 34 databases have been converted, which altogether made up to more than 550 000 personal records.

Many people from Poland and other countries come to the Museum each year to request help in finding information on their relatives, or the issuing of certificates confirming that a given person was in the camp. In 2001 alone, the Museum sent out 6,395 certificates, 4,100 of them to addresses outside



Page from the Bunker Book with the names and serial numbers of prisoners sent to th camp jail. The symbol "+" meant death of the prisoners.

The first and last page of the list of the names and numbers of the Jewish women selected at the Birkenau camp and sent to the gas chamber, signed by the director of the women's camp, Maria Mandel. Polish prisoners from the camp rEsistance movement smuggled the list out of the camp.

Poland, as well as providing information orally to more than 1,000 visitors. The computerization of archival resources will make it possible to access such information on the internet in the future.

The main task of the Museum is not only to preserve all that remains of the camp, including documents and evidence of crime, but above all to preserve the memory of the victims. The collection of some 2,400 photographs taken before the Holocaust is there uncommonly important. They include individual and group portraits. They present people photographed in situations familiar to all, regardless of ethnic background, race or religion: photographs of people enjoying the birth of a child, people in love, people admiring the beauty of nature and taking part in important private, professional and community events. This collection does not depict all the victims of the camp and the Holocaust. It mainly concerns Jews from Będzin and Sosnowiec. Some of the persons have been identified and their biographies were reconstructed. Not all such people died at Auschwitz. Some of them were killed in the ghettos, some died in the other camps or were executed in the other sites, small groups survived. We were working with them on attempts to describe the photographs. Six hundred persons were identified in 1,000 photographs. We received extensive assistance from Fritz Baur Institut from Frankfurt and The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum , Washington D.C.

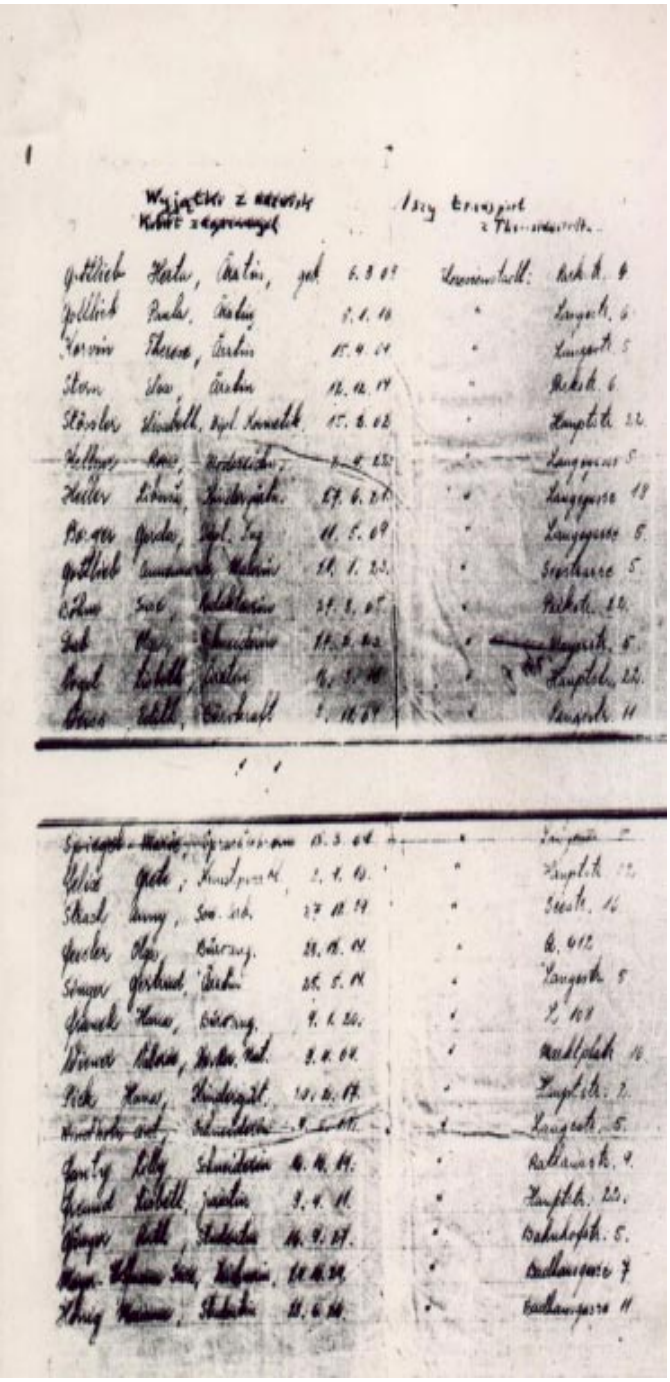
Such collection is a very important not only in view of the fact that they represent a compact group, but also because they were found in their entirety at the site of the camp, after the war. They have thus become a symbol of all the Jewish victims of whom only the ashes remain, and a symbol of a world irretrievably lost.

