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# EMORIA

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## COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY IN BEŁŻEC ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF OPERATION "REINHARDT"

INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE:  
LIFE BEHIND  
FENCES

NEW ONLINE  
LESSON:  
"WOMEN AT KL  
AUSCHWITZ"

MEMORIES AND  
NARRATIVES  
OF THE  
HOLOCAUST  
IN DIGITAL SPACE

BERGEN-BELSEN  
INTERNATIONAL  
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2022

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In the situation where tens and hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens are fleeing to Poland because of Russian aggression, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, in cooperation with the Auschwitz Museum, has decided to provide support.

The Foundation is launching a program of scholarships for professional development in the field of conservation of objects of martyrdom for Ukrainian conservators, with the aim of providing equal job opportunities.

The project will involve the conservation of historical objects related to the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz. The scholarships will be financed entirely by funds specially earmarked by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.

The scholarships will be awarded for 6 months. The Auschwitz Museum will provide the recipients of scholarships with accommodation and introduce them to the project. No knowledge of the Polish language is required.

All interested persons are invited to send their applications with brief information about their educational background and the conservation projects in which they participated. They application can be sent from Marcy 7 in Ukrainian, Polish or English to: [kadry\[at\]auschwitz.org](mailto:kadry[at]auschwitz.org).

We will be grateful for your help distributing this information among refugees from Ukraine with conservation education.

# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: LIFE BEHIND FENCES

The Viktor Ullmann Festival and the Department of Humanities of the University of Trieste, in collaboration with the Museum of the Jewish Community of Trieste "Carlo and Vera Wagner", are pleased to announce the International Conference Life Behind Fences (LBF 2022), which will take place from 23 to 25 November 2022 in Trieste, Italy.

## Aims and Objectives of the Conference

The conference aims to take stock of the most recent historiographical debates on Holocaust Studies: Focusing on the interdisciplinary scope that they have taken on in the last decade, and of which the conference wants to become a platform to provide a communal space for dialogue between the various voices that animate this discussion.

Recently, we have witnessed the proliferation of new research, which has significantly expanded the limits of this subject. *Among the many, we find* *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* by Anna Hajkova (Oxford University Press, 2020), *Dance on the Razor Edge: Crime and Punishment in the Nazi Ghettos* by Svenja Bethke (University of Toronto Press, 2020), *Night without End: The Fate of Jews in German-Occupied Poland* edited by Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking (Indiana University Press, 2021), which dealt with the daily life of internees in ghettos and camps. There are also studies on the impact of alcohol consumption in extermination operations, such as Edward Westermann's *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany* (Cornell University Press, 2021); through to works on the evolving politics of memory in the post-communist era, such as Jelena Subotic's *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance After Communism* (Ithaca, 2019).

These books are just some of the works that have contributed to making Holocaust Studies increasingly broad and multidisciplinary. It is therefore in the light of this richness that the conference will focus on three macro-themes, which will form as many sessions: the first one will deal with artistic production (understood in

its broadest sense) and within coercive contexts such as camps and ghettos; the second one will deal with the concept of survival (in its various declinations); while the third one will deal with the "defence mechanisms" and the re-elaboration of trauma (including post-war trauma), implemented by individuals to overcome the experience of war.

Each session will have a keynote speaker (45 minutes), the presentation of 3 papers (20 minutes each) and, in the end, the possibility for some PhD students to present their ongoing projects (posters) (no more than 10 minutes). Confirmed keynote speakers LBF 2022:

- Professor Dieter Pohl (University of Klagenfurt)
- Professor Anna Hájková (University of Warwick)
- Dr PhD Anna Veronica Pobbe (Ca' Foscari University)

## Call for Papers

Scholars are invited from the following disciplines: Cultural Studies; Memory Studies; Holocaust Studies; Oral History Studies; History and Public History; Literature; Art History; Sociology; Political Science; Philosophy; Musicology, to submit papers related to the above macro-areas.

Selected proposals should preferably, but not exclusively, deal with:

- Literature, painting, and music produced within camps and ghettos.
- On language and linguistic issues within camp and ghetto contexts.
- The burden of survival: reflections and literary, artistic, and musical expressions of guilt among survivors, also from a gender perspective.



