

**RETURNING MEMORIES
STOLEN FROM NAZI VICTIMS**

An International Tracing Service (ITS) Campaign

#StolenMemory

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Mementoes of Nazi Victims

In the archive of the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Germany, there are nearly 3,000 “effects” from concentration camps: pocket watches and wristwatches, rings, wallets, family photos, everyday items such as combs, powder tins or razors, etc. Often they were the last remaining belongings of the victims of Nazi persecution, the things they had with them at the time of their arrest by the National Socialists.

The objects belonged to people from more than 30 countries – many of them from Poland and the former Soviet Union. In 2016, the ITS launched a campaign to return these stolen memories to as many families as possible. The exhibition tells what it means to people to hold these mementoes in their hands – and shows objects whose rightful owners the ITS has yet to find.



Maria Nanmova

The ITS is looking for relatives of Maria Nanmova. A Russian, she was born on November 7, 1923 or 1925. Both dates appear on documents in the ITS archive. We have only a rough idea of the young forced laborer's fate. The Gestapo deported Maria to the Ravensbrück women's concentration camp on May 17, 1944. Her

inmate number was 38639, and like the majority of foreign inmates, her category of imprisonment was “political”. She arrived at the Neuengamme concentration camp on August 31, 1944. That is the last we know of Maria Nanmova. The surviving photos and the jewelry open a small window onto her life.



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Arrested and Robbed

“Effects” is an old word for luggage. Later it came to mean the personal objects taken from prisoners and returned to them upon their release. The concentration camps also had “effects depots.” In camps located within the so-called “Old Reich,” the Nazis kept up a pretense of law and order by storing the personal belongings under the names of the inmates – until

their murder. In the extermination camps in the East, on the other hand, the perpetrators merely collected the Jewish victims’ property and disposed of it immediately. The Nazis turned their spoils from the concentration and extermination camps into cash. The proceeds filled the regime’s war chest.



Tadeusz Markowski

The ITS is looking for relatives of Tadeusz Markowski, who was born in Aleksandrów Kujawski, Poland on April 10, 1914. He worked as a driver and supported his mother Antonina after being forcibly relocated to the General Government. In addition to several family photos, his personal belongings include documents on

monthly money transfers to her. The Nazis deported Markowski to the Neuengamme concentration camp on October 10, 1944. There he survived for little more than two months. “Extermination through labor” was a brutal principle by which the Nazi regime committed murder in the concentration camps and subcamps.

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Jewish Victims

The majority of the “effects” in the ITS holdings once belonged to victims of political persecution and imprisoned forced laborers. The few envelopes containing personal possessions of Jewish inmates of Neuengamme are worthy of special mention. In the extermination camps set up to carry out the mass murder of the Jews, the Nazis sold off their victims’ property immediately. It

was only in the concentration camps in the “Old Reich” that they registered and stored the items they confiscated from inmates. The mementoes shown here belonged primarily to Hungarian Jews. In 1944 the SS had deported them, presumably from the Budapest Ghetto to Neuengamme by way of other camps to perform forced labor.



Ernö Gottlieb

The ITS is looking for relatives of Ernö Gottlieb from Klenovec. At the time of his birth on June 21, 1897, the village belonged to Hungary, from 1918 onwards to Czechoslovakia. In November 1944, the Nazis deported the accountant from Budapest to the Neuengamme subcamp in Wilhelmshaven, a German Navy shipyard.

Tens of thousands of Budapest Jews escaped the gas chambers of the extermination camps. The Nazis nevertheless murdered many of them – including Ernö Gottlieb – by subjecting them to the inhumane conditions of forced labor. The date of his death is known from documents issued by the Nazi bureaucracy: March 25, 1945.



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Finding the Owners

Compensation offices in Germany attempted to return the personal objects after 1945. In 1963 the ITS took responsibility for the nearly 5,000 remaining envelopes and resumed the search, often with the help of national Red Cross associations. But after 1974 very few objects were returned each year. With the means available at the time and the ongoing East-West conflict, it seemed futile to continue the active search.

In 2015 the ITS published photos of the personal objects in its new online archive. The number of returned objects rose immediately, thanks in part to the support of volunteers from various countries. The ITS launched its #Stolen-Memory campaign in 2016 and began actively searching once again. Since then around 200 families have had their relatives' "effects" returned to them – along with their memories of the victims of Nazi persecution.



