

#auschwitzstudygroup



Issue **3**

November 2015

www.auschwitzstudygroup.com

Newsletter

Denis Avey Interview

EXCLUSIVE

Conducted by the Auschwitz Study Group upon the release of his book **Pages 8&9**



Auschwitz Travel Guide

Everything you need to know when visiting the memorial sites for the first or second time

Auschwitz-Oswiecim Film

Exclusive English Interview with Oswiecim Historian Miroslaw Ganobis about his new film

A Tribute to the late Holocaust Historian

David Cesarani OBE

1956-2015



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October 2015 News, Book Reviews, Members Gallery, and much more inside...

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Design, edit and concept

Michael Challoner, Cynthia Southern

About

The Auschwitz Study Group is a jointly owned project between Michael Challoner & Cynthia Southern that was conceived in 2012 and evolved to its current format in December 2014. Our purpose is for intellectual/ polite discourse about the history of Auschwitz-Birkenau (and its Sub-Camps) and bringing the wider spectrum of Auschwitz into a larger platform of education.

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Cover image

Thanks to Jaroslaw Fiedor
Auschwitz Birkenau

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*Views from the articles posted may or may not represent the views of the Auschwitz Study Group. In cases where we feel an article is incorrect, we may interject either in the newsletter or on our Facebook forum.

If you have any questions concerning future editions or current content, please email the editors:
auschwitz.study.group@gmail.com

W e l c o m e

Welcome to issue 3 of the Auschwitz Study Group Newsletter. The reaction we have received over the last couple of months has been humbling and encouraging, infact trying to include all of the top content from September has proved to be the hardest task so far.

Late in September, we discovered from a group member about the death of British Army veteran and the man who had allegedly broken into Auschwitz, Denis Avey.

3 years ago, I was fortunate enough to interview Avey close to my home town in middle England and after discovering this news, we made the decision to bring forward the article for this edition.

We would like to thank everyone for the submissions to this months newsletter, many of which we simply did not have space for inclusion. The majority of these will be used in upcoming issues, so please keep them coming in.

As our file library (that can be found on our

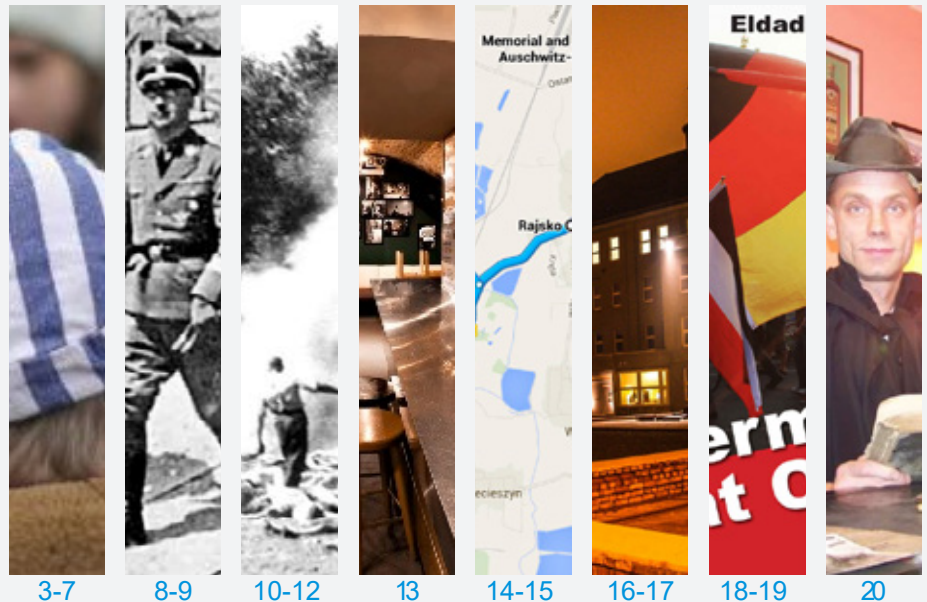
Facebook and website) continues to grow with content such as guidebooks, book and film recommendations as well as several other links, we have decided to include a condensed guide for visiting the Auschwitz memorial for the first time in this issue following regular requests. All of the information in this guide is from my own experience and is not affiliated with anyone else. We believe it to be the most comprehensive guide for visiting Auschwitz covering all logistical considerations, so If you have any comments on this, we would love to hear from you.

We are also proud to announce that the Auschwitz Study Group Newsletter will be available in print in select venues in England, Poland and Israel before the end of the year. If you are interested in advertising or distributing, please visit our website www.auschwitzstudygroup.com

Thanks again to everyone for the continued support!

Michael *Cynthia*
Michael Challoner & Cynthia Southern

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Oswiecim Historian, Miroslaw Ganobis talks about the new Auschwitz Oswiecim film

Auschwitz Study Group: News

Auschwitz: School Trips are Helping Children Fight Discrimination at Home

Independent.co.uk

It is a beautiful day and a group of UK teachers stand in silence next to a railway truck on a short stretch of track outside a small town in Poland. This is Auschwitz-Birkenau, where more than one million Jews were murdered in the gas chambers as part of the Nazis' "final solution", along with thousands of others including Poles and Roma travellers.

Earlier, the teachers stood on a grassy bank on the edge of the small town of Oswiecim, which was translated into German as Auschwitz. There is nothing there now but grass and trees, but before the Second World War, this was the site of a synagogue and near a bustling street of Jewish shops and businesses.

The group are among 200 teachers from the south of England who are taking part in a one-day visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of the Lessons from Auschwitz project (LFA), run by the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET).

Based on the premise that "hearing is not like seeing", participants hear the testimony of a Holocaust survivor, and learn about pre-war Jewish life before visiting the extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. There, they pass through the infamous gate with the camp motto "Arbeit macht frei" (work makes you free) before visiting exhibits where luggage, shoes and other personal items belonging to victims are piled high.

Since 1999, more than 22,000 sixth form students and teachers have taken part in the programme, funded by the government since 2006. Anita Parmar,

head of the Lessons from Auschwitz project at the Holocaust Educational Trust says: "I think it is about rehumanising all the people involved in the events of the Holocaust. When you read about the Holocaust

in text books, it can seem unreal because it seems so horrific and on such a large scale. When it comes to Auschwitz, it is easy to focus on the methods of murder. We want to move away from that to look at the individuals... If you have heard a survivor talk about that experience of being inside, it has a huge impact."

Zigi Shipper is one such survivor. Now aged 85, he was just 14 when he arrived at Auschwitz in a cattle truck so crowded that there was only room to sit down once several passengers had died. Today, he visits schools and addresses groups of teachers as part of the LFA project and the HET's outreach programme.

Mr Shipper says: "People come to me and say, why do you still talk about it, it was such a long time ago? This is the reason – because I want young people to know what happened and where racism, prejudice and hatred can lead. I feel it is my duty to do it. The most important thing is that we must not forget. Look what's happening in the world. We have to fight it, we have to speak."

The LFA programme has been extremely successful, with schools – both state and independent– signing up to take part. But one of the challenges for the HET is to consider how the scheme must change and develop as, inevitably, the last survivors die.

"In a few years, there will not be any more Holocaust survivors left. [But] while there are people such as the Holocaust Educational Trust, I have got full confidence that it will never be forgotten," said Mr Shipper

News broke by Cynthia Southern



A Holocaust survivor tells his story to students (Getty Images)

Shanghai Opens Park to Honour its 20,000 Jewish Holocaust Refugees

timesofisrael.com

On Sunday, a Jewish Memorial Park was opened at the Fushouyuan cemetery in that city's Qingpu district in their honor.

Israeli Consul-General Arnon Perlman, speaking at the dedication, said it is very important "to remember the friendship between China and Israel and between Shanghai and Israel." On a patch of newly laid grass, a Star of David made of stone forms the centerpiece of the park and serves as the base of a sculpture of interlocking stones with another Star of David, and a menorah, at its center.

One of the stones pays tribute to Dr. Ho Feng-Shan, the Chinese consul general of Vienna during the war, who defied orders and issued over 3,000 visas to Austrian Jews to allow them to travel to China (while visas were not required to enter Shanghai, they were required to leave Austria).



Opening of the Jewish Memorial Park at the Fushouyuan cemetery in Shanghai

The mostly German and Austrian Jews who came to Shanghai in the late '30s and early '40s joined another several thousand Jewish residents who had made the country their home in the previous 50 years, either as merchants or to escape Russian pogroms.

"If we were thirsty, [the Chinese] gave us water," recalled Jerry Moses, who arrived in the city as a child with his family, one of the lucky few to escape Germany. "If we were hungry, they gave us rice cakes. As bad as we had it, they had it worse. And they felt bad for us." Since the end of the World War II, and with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Jewish population declined significantly as many relocated to North America, Israel and Australia.