- The elaboration of war events (also in a trans-generational and gender perspective).
- Art and music as forms of opposition and “resistance” in totalitarian regimes.
- Analysis of social and power structures and relations within forced communities and their survival strategies.

As already mentioned, one of the purposes of the conference is to deal with the different nuances that currently animate Holocaust Studies. At the same time, it wants to be a framework for other research fields such as Genocide Studies, Public History, Trauma Studies, Oral History and Gender Studies. It will be particularly appreciated papers presenting comparative and multidisciplinary approaches. Proposals, written in English, must be no longer

than 500 words and must be accompanied by a short bio of no more than 250 words and should be emailed to [behindfencesconference@gmail.com](mailto:behindfencesconference@gmail.com) with the subject line “LBF 2022”. All submissions must be received by 30 April 2022. Early career scholars and PhD students are particularly encouraged to apply. The conference will be held in English. Publication of the conference proceedings is planned.

The Scientific Committee will inform the selected papers **by 1 June 2022**. Board and lodging costs will be covered by the organising bodies.



# COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY IN BEŁŻEC ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF OPERATION “REINHARDT”

The first transports of Jewish deportees from the Lublin and Lwów ghettos arrived at the Bełżec extermination camp in Bełżec 80 years ago. These events marked the beginning of operation “Reinhardt.” Within its course the Germans murdered approx. 2,000,000 Jews between the March 1942 and November 1943. We commemorated all the victims of that mass extermination programme during a ceremony held in the Museum and Memorial in Bełżec on March 15.

Today we gather in a place that 80 years ago, and within the span of merely ten months – between March and December 1942 – was transformed into the third largest cemetery of the Holocaust victims in Europe.

SS-Sonderkommando Belzec was the first extermination camp that was established and launched within the course of “Einsatz Reinhardt” – such was the codename of the mass extermination of Jews conducted in the General Government by the German and Austrian Nazis. A total of approx. 435,000 men, women, and children were murdered here. They were mostly the Jews from the south-eastern Poland, the pre-war Lublin, Kraków, Lwów, Stanisławów, and Tarnopol voivodeships. Only two inmates of Bełżec survived the war.

Five years ago, during a ceremony honouring the memory of the victims who perished in the Bełżec extermination camp, which just like today’s event inaugurated the nationwide commemoration to the anniversary of operation “Reinhardt,” I said something that I would like to repeat today: “We are all here to show that we all remember, but also to face the horrors of that tragedy. In reality, we face the unimaginable. It is not an easy duty, but a necessary one, because only then the memory of the victims who perished in the Holocaust will not be merely an empty ritual, but it will be filled with content that each and every of us will find normative. It can become an element

that could shape our identity, our sensibility, and our responsibility. That is the fundamental principle of what we define as the empathic recollecting or working on remembrance.

Today as we bow our heads to the victims, I am absolutely certain that the memory about the mass extermination of Jews perpetrated by the German Reich during World War II will remain a fundamental basis of Europe for many years to come. I believe that those words, though uttered in the past, are still valid today. We all realise that in the present circumstances our “identity, sensitivity, and responsibility” bear new significance that drive us towards facing new and extremely difficult challenges of the present. Because today is different. Today a war is waged. The Russian invaders slaughter Ukrainian civilians and raze their homes to the ground. Ukraine is merely 17 kilometres from here. – emphasised Tomasz Kranz, the Director of the State Museum at Majdanek.

The commemorative ceremony organised jointly by the Institute of National Remembrance was attended by the delegates of the central government, diplomatic corps, Lublin Voivodeship authorities, local government administration, and numerous institutions and entities that commemorate the victims of World War II. The representatives of several religions made prayers during the ceremony, including the Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich. The testimonies of witnesses and Bełżec survivors were also read





Michael Schudrich. The testimonies of witnesses and Bełżec survivors were also read out during the event.

