The Arolsen Archives: organization, history and projects
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The Arolsen Archives
About the Arolsen Archives

• International center on Nazi persecution located in Germany
• The world’s most comprehensive archive on the victims and survivors of National Socialism
• An important and unique source of knowledge
• About half a million users worldwide
»This is my father’s only memorial. There are no others, not even a marked grave with his remains in a cemetery.«

Thomas Buergenthal, Survivor
History of the Institution

Spring 1945:
Millions of victims of Nazi persecution were missing or on the run after the end of war.

Survivors of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, April 1945

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Hadassah Bimko Rosensaft
The International Tracing Service (ITS) was established by the Allies in 1948 as a central search and information center.
Tracing and documenting Nazi victims were the main tasks of the institution for decades. In 2019, its name was changed to Arolsen Archives.
17.5 Million Names – Documents of the Arolsen Archives

- Concentration Camp Inmates
- Forced Laborers and POWs
- Displaced Persons
- Tracing
More than 12 Million documents from Concentration Camps and Prisons
More than 8 Million documents concerning forced labour
Over 2 million documents concerning DPs as well as over 3 million tracing and documentation request
»May these archives, that will help to furnish relief for the victims and their families, serve as a warning to future generations that never again must such horror afflict humanity.«

Quote from the “deed of purpose” in three languages, embedded on 20 August 1952 in one of the walls of the main building of the ITS at the topping-out ceremony.
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Mission and Goals
Vision: “Everyone matters.”

Mission: “Based on our unique collection on the victims of Nazi persecution, we honor their legacy by engaging with today’s society to preserve historical truth and stand up for respect, diversity, and democracy.”
Positioning Statement of the International Commission

The organization is a leading international center on Nazi persecution

... for professionals, relatives and audiences interested in the subject ... because the UNESCO-protected archives are a unique source of knowledge for our current society
Access
Our Online Archive

27 million documents published

26 million names searchable

0.9 million users in 2020
»I am still thrilled and moved by the documentation that I have found in just a few minutes... I feel that the direct approach to the online archive gives us, the children and grandchildren of the survivors, an unprecedented path to what was left of their lives... It’s a telescope pointed 3,000 miles and 75 years away, and it’s so important that we look through it.«

Assaf Elrom, attorney, New York
Visibility
#StolenMemory

Engelmar Unzeitig

Father Engelmar Unzeitig, who had been christened Hubert Unzeitig at birth, died of lues in Dachau concentration camp in 1945. Engelmar was born in 1920 in Thuringia. He received the Eva-Bettina medal in recognition of his good work in the Resistance. Two medals are among the few hundred personal effects that survived from that camp. The Nazis had arrested the clerk in April 1944 for opening mail in the following June. The prosecution did not accept that the religious order of the Meinland missionaries of Würzburg received the father's personal belongings.

Neonella Doboitschina

We are leaving for Bratislava. Madam, how do you feel? - I am fine, thank you. I am really enjoying the journey. Do not worry about your health. We are leaving for Bratislava. Madam, how do you feel? - I am fine, thank you. I am really enjoying the journey. Do not worry about your health. We are leaving for Bratislava. Madam, how do you feel? - I am fine, thank you. I am really enjoying the journey. Do not worry about your health. We are leaving for Bratislava. Madam, how do you feel? - I am fine, thank you. I am really enjoying the journey. Do not worry about your health.
#StolenMemory Ready-to-Print-Exhibitions

- Since 2018: 12 exhibitions have been shown in 8 countries
- Exhibitions in 2021: among others at Auschwitz Memorial, Memorial Moscow, Sevilla, Murcia
- Online exhibition developed in partnership with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
#StolenMemory - Traveling Exhibition

- In 2021 two exhibition containers will be on the road in Germany and next year in neighboring countries
- Focus on returning the personal items of victims of the Nazis to their families
- Animated films and web stories on https://stolenmemory.org/
- Educational materials support the work of teachers
#everynamecounts

The Arolsen Archives are building a digital monument to the victims of Nazi persecution with the help of thousands of volunteers who are digitizing their names and their life stories.

Now and for future generations.
#everynamecounts – Building a digital monument

• Remembering the victims of National Socialism is important. Because their stories show us what discrimination, racism and antisemitism lead to.

• The motives for persecution enforced by the Nazis are still prevalent. We hope that many tens of thousands of people from all over the world will join #everynamecounts and take a stand – for respect, diversity, and solidarity.
#everynamecounts – Crowdsourcing project

Anyone can help to enter data from the scanned documents
»Every name is a pebble to make a memorial. Every name deserves a kind, sorrowful thought.«

A quote from one of our volunteers
4 steps, 5 minutes
Let’s get started!

1. **Open**
   - Use this link to open the #everynamecounts project page: aroa.to/joinin

2. **Classify**
   - Click Classify or choose documents to work on under Get started

3. **Inform**
   - Read the helpful hints for working with our archival documents or use the digital introduction

4. **Get started!**
   - You’re ready to go!
Milestones of #everynamecounts (as of February 2021)

17.300 Registered volunteers

3.5 Million documents have already been indexed

91,000 Messages have been exchanged within the community
#everyynamcounts – media installation
Arolsen Archives

International Center on Nazi Persecution