News broke by Teresa Lazzaro



Holocaust Survivor Delivers History Lesson

www.nj.com

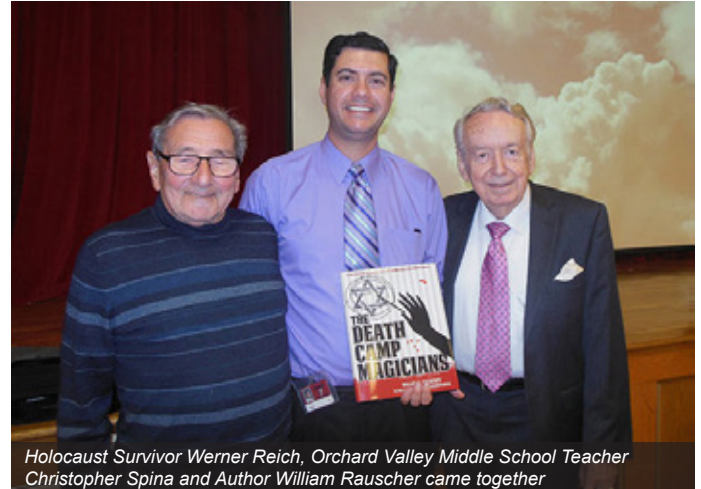
Holocaust survivor Werner Reich, who joined Orchard Valley Middle School seventh-grade students for an assembly one day shy of his 88th birthday, implored them to take heed of a valuable lesson that he learned from his difficult, life-altering experiences.

"Don't be indifferent. Indifference kills. Don't be a good person who does nothing. Help each other. Be sincere. We all need each other, and we have to stick together. Be nice to each other so you can live in a nice world and have a beautiful life."

Reich, a teenager in 1944 in the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, under the supervision of the infamous Josef Mengele (aka "The Angel of Death"), shared vivid, poignant and painful memories of his teenage years, when after hiding for two years, he was arrested by the Gestapo at age 15. He moved to several concentration camps before arriving at age 16 at Auschwitz, where the lives of 1.1 million people were methodically and mercilessly extinguished. When he was liberated in May of 1945, he was 17 years old and weighed 47 pounds.

"I didn't know if I would be dead or alive from one day to the next," Reich said, "and there was nothing I could do about it. I was a teenager. All teenagers believe they are indestructible, so I believed that I would survive. The problem was there were thousands and thousands of teenagers who believed the same thing, and they didn't."

Reich detailed the unspeakable and random violence that defined his youth and resulted in the deaths of 12 million people and related it to the issues of bullying that students face today, repeating his mantra throughout his presentation, "All that is needed for evil to exist is for good people to do nothing."



Holocaust Survivor Werner Reich, Orchard Valley Middle School Teacher Christopher Spina and Author William Rauscher came together

Reich was joined by author William Rauscher who chronicled his story and that of fellow Holocaust survivor Herbert Nivelli in a soon to be released book, "The Death Camp Magicians."

"We feel extraordinarily honored to have had the opportunity to have a first-hand recollection of this history," OVMS teacher Christopher Spina said. "This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us, and it was significant since, in 2015, we mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the year that the U.S. Army discovered the concentration camps."

News broke by Whoppit Kray

Baroque Painting Stolen by Nazis Found in Ohio Home

nydailynews.com

A painting stolen by the Nazis that turned up in an Ohio home has been returned to Poland.

The Baroque 'Portrait of a Young Man' by Krzysztof Lubieniecki had hung in the home of Janis and John Bobb for more than 20 years. But when they realized the painting's extraordinary history, they contacted authorities to arrange handing it back to the National Museum of Warsaw.

The Bobbs turned the painting over to representatives of the Polish Ministry of Cultural and National Heritage during a ceremony on Thursday at the FBI offices in Columbus.

"The Baroque was one of my favorite periods", Mr. Bobb, who holds a graduate degree in art history from the Sorbonne in Paris, told The Columbus Dispatch. "It was very, very well done, signed by the artist and dated 1728. This one just happened to have a hell of a story. The Polish representatives told them that more than 70 percent of their country's art culture had been stolen by the Nazis during the war. The couple has now been invited to a rededication ceremony in Poland.

News broke by Bjorn Emil Hallager



"Portrait of a Young Man" by Krzysztof Lubieniecki was been taken from the National Museum in Warsaw in 1944

The Hidden Holocaust

CBSnews.com

A Priest is determined to find forgotten victims of the Holocaust whose bodies lie in unmarked mass graves in the former USSR.

The Holocaust is marked and memorialized at places like Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen, Dachau. But nearly half of the six million Jewish victims were executed in fields and forests and ravines, places that were not named and remain mostly unmarked today. They were slaughtered in mass shootings and buried in mass graves in the former Soviet Union, where until very recently, little had been done to find them.

Our story is about a man who's brought these crimes of the Holocaust to light. He is not a historian, or a detective or a Jew. He's a French Catholic priest named Father Patrick Desbois. And for the past 13 years, he has been tracking down the sites where many of the victims lie and searching for witnesses who are still alive; many of whom had never been asked before to describe the horrors they had seen more than 70 years ago.

News broke by Henk Claassen

Auschwitz: School Trips are Helping Children Fight Discrimination at Home

Foxnews.com

Can mass killings be predicted and prevented?

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., hopes its new online tool will do just that by making both sophisticated statistical analysis and feedback from experts publicly available for the first time. The goal is to produce early warnings that can help governments, policy makers, advocacy groups and scholars decide where to concentrate their efforts.

"From past genocides in Darfur, Bosnia, Rwanda and the Holocaust, we have learned what the clear early warning signs are that precede mass violence," said Cameron Hudson, director of the museum's Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide. "Tracking those indicators in at-risk countries around the world will, for the first time, allow us to look over the horizon to implement smarter, cheaper and more effective policies that prevent mass violence."

The Simon-Skjodt Center developed the Early Warning Project with the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College. Though the project is being formally announced Monday, developers have been testing it for two years and have identified a list of the countries most at risk of mass killings.

Myanmar tops the list, followed by Nigeria, Sudan, Central African Republic and Egypt. Rounding out the top 10 are Congo-Kinshasa, Somalia, Pakistan, South Sudan and Afghanistan.

"Most of these countries as you go down the list have some form of civil conflict involving the government and some insurgent group or rebel group, often divided along ethnic lines, and there's a risk of violence going in either direction, either the government killing civilians or the rebel group killing civilians," said Benjamin Valentino, one of the



Images from Darfur and Chad are projected on the exterior walls of the USHMM Washington

project's architects and a professor of government at Dartmouth.

While there are private government watch lists for mass atrocities, Valentino said, there have been few efforts to create a public system, and those that have tried mostly involved small groups of people making judgments about the world. He said the Early Warning Project is different because it is public and more systematic, combining both statistical risk assessment based on data sets that go back more than 50 years and an "opinion pool" that includes more than 100 experts in particular regions or subjects who will regularly weigh in.

"When we ask them to tell us which countries are at risk, we ask them to tell us exactly how at risk they are and for what kind of event, and that way we can know in the future whether their forecasts are right or wrong," Valentino said.

"For me that's one of the most important aspects of this project. I wouldn't want to give anyone the impression that we're never going to be wrong. I expect we will make mistakes," he said. "We'll miss some countries where terrible things happen, and we'll have some countries that are high on the list and nothing terrible will happen. But the advantage of this project is we'll know exactly why, and we can use that information to hold ourselves accountable and improve the system going forward."

News broke by Tina Galli

Holocaust Survivor Bankrolls Rescue of 2,000 ISIS Victims

Forward.com

A British Jew who fled Nazi-ruled Austria as a child is funding the rescue of up to 2,000 Middle East Christians.

George Weidenfeld, a publisher who is also a member of Britain's House of Lords, says he has "a debt to repay" to Christians fleeing ISIS, because the Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren fed and clothed him and helped him to reach Britain in 1938, The Independent reported Thursday.

Having arrived in Britain on a train a year before the start of the World War II with just a few shillings to his name, Lord Weidenfeld went on to establish the Weidenfeld and Nicolson publishing business a decade later. He was made a life peer of Britain's upper house in 1976.

The 95-year-old told The Times of London: "I had a debt to repay. It applies to so many young people who were on the Kindertransports"—the German-language name for the organized shipment of Jewish children, often by their own parents with help from religious and secular non-Jewish helpers, to save them from the Holocaust.

The fund aims to offer 12 months -18 months of paid support to the refugees.