Rudy de Wijs

Gerald t'Sas never could have imagined receiving his uncle's diary: "The photo gave my uncle a face. And the notes give him his identity back." The Nazis arrested the twenty-one-year-old Rudy de Wijs on August 18, 1944. His family never knew what happened to him; he simply disappeared one day. He

died in a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp on November 7, 1944. The photo in the notebook had come to the attention of a Dutch journalist in the ITS online archive. It took extensive research, but she finally found out who he was.

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Found in 1945

Shortly before the liberation by the Allies, the SS cleared the concentration camps, sent the inmates on death marches, and set fire to records as well as the victims' belongings to cover the traces of the mass murder they had committed. The largest surviving collection of personal property comes from the Neuengamme concentration camp. As the Allies approached, the camp

commandant had the belongings and clothing of some 5,000 inmates removed from the grounds. British soldiers found the "effects" in Lunden in Schleswig-Holstein. Personal objects from the Bergen-Belsen and Dachau concentration camps also survived, albeit in much smaller numbers.



Nathan van Dam

"These objects give me access to my father's history," commented Arnold van Dam when he retrieved the wallet containing photos and documents at the Amersfoort Memorial. The Gestapo had arrested the Jewish family in early 1943 and committed Nathan van Dam to the Amersfoort police transit camp with inmate number 2795.

The following year they deported him to the Neuengamme concentration camp. He survived; his wife was killed in the Sobibor extermination camp. Since 2007, volunteers of the "Stichting Oktober 44" initiative have found many families of Dutch victims of Nazi persecution, making it possible to return a number of stolen memories.

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#StolenMemory – ready to print

Join the #StolenMemory campaign by staging your own exhibition!

- _ We give you access to a high-quality exhibition.
- _ We help you produce your own individual exhibition for presentation indoors or outdoors.
- _ You can choose individual #StolenMemory posters.

- _ You need space for a minimum of 29 posters (Required wall space: about 70 running meters, with a poster size of 1.50 x 1.20 meters).
- _ We help you prepare the texts in two languages (English and a language of your choice).



Iwan Krywiak

Daniel Krywiak of Canada contacted the Neuengamme concentration camp memorial in search of information about his father's fate. The staff there informed him that Iwan's watch was in the ITS archive.

Iwan Krywiak of Poland was thirty-six years old when the Nazis assigned him to forced labor in the construction of a defensive wall in the Neuengamme concentration camp.

In the Husum-Schwesing subcamp, the SS murdered a large number of concentration camp inmates within a short time by subjecting them to undernourishment, abuse and extremely heavy labor. Iwan died on December 15, 1944. Seventy-two years later, the ITS sent his watch to his son.

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An ITS Campaign

The International Tracing Service (ITS) is an international center on Nazi persecution. Its unique archive contains documents about several million victims of National Socialism. Yet it also holds post-war Allied records about the fates of the deportees and survivors of the camps, ghettos and prisons. Every year, more than 16,000 persons inquire with the ITS in search of infor-

mation about individual fates, and about the Nazi era and its aftermath. In 2013, the original documents in the archive were awarded the status of UNESCO "Memory of the World." The ITS, which actively supports research, education, awareness-raising and commemoration efforts, is in the process of making these documents accessible online. www.its-arolsen.org



Kazimierz Biel

The ITS is looking for relatives of Kazimierz Biel of Cracow, born on September 18, 1921. The trained engraver was twenty years old when the Germans arrested him. On April 25, 1941, the Nazis deported him to the Neuengamme concentration camp. He died in the bombing of the "Cap Arcona" on May 3, 1945. The majority of docu-

ments about Biel in the ITS archive relate to his late burial in the Haffkrug Cemetery in October 1950. In an effort to give the "Cap Arcona" victims their names back, Allied search teams exhumed the dead from mass graves. On one corpse they found an identification tag bearing Biel's inmate's number 5074.



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Join the Campaign!

Please join the community and help us return the mementoes stolen by the Nazis to their rightful owners. Time is of the essence. Visit our website to see photos of the personal belongings and the names of victims

of Nazi persecution. You can use the information there to conduct research and share important clues with us.

www.stolenmemory.org



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