

Press release

Card index on Jewish victims of Nazi persecution now online

Bad Arolsen, March 8, 2017 – The International Tracing Service (ITS) has published two further resources in its online archive. They include the card index of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany and material on death marches from concentration camps.

What is left of the card index of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany (Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland) comprises 32,264 registration cards, primarily those of Jewish school pupils, emigrants and deceased persons. Now interested persons all over the world have access to these cards. The ITS has moreover placed an additional 15,000 documents pertaining to the death marches online, thus supplementing the first group of documents on that subject published on its internet portal last year. “We chose two sets of documents that, while they are small, are of especial interest to the public. They conclude the successful test phase of the online archive,” ITS director Floriane Hohenberg explained. “More extensive holdings will follow, with which we aim to make documents on deportations, the Holocaust and forced labor available to people all over the world.”

The archive of the ITS in Bad Arolsen is one of the largest collections of documents on Nazi persecution and the aftermath of those crimes. In order to provide as many interested persons as possible access to this material, which holds the status of UNESCO world documentary heritage, the ITS set up an online archive in 2015. It offers direct access to the documents along with descriptions of the various holdings. The work of indexing the archives goes hand in hand with the continual expansion of the portal. With the new online placement a central search function has been expanded, allowing comprehensive research on names of people and places throughout the available collections. The ITS has placed a total of some 170,000 images (80,000 documents) in its Online-Archive.

A card index full of stories about Jewish victims of persecution

Only a small proportion of the card index of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany has come down to us. In addition to names, the cards contain such information as dates of birth, professions, and addresses from the period before the mass deportations of the Jewish population, which began in 1941. Hermann Göring ordered the founding of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany in 1939. All persons classified as Jews according to the Nuremberg Laws were obligated to register. The card index aided the Gestapo in organizing the deportations. Between 1947 and 1950, 32,264 cards from this index made their way into the ITS

archive. They include, for example, the “Berlin school pupils index” testifying to the lives of Jewish children during persecution and containing biographical data on the children themselves and their parents as well as information on the schools they attended.

Before publishing the card index of the Reich Association of Jews in Germany in its online portal, the ITS carried out a pilot project to prepare the cards for use for research purposes.

Documents on the death marches

In the late 1940s, the ITS undertook to reconstruct the death marches and compile eye-witness reports as well as maps showing the locations of graves. In 1950, the so-called “Identification Unit” was founded with the goal of giving the often unknown dead their names back. The documents on the frequently successful efforts to identify the victims of National Socialism now supplement the holdings on the death marches in the ITS’s online archive.

In the online archive of the ITS, the death marches are shown on a map with georeferenced documents. When users click the name of a town or village, the documents related to that place appear on the screen, for example the answers to questionnaires that were sent to the communities or – recently added – the material on the identification program.

Link to the online archive: digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org

About the ITS

The International Tracing Service (ITS) is an archive and a center for documenting National Socialist persecution and the liberated survivors. Out of the more than 30 million documents, former victims of Nazism and their families receive information regarding their incarceration, forced labor, and postwar allied assistance. The documents in the ITS archives provide the basis for research and education. In continuing to fulfill these responsibilities, the ITS is part of an international cooperation with memorial sites, archives and research institutes.

The ITS commemorates and memorializes the victims of the Nazi crimes. As of 2013 the original documents in the ITS archives are included on the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Registry.

The ITS is governed by representatives from 11 member states: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, USA. The German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media funds the ITS. The German Federal Archives is the institutional partner of the ITS.

Specially chosen collections are accessible in the Online Archive: digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org

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