In the letter addressed to the attendees of the ceremony, the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, remarked that: The Memory of the Holocaust of Jews prevails and stands as a warning to every next generation. It warns about the aftermath of any totalitarian regime that is based on the imperialistic ideology and racist contempt for other nations. We honour the victims of the Holocaust and put every effort so that those who were bestially murdered can rest in places treated with dignity and respect. [...] The currently waged war reminds us that the memory of the victims of Aktion Reinhardt is a warning to us, today. We must prevent any imperialistic designs, we must condemn any calls for hatred, we must take decisive measures against any hostility and aggression. I firmly believe that the free world will never exhaust their strength nor consistency in this endeavour. We carry this obligation entrusted within the memory of the murdered fellow Jewish citizens and

neighbours. The attendees were also addressed by the Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki. In the letter read out during the ceremony he remarked that: Today's ceremony constitutes an homage to the victims murdered here, in Bełżec, between March and December 1942. Homage to all the victims of operation "Reinhardt" – the shameful implementation of the mass extermination of European Jews. Today we wish to manifest our enduring memory of the victims of the Holocaust. A crime that shall forever be a warning to the mankind, a warning about the aftermath of an ideology that any race or ethnicity of any peoples contradicts their humanity.

The ceremony was the first event held in recognition of the the 80th anniversary of operation "Reinhardt", co-organised by the State Museum at Majdanek.

Further commemorative projects and events are going to be organised between March 2022 and November 2023.

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# NEW ONLINE LESSON: "WOMEN AT KL AUSCHWITZ"

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"Women at KL Auschwitz" is the new online lesson of the Auschwitz Memorial. It is available in Polish and English. It was created by Wanda Witek-Malicka of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Research Center and Jadwiga Dąbrowska of the Bureau for Former Prisoners.

'The very first concentration camp for women in the Nazi Germany was set up in autumn 1933 in the city of Moringen [...]. In May 1939, KL Lichtenberg became the central concentration camp for women. Afterwards female prisoners were relocated to the new concentration camp for women in Ravensbrück. Until 1942 Ravensbrück was the only concentration camp for women [...]. It was necessary to establish a camp for women in Auschwitz as other camps located within the territory of the Third Reich, and the occupied countries (in particular Poland) were overcrowded, and number of prisoners of the Ravensbrück camp increased,' we read in the introduction.

'The lesson is divided into several chapters, in which the authors describe the fate of women in the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. It begins from the creation of the female camp at Auschwitz and the arrival of the first transport of female prisoners, through the structure of the prisoner community, registration, living conditions, work, and finally mass extermination in gas chambers and selections in the camp,' said Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka, head of E-learning at the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

'Then, the authors introduce the reader to the subject of escapes and punishments, physicality, illnesses, experiments, pregnancy, and childbirth, to move on to interpersonal relations, resistance, manifestations of religious and cultural life, and creative activity," she added.

The tragedy of women in the camp is

presented in the lesson through many accounts of female survivors. Aerial photographs, plans, photographs taken by the SS men while Auschwitz was in operation, postwar photographs, artworks, and objects made by female prisoners in the camp give an understanding of the size of the camp itself, as well as the work and existence of female prisoners in the camp.

'The end of the war wasn't the end of the nightmare for the former female prisoners. Most of them suffered from various diseases, they contracted during the imprisonment. The treatment took sometimes months or even years. The separate issue was the nervous and emotional disorders as a result of traumatic experiences and many months or even years of living under extreme stress. The first months after the war were also dedicated to calculating the loss related to the war and to build up a new life, literally from the ruins. Many of female survivors had to face the information regarding the loss of their children, husbands and other relatives. Especially the Jewish women had usually nobody to return to. In the case of most female Auschwitz survivors, the imprisonment had a negative impact on further life. Some of them have never recovered completely their health and regained their normal life,' states the summary of the lesson.

The online lesson "Women in KL Auschwitz" is available in English and Polish.





FIRST CONCENTRATION CAMPS FOR  
WOMEN IN THE THIRD REICH

THE WOMEN'S CAMP IN AUSCHWITZ

FIRST PRISONERS OF THE WOMEN'S  
CAMP IN AUSCHWITZ I

LIQUIDATION OF THE FEMALE SECTION  
IN THE MAIN CAMP

WOMEN'S CAMP IN AUSCHWITZ II-  
BIRKENAU

COMMUNITY OF PRISONERS

ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE  
PRISONER COMMUNITY

REASONS FOR ARREST

PRISONER FUNCTIONARIES

TOTAL NUMBER OF FEMALE PRISONERS

MASS EXTERMINATION

ADMISSION TO THE CAMP

## WOMEN IN AUSCHWITZ

### FIRST PRISONERS OF THE WOMEN'S CAMP IN AUSCHWITZ I

On March 26, 1942, right after finalizing of construction of the wall separating blocks for female prisoners, the very first transport of 999 women came from Ravensbrück. They were mainly German prisoners, most of them criminals and so-called social misfit prisoners, but also political prisoners and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Fragments of testimonies of women deported to Auschwitz on 26 March 1942.