News broke by Michael Graber

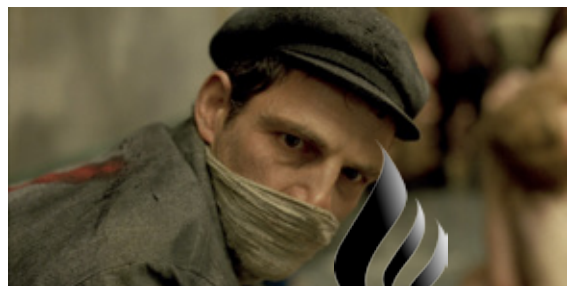


Son of Saul - Auschwitz Film Makes Debut at New York Film Festival

filminc.org

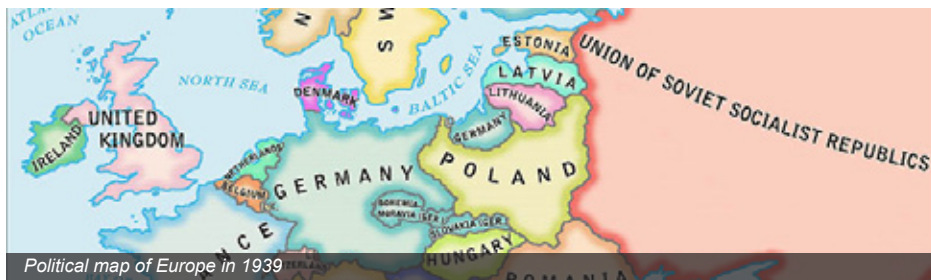
A Film that looks into the abyss, this shattering portrait of the horror of Auschwitz follows Saul (Géza Röhrig), a Sonderkommando tasked with delivering his fellow Jews to the gas chamber. Determined to give a young boy a proper Jewish burial, Saul descends through the death camp's circles of Hell, while a rebellion brews among the prisoners.

A bombshell debut from director and co-writer László Nemes, Son of Saul is an utterly harrowing, ultra-immersive experience, and not for the faint-hearted. With undeniably virtuoso plan-séquence camerawork in the mode of Nemes's teacher Béla Tarr, this startling film represents a new benchmark in the historic cinematic depictions of the Holocaust. A deeply troubling work, sure to be one of the year's most controversial films. A Sony Pictures Classics release. News broke by Max Chmielnicki



Poles Furious after Russia Blames Them for Starting WWII

News24.com



The Russian ambassador to Poland has sparked outrage for putting some of the blame for World War II on Poland, creating a new spat amid deepening tensions between the Slavic nations.

Russian Ambassador Sergey Andreev on Friday described the Soviet's 1939 invasion of Poland as an act of defence, not aggression. The comment prompted Poland's Foreign Ministry to declare on Saturday that the ambassador "undermines historical truth" and seems to be trying to justify Stalinist crimes.

World War II began after Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union sealed a pact in 1939 that included a secret provision to carve up Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe. Germany soon invaded Poland from the West, followed by a Soviet invasion from the east 16 days later. Millions of Poles were killed in the war.

In an interview broadcast on the private TVN station, Andreev also said: "Polish policy led to the disaster in September 1939, because during the 1930s Poland repeatedly blocked the formation of a coalition against Hitler's Germany. Poland was therefore partly responsible for the disaster which then took place."

Poland's Foreign Ministry expressed "surprise and alarm" at those comments, and Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna summoned Andreev for a

meeting Monday on the matter.

"The narrative presented by the highest official representative of the Russian state in Poland undermines the historical truth and reflects the most hypocritical interpretation of the events known from the Stalinist and communist years," the ministry said in a statement.

Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz also expressed displeasure with the ambassador.

"The role of an ambassador accredited in a country should be to build to build harmony and friendly relations between countries," Kopacz said.

Relations have never been easy since Poland, a former Soviet bloc nation, rejected Moscow's control and embraced the West, joining NATO and the European Union. But tensions have been especially high since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, a step that Warsaw has strongly condemned.

In other points of contention in recent days, Poland blocked a Crimean official hoping to attend an OSCE conference in Warsaw from entering the country, angering Moscow. Moscow has also protested a Polish town's dismantling of a monument to a Soviet World War II general, threatening Warsaw with "most serious consequences" for that.

News broke by Cynthia Southern

The Man who Survived Eight Nazi Death Camps

BBC.co.uk

A Holocaust survivor who cheated death in eight Nazi concentration camps during World War Two has recalled his experiences, 70 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.

"We arrived at 12 o'clock at night. It was dead quiet, and frightening to look at," Chaim Ferster says, remembering his first impressions of the notorious death camp.

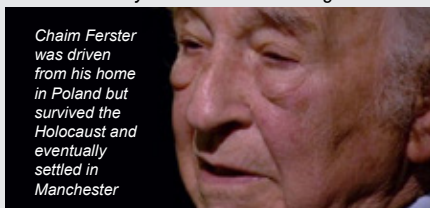
"We could see from a distance that there were flames coming out from four chimneys. I didn't realise that this was the crematorium."

He had arrived in the middle of two-year ordeal, during which he endured horrific labour conditions, malnutrition and typhus, before finally being freed at the very moment he and his fellow prisoners had been rounded up to be shot, when Allied forces broke into the camp.

Born into an orthodox Jewish family and raised in the Polish town Sosnowiec, Mr Ferster was 17 when war broke out in 1939. The great-grandfather remembers the rising fears of Jewish communities, as news of the German military expansion began to filter through.

Now aged 93 and living in Cheetham Hill, Manchester, where he settled in 1946, he said: "You could see planes flying over. [The Nazis] came over to Sosnowiec very fast. He later discovered only two other members of his family survived the Holocaust - his sister Manya and cousin Regina. Through tears, Mr Ferster added: "I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it."

News broke by Annemor Schonhaug



Chaim Ferster was driven from his home in Poland but survived the Holocaust and eventually settled in Manchester

Holocaust-era Archive Uploads Thousands of Documents

www.dw.com

The International Tracing Service has posted photos and personal papers of Nazi victims online, along with other selected documents from its massive archive. The group deals with people who disappeared during Holocaust. The organization published the first batch of some 50,000 documents on Wednesday, which makes for just a fragment of their collection encompassing 30 million items. The page is available in German, English and French, with an index and a search function provided.

"Archives must not hide themselves from the digital world. Otherwise, one day they will be forgotten," said head of International Tracing Service (ITS) archive department Christian Groh. The ITS was founded by Allies in the final days of the World War II. At first, its mission was help find the people who went missing in war zones or concentration camps.

In 2007, the organization first granted access to its archives in the German city of Bad Arolsen to scholars and researchers, marking the transition from a tracing service to a research institution. The group's collection includes documents on Nazi death marches, forced labor and children lost during the war. ITS also holds around 3,300 personal items that Nazis had seized from concentration camp inmates. *News broke by Stefania Zezza*



His Mother Turned Left at Auschwitz

Huffingtonpost.com

Ernst Hollander and his family arrived at Auschwitz in 1944. He was seventeen years old and on his coat he wore a large yellow Star of David. His mother had sewn it there for him. Ernst and his family had traveled three days by train without food in a crowded cattle car from Iloszvo, a town in the Carpathian Mountains in what was then Hungary.

Ernst's father had been head of the local rabbinical council and a respected member of the community until the Nazis came and everything changed. From then on, Ernst's family and the other Jewish townspeople were required to wear the yellow Star of David. The family business was confiscated. Ernst couldn't go to school, and the children who had once been his schoolmates pushed him into the street as they passed him by.

For three days - the entire train trip - the cattle car doors had been kept sealed. Several people had died, and there had been no way to remove their bodies. But, now, at last, the doors opened and a ramp was placed at the door.

Ernst watched his mother walk down the ramp ahead of him. She held Ernst's two youngest sisters in her arms, the five-year-old and the seven-year-old. A third sister, nine years old, walked alongside her mother. At the bottom of the ramp, an official motioned Ernst's three sisters to the left and their mother to the right.

"My mother could have saved herself," said Ernst. "She was still young. She was in her thirties. She could work." Ernst's father and brothers could also

work. But the three small girls were too young to be of much use to the Third Reich. The guard told them to go to the left.

Ernst's mother refused to be separated. "I don't want to give up my children," she protested. And she went to the left with her daughters.

"She didn't know what means left," Ernst told me. "But I know in my heart that if my mother would know what's happening on the left, she would still not give up the children. Which mother would give up children? And she went with the children to the left. Five minutes later they were dead.

"At that time we didn't know," Ernst said. "But the people who were working in the crematoriums and the gas chambers were Jewish people. After a few days we asked, 'Do you know what happened to these people who went to the left?'"

"They said, 'You see that chimney over there where the smoke comes out? They were dead a half an hour after they arrived. That's where they killed all the people who went to the left.' And only then you found out that there were gas chambers."

After the war, Ernst migrated to Oakland, California, where he was active in his synagogue, Congregation Beth Jacob. He died in 2002 at the age of seventy-seven. I met Ernst in the course of conducting interviews for my interfaith book, "Wrestling with God: Stories of Doubt and Faith."

News broke by Cynthia Southern



Jewish Museum, Dohany Street Synagogue. Photo by Barbara Newhall

Hitlers FIRST Death Camp

Dailymail.co.uk

Behind these gates emblazoned with the symbol of Hitler's dreaded SS, lies one of the lesser known horrors of the Nazi occupation of Poland - the first use of gas chambers for mass extermination. Seized by the SS on October 10 1939, the 19th century Fort Colom in the city of Poznan in west Poland was renamed Konzentrationslager Posen (Concentration Camp Poznan).

But rather than serving as a holding space for prisoners of the Reich, what followed was the systematic murder of psychiatric patients, local resistance fighters, academics, the intelligentsia and anyone seen by the Nazis as a threat. It wouldn't be until three years later that the use of gas chambers to eliminate the Jewish population became a Third Reich policy. But 76 years ago this month, it was decided that Fort VII, as it is known, would be the first place to experiment with gas in the mass killing of civilians.