Some photographs from this collection were used in our temporary exhibitions in Great Britain (1983) and the USA (1985). They were also shown in a documentary film made by a Polish film director Ziarnik in 1980.

The majority of the collection of family photographs was placed in 2001 in permanent exhibition at the wall of remembrance at the Birkenau site / at the camp sauna building in the vicinity of the remnants of the gas chambers and

crematorium nr IV/. All the photographs were published in the album "Before they perished" and also on CD.

Similarly, the Museum has so far published several Memorial Books – for example , three volumes of the Death Books (in cooperation with Saur Verlag from Germany), two volumes of the names of Roma, three volumes of the names and biographies of Poles deported to Auschwitz from Warsaw and five volumes from Kraków. We are working on Memorial



List of names of Jewish women from the first transport from Theresienstadt,who were sent to the gas chamber. The list was made illegally in the camp by Polish prisoners from the resistance movement and smuggled out of the camp.

Books of Jews from £ódź, as well as on an album dedicated to the youngest victims of the camp – the children and young people who were sent to the Camp. It will contain approximately 800 photographs accompanied by detailed descriptions and, as far as possible, biographies describing their lives before the war, during the war, and for those who survived, after the war.

Preparing such research and publications we have been engaged in a wide-ranging search operation, which is constantly expanding. We still enrich our collection thanks to cooperation with other institutions, searches of other archives, and campaigns among former prisoners and their families.

One of the most important examples of such activity was the return of the collection of 69,000 original German death certificates to the Auschwitz Museum. Soviet archives that contained documents related to Auschwitz, among other things, were opened after the fall of the communist system in the USSR. After crossing onto Polish soil and liberating the camp in 1945, the Red Army confiscated some German records (not only from the Auschwitz camp) and sent them to the Soviet Union. In 1991, the museum historians received permission to examine the original archives. At the Archives in Moscow, they found 46 volumes containing 69,000 original death certificates issued by the German civil registry office in Auschwitz. After several months of efforts, these records returned to the place where they had been created.

In July, 2002, thanks to cooperation with the Museum of Deportation and the Resistance Museum in Malines, the central Holocaust research institute in Belgium, we obtained a data base containing information on 10,000 people of Jewish origin who resided in Belgium during the occupation. Their names, dates of birth, birthplaces, nationality and occupation are listed. The data base was compiled using files from the Antwerp Gestapo archives containing personal information on deported Jews. Almost 3,000 of these people had come to Belgium from Poland before the outbreak of the war. The Belgium museum has announced that it will soon send us 25,000 names and other data of the Jews deported to Auschwitz from the Malines transit camp. This resource, consisting of scanned original Gestapo documents, will be available to researches and relatives in the Archives and Computer Section of the Auschwitz Museum. They can be viewed in three languages, English, French and Flemish, thanks to a special browser. The original files belong to Jewish Charitable organizations in Antwerp.