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# MEMORIES AND NARRATIVES OF THE HOLOCAUST IN DIGITAL SPACE

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First EHRI-AT-Conference hosted by the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI). The conference will take place in Vienna on May 23-24, 2022.

Transnational Holocaust research, commemoration, and dissemination forms the mission of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI). Its biggest challenge is the broad dispersal of original sources and disciplinary knowledge across many institutions. Since 2010, EHRI has been working to overcome this fragmentation and dislocation of the Holocaust's legacy and to connect historical materials, institutions, and researchers. The subsequent opportunity to research, interlink, mediatise, and present digital data in virtual space has resulted in new research paradigms: Holocaust research and its dissemination can now be considered transnational, transcultural, digital, and interdisciplinary.

EHRI has adopted the processes of digital transformation from the fields of digital history and digital humanities and regards itself as the engine of new digital methods and tools. Aside from exploiting the potentials afforded by mobile technology, EHRI is perceived as a

scholarly infrastructure engaged in the long-term, sustainable networking of diverse expertise from the field of Holocaust research and dissemination, crossing disciplinary and institutional boundaries and going beyond the various politics and logics of national histories.

The World Wide Web and digitisation have proven to be irreplaceable instruments for the history of the Holocaust and its commemoration. Its technical potential constitutes the foundation of what Marianne Hirsch in 2012 termed "postmemory's archival turn". It has become an indispensable tool also for the mobilisation of the most varied social and ethnic groups engaged in public history. The example of the Holocaust impressively shows the paradigmatic shift taking place in the humanities. Memorial institutions today use the Internet on a very high professional level, as a site of self-presentation and representation and as a discussion forum for increasingly international, transcultural, and

At the same time, it is not always established institutions that are using the technical possibilities of the internet to their fullest extent. Creative and sometimes controversially discussed new forms of narrating the history of the Holocaust or digitally remediated forms of Holocaust commemoration are emerging amongst individuals and groups who do not work within the realm of large memorial sites, museums, and archives.

Such "private" representations have become especially popular following the boom of so-called Social Media. The use of the Internet and Social Media demonstrates – also within the context of the Holocaust – that new structures of decision-making

have arisen in society that exceed the potential of traditional mass media, alongside new public forms and forums that work differently, disseminate content differently, activate people differently, and thereby not only generate a passive reception, but on the contrary, live from the broad participation of the public. Thus, the planned international conference will focus on digital space as an abstract and unlimited archive for the mediation of the Holocaust.

See details about the conference program on this website: <https://www.uibk.ac.at/zeitgeschichte/connectedhistories2022/index.html.en>





# BERGEN-BELSEN INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL 2022

As a part of the „Houses of Darkness. Images of a contested European Memory“ (HICE) project, Bergen-Belsen Memorial will host a digital summer school programme from July 18 - July 2022 (with an introductory session on July 8) via Zoom.

We aim to gather international graduate & PhD students and young professionals. Building on our long-standing experience with student groups in different settings, we are convinced that we benefit from working with people from different professional and cultural backgrounds.