News broke by Nicholas Bognar



Austrian Jewish Scholar Begins Jail Term, Decries 'Absurd' Sentence

Timesofisrael



The accused, Stephan Templ

A Jewish Austrian scholar and fierce critic of the republic's failures to compensate Holocaust victims began his jail term Tuesday.

Ahead of serving a one-year sentence for his 2014 conviction over his omission of a relative from a restitution form he filled out for his mother in 2006, Stephan Templ told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz his case was "Kafkaesque" and "completely absurd."

In 2001, Templ published the book "Our Vienna: Aryanization, Austrian-Style," in which he identified individual families that moved into Jewish homes stolen in the 1930s and never returned. Templ also led tour groups to see the stolen houses during which he toted a loudspeaker, occasionally calling out the names of the families that had come to live in them. Last month, 75 Holocaust historians decried his sentence.

"The Austrian government's decision to intervene by prosecuting and jailing Mr. Templ will be seen as an extreme overreaction to Mr. Templ's important book," the 75 historians wrote in a letter they sent Monday to the Austrian ambassador in Washington, Hans Peter Manz.

"This matter could have been resolved by the Templ family in civil court," argued the historians, whose letter was coordinated by the Washington, DC-based David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

The signatories on the letter include Wyman; Deborah Lipstadt, author of "History on Trial"; Walter Reich, a former executive director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum; and Michael Berenbaum, a former research director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Templ, who is represented pro bono by the well-known human rights attorney Robert Amsterdam, argued that Austrian law does not require restitution applicants to list all heirs.

News broke by Annemor Schonhaug



The opening words of his book read “The Man who Broke into Auschwitz is the true story of a British Soldier who marched willingly into Buna Monowitz, the concentration camp known as Auschwitz 3”.

In the summer of 1944, Denis Avey was being held in a POW (Prisoner of War Camp), E715, near Auschwitz 3. He had heard of the brutality meted out to the prisoners there and he was determined to witness what he could.

He hatched a plan to swap places with a Jewish inmate and smuggled himself into a sector of the camp. He spent the night there on 2 occasions and first experienced at first hand the cruelty of a place where slave workers had been sentenced to death through labour.

In July 2015, Denis Avey formerly of the 7th Armoured Division in the British Army sadly passed away aged 96. For over 5 decades following the end of the war, Avey remained largely silent over his time during the British North African campaign fighting Rommel's armies. He rarely spoke of his subsequent capture and the time spent as a British Prisoner of War in the Polish town of Oswiecim (Auschwitz in German)

I was fortunate enough to meet Dennis Avey on a number of occasions and particularly over 2 talks in 2011 and 2012 as Avey presented his book to students and scholars. I took this opportunity to speak to him about his time in as a prisoner,
writes Michael Challoner of the Auschwitz Study Group.

I had read Denis Avey's book with great interest. He had settled in a neighbouring town after the war, in Derbyshire middle England, only an hour's drive from where I lived. The timely release of his book coincided with my research of the subsidiary camps of Auschwitz in Oswiecim.

Around 8 camps consisting of over 400 wooden barracks similar to those you see at the Birkenau Museum would have existed in the area where Avey lived and worked during the war. He would have easily been able to hide amongst the several thousands of prisoners who toiled frantically for the failing German war effort. And yet, most of the headlines were submitting doubt to his incredible story.

When I spoke to Denis Avey for the first time, there was a worldwide controversy surrounding his story. He had been captured by the Germans during the North African campaign. He had been sent to camp E715 (A British POW camp) in Monowitz just 10 minutes' drive from Auschwitz 1 and 15 minutes from Auschwitz 2 where over 10,000 Hungarian Jews were being gassed every



Himmler Visting IG Farben in 1941, in the same spot where Avey Worked

I BROKE INTO AUSCHWITZ

*In 2012, The *Author of 'The Man who Broke into Auschwitz' Denis Avey, spoke to Michael Challoner from the Auschwitz Study Group. In 2015, Avey sadly passed away aged 96.*



Denis Avey
Photo: Bruce Adams

day in the middle of 1944. His story has since been given more credibility by the testimony of the Jewish prisoner he allegedly swapped places with at the time. You can find more details about this by researching *Ernst Lobethal* who verifies the large part of their relationship.

I was aware of this controversy, and Avey himself addressed these issues during the talks promoting his book. However, this was something I was not primarily interested in.

Avey had been imprisoned in the village of Monowitz, a geographical area I would go on to study for a further 5 years. Auschwitz 3 was the largest single consistent spatial area in the Auschwitz network that consisted of 3 main camps, 45 sub-camps and over 10 subsidiary camps.

The possibility of speaking with him excited me greatly. This was the same camp that the famous Italian writer Primo Levi had toiled and suffered in at the same time. I asked Avey if he minded me making notes on our talks. He was happy for me to do so although at the time, I could not tell him how I wished to use them in the future. This is the first time I have published our dialogue.

ASG: It's an honour to meet you. Your book (co-written by Rob Broomby) came at a time I began to research the IG Farben work camps in detail. I still can't comprehend the scale of this site. It is one of the largest industrial sites I have ever visited, certainly in UK scales.

DA: (interjected) All we saw was (masses) of people.

ASG: in the camp or....

DA: Everywhere, the only time we were alone would be at night in the barracks and that was in the company of several men. We were never alone so to speak....

ASG: So solitary was relative?

DA: We never had privacy.

ASG: There were at least 8 camps around Monowitz, you were probably in the most lenient. It's hard for me to say that to you, but if you consider the fate of the Jewish prisoners or the Russian prisoners of war, they were earmarked for death. You were POW's partly protected (by the Geneva Convention)

DA: We knew we were a little more protected, I saw death daily but we still felt death was close to us. When you see death close up, you feel it closer to yourself. We never knew what the Germans had in store for us.

ASG: But there was a difference between the Jewish prisoners and yourself

AUSCHWITZ WERK KAMPS

A document from 1944 shows there were 7 other work camps besides E715 surrounding the former IG Farben plant.

You can find more about these camps by contacting Michael Challoner. Please visit

www.auschwitzstudygroup.com

Leonhard Haag
German, Italian

Buchenwald Ost
Polish, Ukrainian

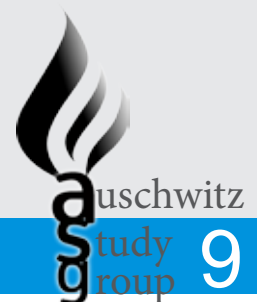
Buchenwald West
French, Czech

Teichgrund
Germans, Polish Ukrainian

Tannenwald
Germans, Polish, Ukrainian

Pulverturm
German, British POW's

Karpfenteich
German



ASG: Outside the camp, there is one large brick tower

DA: I remember wooden towers too

ASG: Yes that was possible

DA: wherever we looked, we saw guns and dogs, we always walked to work with a purpose to show the Germans we were not beaten. We looked straight ahead. We were proud soldiers.

ASG: I have walked from the area of E715 to the Buna Factory - about a 20 minute walk. A Photo exists from 1943 (possibly 1944) of Monowitz only a few minutes east that's shows a wooden watch tower...

DA: Wooden watch towers were everywhere. In the camp, outside the camp. I even saw them being constructed but probably not there the following day

ASG: You mean they were temporary constructions

DA: (Asks for clarification) Most probably they were put there if there was a short amount of work to do. And then moved. They looked like they were limented with sand bags (ASG I am not sure about this?)

ASG: Did you get to see much of the IG Farben plant?

DA: On the rare occasion I was on the vantage point of towers, I saw the area of the camp, the trains...

ASG: The trains at the Dwory (I explain the train line at Monowitz)

DA: There were trains, and a horizon of construction

ASG: Well construction carried on until late 1944...

DA: All we saw was construction. Camp fence (the camp posts) were everywhere in piles.

ASG: Do you mean the grey Poles?

DA: The prison (camp) poles were everywhere. Like the camp would stretch for miles beyond what we could see. It was a horizon of construction. We knew very early on we were in a place of significance.

ASG: Well, we know now that there were several prisoner camps assigned to work at IG Farben.

DA: Correct. As I said construction everywhere, it never seemed to be complete but the areas of inactivity allowed us to smoke occasionally. We had plenty of opportunities to smoke. It seemed very disorganised. Our (masters) wanted to seem they were working us hard but were rarely did. The days were long but we didn't do much

ASG: Did you feel you were in an important place as far as the Allies were concerned at the time?

DA: We didn't think in those terms. We thought about escape sometimes, morale and how not to be seen. That was important.

Thanks to Denis Avey and his family for allowing me the chance to speak to him about his incredible story. You can buy his book on Amazon and all good retail outlets

Denis Avey was speaking with Michael Challoner of the Auschwitz Study Group

The chimneys and werk barracks of IG Farben as seen in 2015
Photo by Michael Challoner



The entrance to Auschwitz 3 Monowitz in 1943



The same location as seen in 2012: Photo Michael Challoner



IG Farben where Denis Avey worked. Photo Michael Challoner 2014

DA: (inaudible) of course what we saw to those in the uniforms (prisoner uniforms) disgusted everyone but fear hit us all. Not many of them (Jewish prisoners) spoke English. It was hard to communicate, and we were both (subject) to death if we displeased the (Nazis). That's why I decided to see closer how our (friends) were being killed.