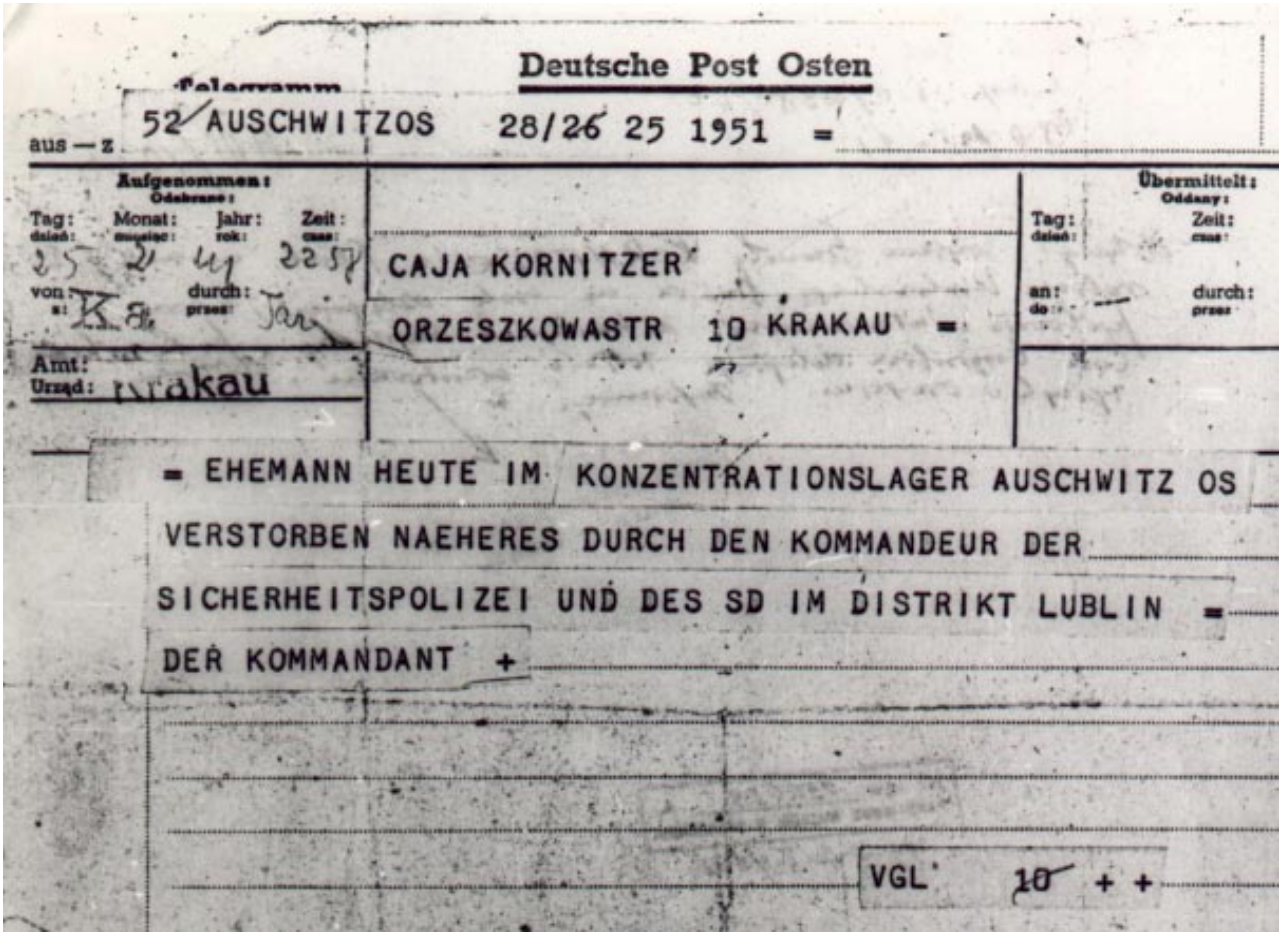
At the end of September of this year we expect to receive a complete set of court records and testimonies by witnesses from the trial of a group of SS men from the Auschwitz garrison, held in Frankfurt in Germany from 1963–1967.

We also carry out detailed surveys, with questions addressed to both former prisoners and their families. We have developed three types of questionnaires. Questionnaire A is addressed to those who were in the camp, and includes detailed questions about what happened to them there. Questionnaire B is also addressed to former prisoners, but

includes questions about relatives, friends and acquaintances who were either deported to the camp along with them, or who were in the same block or labor detail. This is particularly important in the case of mass deportation of Jews to Auschwitz, beginning in 1942. The majority of them, after selections were sent straight to their death and never became prisoners in the camp. Therefore they were never entered in the camp record or registered.

Questionnaire C is addressed to the relatives of people who survived the camp, but died later, before they could respond to our inquiries. Their families can do so in the name of the deceased.

We are also constantly collecting accounts by, and conducting interviews with those who survived the camp. We have been doing this since the 1950s, and these accounts, many of which were recorded at the site of the camp, by people who remembered those times well, are particularly valuable as a supplement to the official German records. It should be borne in mind that the records kept by the camp administration must be analyzed with great caution, since the Germans took deliberate steps to conceal their crimes, and often used various sorts of code words, as well as distorting the facts. For instance, the official death certificates very often list fictional causes of death, and these need to be checked against other sources. Such cases we can see in the many executions carried out in the camp. Sometimes the whole camp had to stand at the roll-call square and observe the execution by hanging. They knew the names of murdered people, but the German death certificae informed that this person died, for example, from a heart attack.