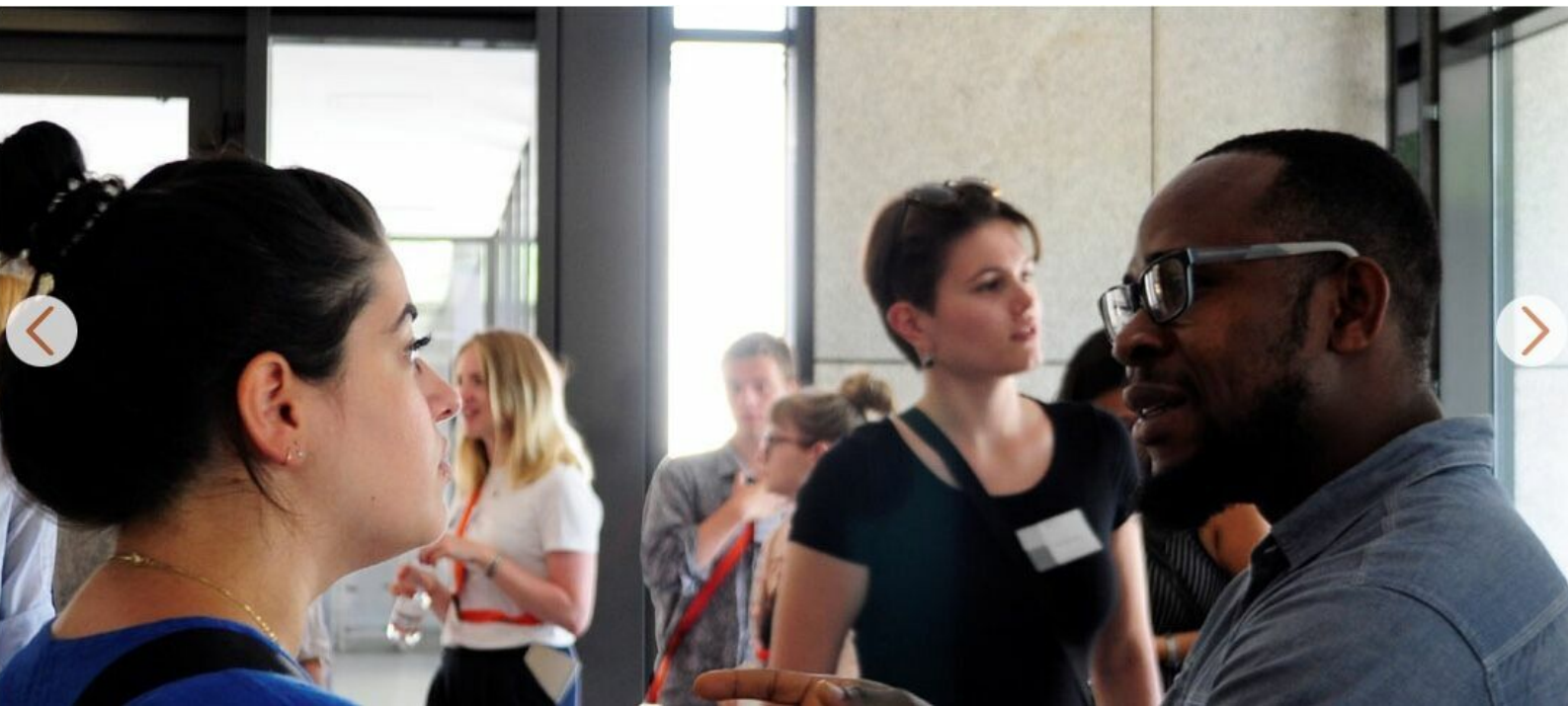
Topics include but are not limited to:

- Individual responsibility and leeway
- Motivation and dynamics of perpetration
- Reception and perception of perpetrator accounts
- Atrocity images and the perpetrator gaze
- (Transitional) justice

The working language of the Bergen-Belsen International Summer School is English. The participants' language skills must be sufficient to enable them to understand the preparatory texts, follow the sessions and actively participate in the discussions. Sessions will be hosted in CEST (UTC +2). We will try to find times that are suitable across all time zones, but a certain flexibility is required.

The programme will be hosted on Zoom. Additionally, we will be using an online messaging platform and project management tools for small assignments





and workshops. Participation requires internet accessibility and a workspace with suitable hardware (at least Windows 7/Mac OS X 10.10). Additional use of mobile devices is encouraged.

To apply for this year's Summer School, we ask you to submit a video statement (max. 90 seconds) in which you tell us about yourselves, your expectations of the programme's topic and what you could

contribute. No creative limits are set on how you present your statement, but it should be in English.

You can submit your application by filling out this form. Registration will close on May 15, 2022.

For more information, visit [this website](#).



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