ASG: What do you remember of the surroundings of the camp? I am particularly interested in the camp features

DA: (asks for my clarification) Grey everywhere. That's what I saw. Fences, wire, factories, prisoners.

ASG: There is a lot of greenery around the former camps now.

DA: We didn't see anything but mud. Mud and grey

ASG: What was grey?

DA: (ponders) The atmosphere felt grey. In the mornings, there was a mist in the camp. The walk to work, watchtowers and (sentry) guards paraded. There was no grass to be seen.

ASG: Ah ok, watchtowers. I have seen several brick watchtowers around the former camp of E715. They are still there

DA: Maybe they were brick

October: A Holocaust Timeline



2nd October 1940, Governor Ludwik Fischer commands the wall surrounding the Jewish Quarter.

The Warsaw Ghetto (German: Warschauer Ghetto, called by the German authorities: „Jüdischer Wohnbezirk in Warschau“ (Jewish residential district in Warsaw); Polish: ghetto warszawskie) was the largest of all the Jewish ghettos in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II.



2nd October 1944, In the daily listing of the labor deployment of female prisoners in Birkenau, it is noted that 250 female prisoners work in the service posts of the SS in Sorting Squad 1 on the grounds of the DAW i.e. the so-called Kanada sorting squad 1.

815 female prisoners work in Sorting Squad II in Camp B-IIg, the so-called Kanada Squad II.



3rd October 1943, an SS Camp Doctor carries out a selection among the prisoners in Quarantine Camp B-IIa, during which he selects 139 prisoners. They are killed the same day in the gas chambers.

Image of the B-IIa Quarantine sector 2012 by Cynthia Southern, The wooden barracks are not original but are reproductions.



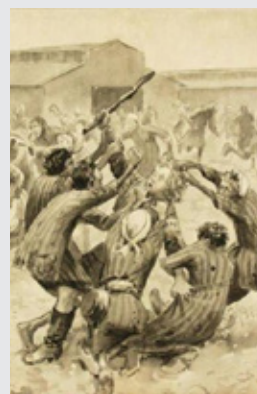
4th October 1944, Kommandant Heinrich Schwarz of Auschwitz III aka Monowitz informs the SS guard units that four prisoners have overpowered a guard who turned his back on them for a long time. They escaped after they tore his weapon from him and rendered it useless. Schwarz orders "that this unfortunate incident of negligence" be made known to all guard companies as a warning.

Photo of View of the IG Farben site In Monowitz courtesy of Michael Challoner



5th October 1943. The occupancy level at the experimental station of Professor Dr. Clauberg in Block 10 of the main camp decreases by four female prisoners. There are now 64 female prisoner orderlies and 394 female prisoners for research purposes.

Image by Cynthia Southern



6th October 1942, „During the morning, the SS Erkennungsdienst (Identification Service) of the Politische Abteilung (Political Department) and SS medical orderlies enter the Penal Company in Budy where a massacre of 90 French Jewish women took place by SS guards and German prisoner functionaries.

Mutiny in Budy drawing by Wladyslaw Siwek, courtesy of the Auschwitz Museum.



7th October 1944, SS-Oberführer Oskar Dirlewanger suggests to Reichsführer Himmler a project to enlist German prisoners, former criminals, in the concentration camps for the SS Special Unit Dirlewanger. The project is approved by Himmler and relayed on October 15 to SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS Gottlob Berger, the head of the SS main office, Image of Soldiers in central Warsaw 1944 from Wikipedia



8th October 1944, In an isolated block in women's camp B-1a in Birkenau, 370 girls between several months and 14 years are kept who were arrested in Warsaw with their families after the outbreak of the uprising and were sent to Birkenau.

Images of Block 16 in Camp B-1a by Cynthia Southern 2012

Join our group for more information

Timeline created from our members contributions

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9th October 1944, 2,000 Jewish men, women and children are sent in a transport from Theresienstadt and Trieste are killed in the gas chambers of Crematorium II.

Image of Theresienstadt today courtesy of the Mirror.co.uk



10th October 1942. In connection with the outbreak of typhus, Kommandant Hoess orders a general disinfection of the rooms in the SS buildings, the bathing facilities, the washrooms, latrines and all other installations and clothing.

Image of Zyklon being used as an insecticide in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1939. It was widely used around the world before WWII and the Holocaust.



11th October 1943, a selection is carried out in the bunkers of Block 11. 54 prisoners are selected who have been locked in there by order of the Political Department, the Camp Commander or the Roll Call Leader. That same day the selected prisoners are shot in front of the execution wall in the courtyard of Block 11.

Image of the Black Wall by Cynthia Southern 2012 as taken from the side



12th October 1944. Two more female prisoners are arrested in the women's camp in Birkenau who are suspected of helping the Sonderkommando members in acquiring the explosive material for the production of primitive grenades.

Jan Kowski drawing of a barrack in the women's camp



14th October 1944. The Sonderkommando begins to break up the walls of Crematorium IV, which was destroyed during the uprising on 10/07/1944.

Image of Crematorium IV by Cynthia Southern 2012



16th October 1944. From among the Jews sent in an RSHA transport from Berlin, several women and five men are admitted to the camp. The remaining 800 prisoners are killed in the gas chamber of Crematorium III.

The ruins of the gas chamber in Crematorium III in 2012. Image by Cynthia Southern



17th October 1942. SS Camp Physician Johann Paul Kremer notes in his diary: "Fresh living material from liver, spleen and pancreas taken after an injection of Pilocarpine."

He was sentenced to death in the Auschwitz Trial in Krakow in 1947. This sentence was later commuted to one of life imprisonment.

He was released in 1958. Kremer died in 1965




18th October 1944. There are 3,801 female prisoners in the women's camp of Auschwitz I, of whom 47 women in the camp and in the auxiliary camps are sick. 55 are recovering, 29 are registered with the doctor, two are under arrest (locked in the bunkers of Block 11), four are being interrogated and 97 are without occupation.



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19th October 1942. Kommandant Hoess orders the closing of Birkenau to civilians. Birkenau may be entered only by holders of a special pass who come on official business. The order is probably connected to the fact that Franz Hößler was assigned to get rid of the evidence of crimes, to dig up and burn the bodies in the mass graves, which in fact have not decomposed but have resurfaced.



20th October 1942. No. 65492 is given to Helena Plotnicka, born on October 22, 1902, a courier of the camp resistance movement who also organized and implemented illegal deliveries of food to the prisoners. She is arrested on May 19, 1943 and locked in the bunker of Block 11. Plotnicka is released from the bunker and transferred to the women's camp in Birkenau. She died there on the 17th March 1944.



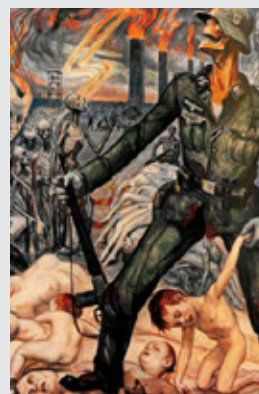
21st October 1944. 60 female prisoners work in Expropriation in Room I on the grounds of the DAW, sorting and packing stolen goods. 1,064 female prisoners work in Expropriation Room II in Camp B-11g in Birkenau. A total of 1,124 female prisoners do this work. SS member Schmidt and Hoppmans are Squad Leaders. Prisoners from "Kanada Kommando" sort a new collection of stolen personal items outside the blocks in Camp B-11g in Birkenau. Image from The Auschwitz Album



22nd October 1943. By order of the Political Department, the following prisoners are locked in the bunker of Block 11: the French Jew, Wolf Korcweig, who is released into the camp the following day: the Pole Kazimierz Domanus and the Czech Wladimir Bachurek, who are both released from the bunker into the camp on 11/23/1943. The Jewish men, Lenczner Sussman and Judel Oliszewski, are also locked in Block 11 and are both later shot on 11/09/1943 after a selection.



23rd October 1943. 1,800 Polish Jews arrive on an RSHA transport from Bergen-Belsen. They had received passports for departure to Latin America. Most paid a high price for these visas with the approval of the Gestapo. The prisoners were duped and were instead sent to the gas chambers at Birkenau. A woman named Franceska Mann shot SS-Oberscharführer Josef Schillinger, in the undressing room of Crematorium II, after stealing his gun, rather than be murdered by gassing.



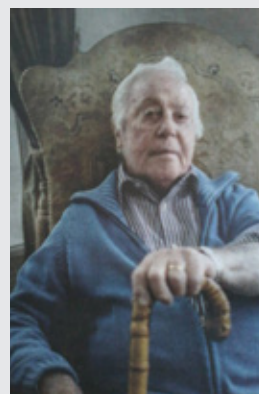
24th October 1943. In retaliation for the death of SS-Oberscharführer Schillinger the previous day, SS guards shoot machine guns at random in Birkenau in the evening. 13 prisoners are killed, four are severely wounded and 42 are lightly wounded.