Deutsche Post Osten

Telegramm

aus — z 52 AUSCHWITZOS 28/26 25 1951 =

Aufgenommen: Tag: 25 Monat: 2 Jahr: 49 Zeit: 2257

von: durch:

Amt: Krakau

CAJA KORNITZER

ORZESZKOWASTR 10 KRAKAU =

Übermittelt: Tag: Zeit:

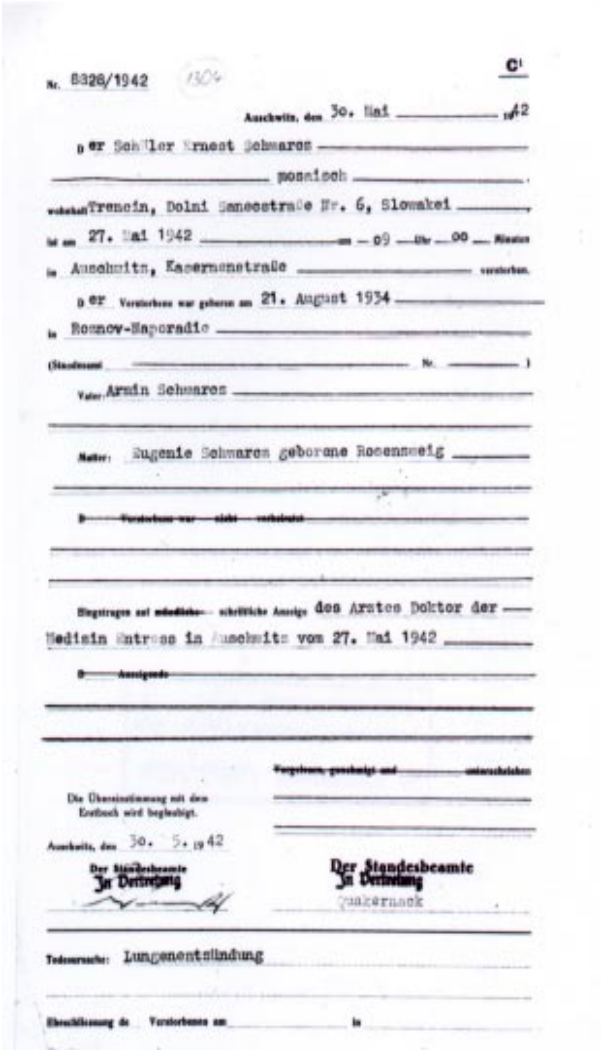
an: durch:

= EHEMANN HEUTE IM KONZENTRATIONSLAGER AUSCHWITZ OS VERSTORBEN NAEHERES DURCH DEN KOMMANDEUR DER SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI UND DES SD IM DISTRIKT LUBLIN =

DER KOMMANDANT +

VGL 10 + +

Telegram informing about the death of Rabbi Kornitzer from Cracow. It was sent to his wife, Caja Cornitzer. Such telegrams were sometimes sent by the commandant's office to families of such prisoners who were registered in the camp and lost their lives, especially in the first years of the existence of the camp.



Nr. 8328/1942 (1304) C¹

Auschwitz, den 30. Mai 1942

der Schüler Ernest Schwarcz

mosaisch

wohnhaft Trencin, Dolni Sanecestraße Nr. 6, Slowakei

ist am 27. Mai 1942 um 09 Uhr 00 Minuten

in Auschwitz, Kasernenstraße verstorben.

Der Verstorbene war geboren am 21. August 1934

in Rosnov-Haperadic

(Standesamt Nr.)

Vater: Armin Schwarcz

Mutter: Eugenie Schwarcz geborene Rosenzweig

Verstorbene war nicht verheiratet

Eingetragen auf mündliche schriftliche Anzeige des Arztes Doktor der Medizin Entress in Auschwitz vom 27. Mai 1942

Anzeigende

Vorgelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben

Die Übereinstimmung mit dem Erstbuch wird bestätigt.