David Olere painting showing Nazi atrocities in Birkenau



25th October 1942. At 11:30 AM the SS standby squad is assigned to the unloading platform for take charge of a transport of Jews.

Image of die Alte Judenrampe courtesy of Michael Challoner



26th October 1942. All male Norwegian Jews were arrested by the Norwegian Police. (Women and children were arrested 25.11.42). 70 years passed by before these Jews were given an official excuse from the Police authorities. In November 2012, director Odd Reidar Humlegard, on behalf of the police dept., made a statement of apology. Only one of these Jews, Samuel Steinmann, who died in 2015, was then able to hear the words.

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Accommodation Recommendations

Hotel Olecki - Restaurant and Bar

St.Leszczyński 16, 32-600 Oswiecim +48 033 847 50 00

Location - 300 Yards from the Auschwitz Muzeum

Pros The hotel is opposite the Muzeum. A 3 minute walk to the Museum reception area
Very clean hotel, great staff, nice Restaurant and Bar that rarely gets full. Directly outside, you have 3 other Restaurants. For cheap but decent take away food, go to Art Burger. For a good European Menu and better quality food, go to Art Deco.

- FREE WIFI
- TV In room
- En Suite in all rooms
- Free car park

Price - The average price per night is 256zł based on 2 people

The old town is a 50 minute walk or 10-15 minute drive. There is nothing to do at night apart from enjoy the Restaurant and Bar area.

Hotel Pierrot - Self Serve/Kitchen Access

Władysława Jagiełły 2, 32-600 Oswiecim +48 662 049 377

Location - 10-15 minute drive or a 50 minute walk to Muzeum

Pros The price is excellent. You are in a beautiful part of the old town. If you request a room at the front of the Hostel at no extra cost, your room will have a balcony with a view towards the Market Square. If your room is at the rear, you will be looking towards the Sola River. Plenty of shops, bars and restaurants in this area. Very pretty in the day and for night walks.

- FREE WIFI
- TV In room
- En Suite in all rooms
- Free car park

Price - Average price per night is 130zł based on 2 people

The Muzeum is a 50 minute walk or 10-15 min drive.



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Your Guide on Travelling to the Auschwitz Museum

The full 20 page guide can be downloaded from the files section of the Auschwitz Study Group Facebook page or by request on www.auschwitzstudygroup.com

All of the details in my guides, are from personal experiences in the 6 years I have been researching the town of Oswiecim.

The purpose is to aid those of you that may have previously visited the Museum & wish to explore further, or have an extended interest in the subject.

During the Nazi occupation of Poland, a new town was created here that would become a place of slave labour and torment for prisoners. Evidence of this period in history are still in existence today. The former slave labour factories of Krupp and DAW can still be seen, although derelict and falling apart - they represent some of the extensions of Auschwitz that I recommend seeing on an extended tour of the external sites.

I will also recommend visiting some of the Auschwitz Sub-Camps which are within a 15 minute car journey from the Museum.

Auschwitz III was a camp that held 10,000 prisoners at its peak. It was approx. 5km from the Museum in a village called Monowice. There is no

Museum there, but signs of the former camp can still be seen. It housed prisoners who were forced to work at the IG Farben plant, which was opposite the Auschwitz III Camp. I will help you locate existing relics and information to get there.

You may also wish to explore the old town of Oswiecim, which is approx. 10 minutes from the Museum. Its a beautiful old town that sits on the Sola River. Whilst here, you can visit the former Jewish quarter and experience the newly opened Café Bergson located in the 100-year old Kluger Family House. It was opened as a tribute to the last Jew who lived in the town.

There are restaurants and cafés surrounding the Market Square that I can recommend, and whilst these are far from the tourists - all of them speak English.

For this tour, the minimum recommended stay is 2 days. It will hopefully provide a new perspective on what Auschwitz was and help you consider the vast spacial awareness of Auschwitz outside of the Museum protective areas.

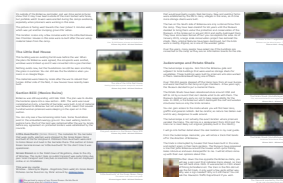
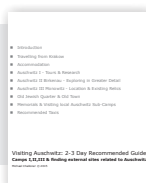
TRAVELLING FROM KRAKOW

There are Coaches/Buses and Trains that will take you directly to the town of Oswiecim from Krakow. Journey time is approx. 1.5 - 2 hours. All 3 forms of transport depart from the same building at the Krakow Główny (by the new Krakow Galleria shopping centre). The train stops at Oswiecim station which is a 15-20 minute walk from Auschwitz, but don't worry the Museum is well signposted. Taxis also wait outside here and usually charge around 10zł. The PKS Bus and Minibus stops adjacent to the Muzeum with service to Krakow and Katowice frequent all year round. Most stop at around 3pm in winter though. The stop is a 1 minute walk to the Museum. Its not the last stop on the route, but the driver will call out the Museum stop in English for all passengers.

ACCOMMODATION IN OSWIECIM

Depending on your budget and preference, I have listed a couple of pros and cons to help you decide between my 2 personal choices.

Hotel Olecki - Restaurant and Bar : The hotel is opposite the Museum. A 3 minute walk to the Museum reception area
Pros: Very clean hotel, great staff, nice Restaurant and Bar that rarely gets full. Directly outside, you have 3 other Restaurants. For cheap but decent take away food, go to Art Burger. For a good European Menu and better quality food, go to Art Deco.





AUSCHWITZ II BIRKENAU

The package tours are generally very poor at Birkenau. Some guides will not show you the far west of the camp such as Crematorium 2/3 or the Sauna Building.

When travelling alone, You can explore Birkenau in much greater detail. Between 4-6 hours is probably the right amount of time.

Besides the Quarantine Section, the Women's brick barracks and Crematorium 2 and 3 (which can sometimes be part of the package tours), your check list should cover the following areas:

- Sauna Building
- Crematorium 4 and 5
- The Little White House
- The Ash Fields behind the Little White House
- The Russian Monument
- The Little Red House
- Section BIII (Mexico Ruins)
- The Vegetable Sheds
- The Judenrampe and Potato Sheds
- Ruins of the Ornamental Garden Wells
- Water Conditioning and Pumping Station

AUSCHWITZ III MONOWITZ

If you are reading this guide, you may already have a good level of Knowledge about the history of Auschwitz III.

Auschwitz I-The Main Camp, Auschwitz II-Birkenau both have Museums on their former sites, but the site of Auschwitz III in the Polish Village of Monowice (around 5km away) has no preserved relics and is not under the administration of the Auschwitz Muzeum.

Because of this, you will find no information on how to travel to the former site, and no significant memorials or maps will exist.

Many of the public buses running from Krakow to Oswiecim will enter the town through the village of Monowice. On a clear day, you can see train cargos merging closer to the road from the Horizon. Just past the line is the Vistula River that eventually weaves itself through the 3 former camps of Auschwitz. You will not see the railway line though, as its hidden behind the old prison fence which stretches for approximately 2km before it disappears again. It follows the railway track deep into the grounds of the former I.G Farben complex. This is now Auschwitz.

In 2014, new industrial units were built which meant the demolition of several watch towers following 69 years of existence. By the time you reach the end of the former IG Farben plant, you will have already passed the sites of 6 Labour camps, the biggest being Auschwitz III, Monowitz, which was one of 2 forced labour camps in the area. At its peak in 1944, Monowitz housed over 10,000 prisoners that worked within the several

factories in the vast complex opposite. The second prisoner camp, E715 Monowitz housed British Prisoners of War. As the prisoners sent here were not officers, they didn't have the protection of the Luftwaffe and had to work as slave labourers at the IG Farben complex. The foundations of camp E715 can still be seen today. The 4 other camps on this road were built as temporary homes for the IG Farben civilian workers. This was due to a shortage of available homes in the town. The barracks of Camp I, Leonhard Haag can still be seen and have since been converted into garages.

At the end of the road, you will approach a roundabout. Straight on takes you to the old town of Oswiecim and then on to the Museum of Auschwitz. A right turn will take you north along the west side of the former IG Farben plant. The camp fence still exists around much of this perimeter. Eventually, the road veers right heading in an Easterly direction.

Existing Relics/Memorials to discover:

- SS Single Bomb Shelters
- Brick Watch Towers
- Brick and Wooden Barracks of Auschwitz III
- Large SS Bomb Shelter (in Monowice)
- Camp Fence Surrounding IG Farben
- Existing Buildings in the former IG Farben Plant
- Camp Kitchen
- Memorials

OLD JEWISH QUARTER

I have observed the 2 year renovation project of the Market Square and seen how the folk of Oswiecim celebrate its town - but do not shy away from the Nazi Occupation.

There is also the Life Festival- an idea of Darek Maciborek, a journalist who was born, raised and has always lived in Oswiecim. Darek Maciborek wanted to "break the spell" of his home town that is commonly associated solely with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

The main concept of the Festival is to build peaceful relations beyond cultural and state borders where there is no place for anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of xenophobia. Concerts attracting big global stars perform each year at the now established life festival here.

The town is full of young educated people who are beginning to change the perception of Oswiecim and show that something good can grow out of its past.

The picturesque Sola river runs through the town, passing the restored Castle. The Market square re-opened in 2014 and is surrounded by restaurants, shops and cultural references to the towns rich history.

Not many tourists stay here, and if you want to explore Polish culture away from the tourists traps then this is the place to stay.

All information by Michael Challoner ©

Hotel Pierrot - Self Serve/Kitchen Access.

The price is excellent. You are in a beautiful part of the old town. If you request a room at the front of the Hostel at no extra cost, your room will have a balcony with a view towards the Market Square. If your room is at the rear, you will be looking towards the Sola River. Plenty of shops, bars and restaurants in this area. Very pretty in the day and for night walks.

AUSCHWITZ I TOUR & RESEARCH

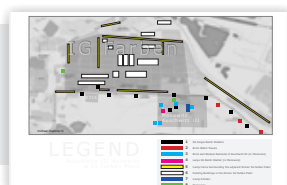
For the standard tour information for the Auschwitz Museum, please visit the 'Files Section' in the Auschwitz Study Group Facebook Page and select the following PDF:

[Visiting the Auschwitz Memorial for the first time Guide.pdf](#)

If you wish to speak to the Auschwitz Research or Archives team before your visit, please select your option from the following link: <http://auschwitz.org/en/contact/>

You can then arrange a time during your visit where you can meet with a representative at the Auschwitz Muzeum and discuss your query in detail.

You can also arrange to see/take home archive pictures/information and copies of documents available. It is best to make contact weeks in advance so you can utilise your time better. Slots are loosely 30 mins - 1 hour depending on when you make contact.



Members Photo Gallery: October



Birkenau by Artur Chmielewski



Birkenau by Artur Chmielewski



Birkenau by Artur Chmielewski



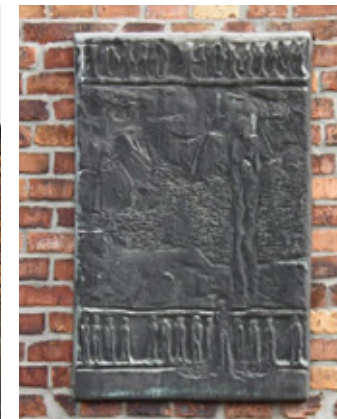
Birkenau by Artur Chmielewski



Birkenau by Enrique Almonte-Checo



Auschwitz by Enrique Almonte-Checo



Auschwitz by Enrique Almonte-Checo



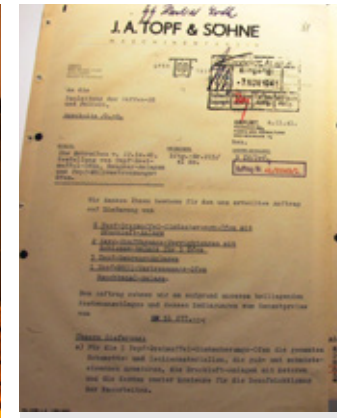
Memorial Paris by Linnea Eva Holmer



Memorial Paris by Linnea Eva Holmer



Topf & Soehne by Michael Grabers



Topf & Soehne by Michael Grabers



Topf & Soehne by Michael Grabers



Auschwitz by Tommi Ritola



Wien Memorial by Teresa Lazzaro



Auschwitz by Tommi Ritola



Auschwitz by Tommi Ritola

Schindler Factory by Kev Harmon



Auschwitz by Artur Chmielewski



Birkenau by Artur Chmielewski



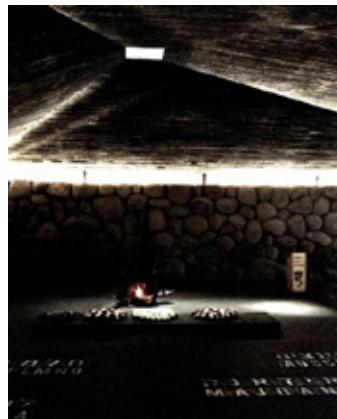
Sachsenhausen by Tommi Lindholm



Krakow Ghetto wall by Hannah Wilson



Yad Vashem by Michael Graber



Yad Vashem by Michael Graber



Auschwitz by Tim Van Gorp



Birkenau by Tim Van Gorp

Memorial at Monowitz by Teresa Lazzaro

Birkenau by Alexa Leah

Birkenau by Alexa Leah

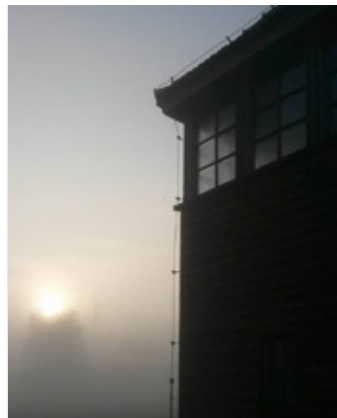


Birkenau by Jarosław Fiedor

Birkenau by Jarosław Fiedor

Birkenau by Jarosław Fiedor

Oswiecim Rynek by Jarosław Fiedor



THE PROPAGANDER:

21st Century Propagander with Wally O'Lepp

Visit: propagander.tripod.com

Walter John Loep Jr, better known to members of the Auschwitz Study Group Facebook members as 'Wally,' is an amateur historian and valued contributor of information to our discussion forum. Having been inspired by the increased member input and incredible information shared by our more regular members, Wally created what he calls his 'sister site' to the Auschwitz Study Group page, specialising in 20th Century History. But it is his own website that has become the hub of over 30 years collective information that represents Wally's interests and specialities. Having long been impressed with his knowledge on 20th century history, we asked if he would like to provide background on his interests, and links to some of the more popular areas of his website.

Many people know me as Wally. I'm 61 years old, of German/Polish/Irish decent, a history buff and amateur historian specializing in the Third Reich. My interest in these subjects began in a Cleveland, Ohio public High School, by my history teacher. However, while most tales of this sort involve being inspired by an above-average teacher, in my case the opposite occurred, The fellow was a complete bore, a Right-Wing fanatic who should not have been a public school teacher to begin with.

Youthful beginnings

One particular day in 1970, our teacher was discussing how the FDR were Communists who handed Eastern Europe to the Soviets. He also declared that if the US had not been 'ruled' by the Communist FDR, the country would have backed Hitler. A Jewish girl in the class bravely challenged him, and his reply inevitably upset to the degree she left and never returned.

Even at such a young age, I knew he was wrong, but I concede I did not possess the knowledge to adequately refute his opinions. This prompted me to begin an intense, life-long study, first of FDR, Hitler, the Cold War, the Holocaust, and much more besides.

At first, my motivation was a little juvenile, as I pictured myself coming to the distressed damsels defence, armed with superior knowledge and judgment, slaying the right

wing dragon with strength-of-argument and biting wit.

Gradually, as I matured, my studies became more cohesive as well. But the desire to never again be caught lacking the knowledge necessary to refute dangerous ideological nonsense with objective fact and analysis still remains perhaps my primary motivation, to be introspective.

The Internet

My study methodology began with taking copious longhand notes from my readings, filling many notebooks with difficult-to-make-out scribbles. Not only did I fail to come up with any sort of indexing system allowing me to quickly retrieve information once noted, I had also neglected to source-note the entries beyond the title of the book from which it was procured.

The end result was that 30 years of these longhand notebook volumes ultimately proved to be nearly worthless for their intended purpose, as reference. At the same time I retired in the late 1990's, the emergence of the internet began to have worldwide consumer appeal. I purchased my first computer and began to learn HTML code for building my own web pages.

After filtering a list of 35 names in search of a unique collective title, I finally decided on The Propagander!™

TOP WEBSITE LINKS

Website Index:

propagander.tripod.com

Most Visited:

[The Biographic Timeline Of The Infamous Adolf Hitler](#)

[The Nuremberg Nazis: Detailed, Documented Biographies](#)

[Wunderwaffen: Hitler's Deception and the History of Rocketry](#)

[Countdown to Infamy: Timeline to Pearl Harbor](#)

[Austria: The Other Germany](#)

[The Last Days of the Third Reich](#)



You can purchase 'Germany at Odds' as an ebook or hard copy from Amazon by

[clicking here](#)

Eldad Beck has been a member of the Auschwitz Study Group discussion page since its current inception. For those who have not come across Eldad's work, he is a Berlin-based correspondent of the Israeli daily "Yedioth Ahronoth". He is one of the rare Israeli journalists who reported from Arab and Moslem countries - such as Iran, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan - about major events in the Middle East. His first book "Beyond the Border" was published in 2009 in Israel.

The Auschwitz Study Group recently spoke to Eldad about his new book:

'Germany, at Odds'

His latest book is a personal journey of an Israeli journalist throughout this challenging country at the beginning of the 21st century. The book questions many assumptions about the new Germany:

Is there really only one Germany or such a thing as "a German mentality"?

Is Germany a strong and stable democracy in the heart of Europe?

Have "the Germans" really confronted their past?

'Germany, at Odds' is an invitation to see Germany differently.