Auschwitz, den 30. 5. 1942

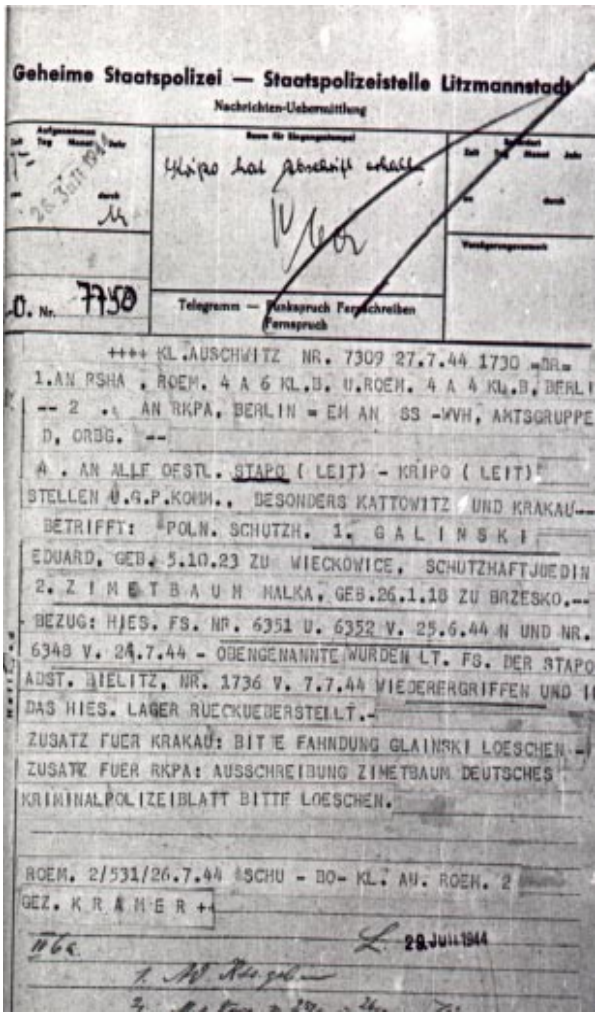
Der Standesbeamte In Vertretung

Der Standesbeamte In Vertretung

Todesursache: Lungenentzündung

Beurkundung des Verstorbenen am in

One of the German death certificates



Geheime Staatspolizei — Staatspolizeistelle Litzmannstadt

Nachrichten-Uebermittlung

Kripo hat Abschrift erhalten

D. Nr. 7750

Telegramm — Funkspruch Fernschreiben Fernspruch

++++ KL.AUSCHWITZ NR. 7309 27.7.44 1730 =DR=
1.AN RSHA . ROEM. 4 A 6 KL.B. U.ROEM. 4 A 4 KL.B, BERLI
-- 2 . AN RKPA, BERLIN = EH AN SS -WVH, AMTSGRUPPE
D, ORDG. --
A . AN ALLE OESTL. STAPO (LEIT) - KRIPO (LEIT)
STELLEN U.G.P.KOMM., BESONDERS KATTOWITZ UND KRAKAU--
BETRIFFT: POLN. SCHUTZH. 1. G A L I N S K I
EDUARD, GEB. 5.10.23 ZU WIECKOWICE, SCHUTZHAFTJUEDIN
2. Z I M E T B A U M MALKA, GEB.26.1.18 ZU BRZESKO.--
BEZUG: HIES. FS. NR. 6351 U. 6352 V. 25.6.44 N UND NR.
6348 V. 24.7.44 - OBENGENANNTE WURDEN LT. FS. DER STAPO
ADST. BIELITZ, NR. 1736 V. 7.7.44 WIEDERERGRIFFEN UND I
DAS HIES. LAGER RUECKUEBERSTELLT.-
ZUSATZ FUER KRAKAU: BITTE FAHNDUNG GLAINSKI LOESCHEN -
ZUSATZ FUER RKPA: AUSSCHREIBUNG ZIMETBAUM DEUTSCHES
KRIMINALPOLIZEIBLATT BITTE LOESCHEN.
ROEM. 2/531/26.7.44 SCHU - BO- KL. AU. ROEN. 2
GEZ. K R A M E R ++
28 JULI 1944

Telegram dated July 28, 1944, reporting the capture and return to the camp of escapees: a Jewish prisoner, Mala Zimetbaum and a Polish political prisoner, Edward Galinski. Both were sentenced to death by hanging.

Teresa Świebocka is the managing editor of the Publishing and Information Department and the Chief Editor of the periodical magazine "Hefte von Auschwitz." She is also a member of the international editorial board of "Journal of Genocide Research" and a member of the Polish delegation taking part in the "Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research." She is trhe Executive Director at the Museum and author or co-author of several albums, including "Auschwitz: A History in Photographs" and "Auschwitz: A Crime Against Humanity" prepared for the United Nations in New York and showed in dozens of USA cities and European countries. She has also written several articles connected with the team working on a concept for a new permanenet exhibition and was a member of the team who designed a new explanatory and commemoration system of the most important places and events in the area of the former camp.

Editor's Note: The foregoing article is based upon a presentation at the 22st International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held in Toronto in August, 2002. The article appears on this website with permission from the author. All document examples are from the Auschwitz Archives.