A film about
the pre-war
history
of Oswiecim
town is about to
be shot...



Auschwitz Study Group
English Exclusive.

Please visit:
www.gazetakrakowska.pl
for the original article

An interview with Miroslaw Ganobis, the Oświęcim area history lover, and contributor to the Auschwitz Study Group Facebook discussion forum who is currently shooting a film about life in pre-war and occupied Oświęcim, along with other passionate people.

The film is scheduled to debut before 27th January 2016, the 71st anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Q: How did you come to the idea of making a film about history of Oświęcim?

A: I am passionate about this town and its history. I've been trying to learn its past and to get to people who tell me their family stories connected to Oświęcim for years. I also collect memorabilia's made before and during the Second World War. At the beginning it was only me who was admiring them but now everyone can see those items in my own museum. I came to the conclusion, though, that history of my town should be known in every Oświęcim home, it should be learnt by people who can do it at their own places.

That's why I decided to make a film. Although I had to find people who would work with me on it, but actually it didn't happen to be a problem at all.

Q: Are the film actors connected to Oświęcim personally?

A: Yes, they are. Most of them are members of the Bunkrowcy group who have been discovering and exploring Nazi bunkers in the whole town for years. But there are other citizens playing there, too. We don't have any sponsors, so we are making the film in our amateur way. It's all about our good intentions and we have little money from our own savings. I wrote the script, and our camera operator will be travelling to us from Wrocław. All items used in the film are part of my collection, but if there is anything missing, we should quickly get, I think.



Oswiecim Historian, Miroslaw Ganobis surrounded by exhibits from his personal museum, photo: www.gazetakrakowska.pl

Q: Where are you looking other necessary items for?

A: When I only said that we were going to shoot this film, people immediately started to ask what we needed, how they would be able to help. One lady from Lublin sent us a whole box full of shoes and clothes people that used to wear before the WWII. We cannot afford costumes, so girls playing in the film buy a lot of things in second hand shops.

Q: Could you tell us a bit more about the film or is it supposed to be a mystery?

A: It's not a mystery at all. It will be a 28-minute-long film because it's a condition of television channels and I would like it to be shown on Polish TV. My museum is the main filmset. This is a place where I will conduct 'lectures' about Oświęcim history using items I own. After touching a particular exhibit presented by me, each of our 8 actors will travel in time to the place and a day where this particular thing comes from.

Q: How many exhibit are you going to use?

A: 8 in total. 4 thanks to which we will see the pre-war period and another 4 thanks to which we will travel to the Nazi Oświęcim.

Q: Seems there are going to be also outdoor shots. Where will you record them?

A: In the first (pre-war) part we will use a bottle after vodka manufactured in Jakob Haberfeld's factory. In the background you will see a photography presenting the factory's bottling plant, and the actors will 'appear' on the image. After a while the photo will disappear to show what is there now - just rubble and empty area. In next scenes we will see a Jewish school which used to be located by Berka Joselewicz Street.

Our characters will travel in time there because of a book which used to be used during classes. We will use also Aron Ha-Kodesz - a part of an altar of a synagogue which used to be located by the same street - and also a Jewish candle holder with ornaments. The Pelz family gave the candle holder to their friends because they were afraid that the item would get lost. That happened just before the occupation.

Q: After that there will be the second part of the film. What will we see in it?

A: I must admit we had a little problem how to link both film parts. I came to an idea where, before the next character travels in time to the occupation years, we would record a scene when I use a map of Oświęcim to show it to people in the museum. At some point I will try to grab a mug of coffee but it spills on the map. The stain will cover whole paper and when I clean it, it will show a map with 'Auschwitz' written. That's how the film audience will know we be travelling to years between 1939 and 1945.

Q: What exhibits will we see there?

A: A prison uniform, a set of chess made by one of prisoners, a wardrobe from the Monowitz sub-camp and photos of smiling Nazis having fun by the camp.

Q: Does it mean you are going to shoot some of the scenes in the Auschwitz Memorial?

A: No, not at all. We want to show people that there was something more in Oświęcim than only the concentration camp at that time, that people there used to still live their lives, work, have farms. We will play a scene when Nazi soldiers arrive to one family living there, take them all out to the backyard and go through their house. After a while one of soldiers will find a prison uniform in an attic and everything else will happen immediately after that. We want to show by this that Oświęcim citizens risked their lives by helping prisoners while bringing them food or hiding them.

Q: When will you start shooting the film?

A: We're starting in October. Firstly, we want to record the outdoor scenes, and we will record scenes in my museum later. Film music will be composed by Henryk Grzeslo, an Oświęcim citizen. At the end credits you will hear a song by Krzywa Alternatywa, a band from Oświęcim. A postproduction - editing all shot materials into one - is planned for November and December.

Special thanks to Ewelina Sadko for asking the original Questions, Miroslaw Ganobis for his permission and friendship & Natalia Nowak for the English translation



David Cesarani OBE 1956 - 2015

The **Auschwitz Study Group** mark the untimely death of **Professor David Cesarani**, who died following a short illness on the 25th October 2015.

David was one of the leading Holocaust scholars of his generation and built a worldwide reputation both for his academic and media work. To celebrate his contribution to expanding knowledge of the Holocaust to wider audiences, and to his relentless efforts to appeal for funding to studies, (particularly the *Wiener Library for Holocaust Studies in London*), we will devote an entire special feature in the December Newsletter, including an interview with one of his former colleagues who knew him well.



Picture graphic:
Michael Challoner

David Cesarani 2012

From the introduction to the Myth of silence

“ The purpose of this essay collection is to present evidence that in the wake of the Second World War the Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution and mass murder were not ‘silent’ and that, over the ensuing fifteen years, the world was gifted a plenitude of information about the horrors that had so recently occurred in Europe. In so doing, several contributors pose the question of why, if this material existed, historians got it so wrong? One reason is that many Jewish survivors who lived through that period, and whose personal experiences informed the work of later researchers, tended to maintain that there had been a ‘silence’. Yet, as we can now understand, their memory of those years was affected by the extraordinary salience that the horrendous events they had lived through assumed later on (and perhaps somewhat belatedly), and by their own enhanced status as ‘survivors’. In comparison with the recognition heaped upon them in the 1990s and the ubiquity of ‘the Holocaust’ in historiography and public discourse, the 1950s did look in retrospect like an unknowing and uncaring decade. This is why it is apposite to use the term ‘myth’ to describe the phenomena being scrutinised here. ”

Thanks to members of the Auschwitz Study Group for their comments following David's passing: Niels Den Hartog How sad. Way too young. Mikael Pettersson So sad and choking. RIP. Siska van Alfen I have seen him in documentaries about the Holocaust. Very interesting man to listen too, he knew so much about it. May he rest in peace thank you for sharing all your knowledge with us Hannah HW So sad. I was waiting to meet with him too. A big loss. Michael Challoner The untimely passing of Cesarani has at least allowed us to reflect on the impact he made on literary and mainstream audiences over his illustrious career. A man who was clearly passionate about education, he was able to bring history to life in even the shortest segments on the several television documentaries he contributed to. David had agreed to contribute to our newsletter and whilst we can no longer bring you the interview, his work will continue to attract new audiences who will continue holocaust studies for future generations to come. James Stewart Very sorry to hear of David's passing, he has made a major contribution to the history of the Holocaust . RIP sir. Susan Mansi What a huge loss this is. He was tireless in keeping information about the Holocaust alive. I'm so sad he's died so young. Kev Harmon I am still stunned as this sinks in. David kick started my wife and myself's interest in the Holocaust many years ago and I would prefer to think of David as one of the world's top educators in the Holocaust. His style of presentation on television was informative but relaxed. Thankfully David left a legacy of literature and TV documentary's to live on in his memory and keep the Holocaust alive. Rest In Peace. Dawn Shotwell Lunsford Very sad!! He will be missed. Cynthia Southern I have a copy of "Eichmann: His Life and Crimes," which David Cesarani wrote. It is a ground-breaking new book about Eichmann and one of the first to come out in many decades. Cesarani knew his Holocaust history well and it was evident he was passionate about educating others about it thru his writing, teaching and working to organize the annual UK Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. He was esteemed and honoured and the fact he was awarded the OBE is not surprising due to his talents. The passing of David Cesarani this year and the passing of Martin Gilbert last year leaves a void in the ranks of esteemed Holocaust scholars, authors and educators. Thank-you Mr. Cesarani. Annemor Schønhaug May he rest in peace. Rita Gabis So very sad to learn of his death. A huge loss. Philip Wharam David Cesarani was Professor of History at Royal Holloway, where I was lucky enough to study Nazism and WW2 in the 1970s. He and others helped to keep my passion alive to understand not only how but why the Holocaust happened. RIP David, a truly remarkable man. Stefania Zezza David Cesarani had the great merit of understanding the importance of the early Holocaust testimonies. He edited a book about the myth of silence, which plays an important role in the contemporary approach to the Holocaust Studies. "The Holocaust' as we know it is not to be found in these postwar accomplishments, but by the 1950s the first layer of historiography and literature had been laid. Everything else rested on this achievement