"Our duty to present and future generations"

Victims' Efforts to Document the Nazi Atrocities

Martínez , Victoria Van Orden

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80 YEARS SINCE THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

Förintelsen som europeiskt minne

80 ÅR SEDAN BEFRIELSEN AV AUSCHWITZ

NORAH 1

FÖRINTELSEN SOM EUROPEISKT MINNE

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THE HOLOCAUST AS EUROPEAN MEMORY

Förintelsen som europeiskt minne

80 år sedan befrielsen
av Auschwitz

Ulf Zander (red.)

NORAH:s skriftserie
volym 1

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The Holocaust as European Memory

80 YEARS SINCE THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

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Omslagsbilden med två okända kvinnor tecknades av den polska konstnären Jadwiga Simon-Pietkiewicz (1909–55). Hon arresterades av tyskarna 1941 och sattes i fängelse varefter hon förflyttades till koncentrationslägret Ravensbrück. Hon fördes till Sverige i andra världskrigets slutskede. Teckningen är daterad 8 augusti 1944 och ingår i Polska källinstitutet i Lunds arkiv vid Lunds universitetsbibliotek.

The cover image with two unknown women was drawn by the Polish artist Jadwiga Simon-Pietkiewicz (1909–55). She was arrested by the Germans in 1941 and put in prison, after which she was transferred to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. She was brought to Sweden in the final stages of the Second World War. The drawing is dated 8 August 1944 and is part of The Polish Research Institute in Lund archive at Lund University Library.

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Innehåll

"Our duty to present and future generations"

VICTIMS' EFFORTS TO DOCUMENT THE NAZI ATROCITIES

Victoria Van Orden Martínez

Researcher at the Department of History at Lund University

As Allied troops closed in on Nazi extermination, concentration, and labor camps in 1944 and 1945, the SS attempted to destroy evidence of their crimes, including documents that detailed the bureaucratic evidence of genocide. In the spring of 1944, as the Soviet army marched toward the Majdanek concentration camp in Lublin, Poland, "the order was given first to dismantle the camp barracks and then to destroy evidence of crimes, such as the gas chamber and documents."[1] Likewise, in late October 1845, the "systematic destruction of the evidence of mass murder" began at Auschwitz-Birkenau. "All trace of the documents, as all trace of the corpses, was to be obliterated."[2] Fortunately, these efforts were only partially successful, and not only because there was not sufficient time to complete the task.

During and after the war, Jews and other victims documented the crimes against them in diverse ways. In ghettos, camps, exile, and hiding during the war, victims risked their lives to paint, draw, photograph, and write about what was happening, gain access to official SS and other documents and smuggle them out of the camps, and pass on information to underground groups, governments in exile, and international authorities.[3] Thanks in part to these efforts, valuable evidence of the Nazi atrocities was saved that contributed to history and justice in ways that are still not fully realized and researched. Evidence created, collected, and given by victims played an essential role in postwar war crimes trials, such as the Nuremberg trials, and in communicating to the world the

unfathomable realities of Nazi persecution and genocide.[4] Moreover, as historian Laura Jockusch has shown, through individual and collective efforts, "the documentation initiatives stockpiled extensive archival collections that formed the basis for the major Holocaust archives, museums, and research facilities in Europe and Israel that have provided an institutional structure for subsequent research."[5] Lund University has an incredible archive of documentation and materiality created, collected, and preserved thanks to the efforts of the Nazis' victims who came to Sweden as repatriates in 1945. The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to this important evidence of the Nazi atrocities in Lund and highlight a few examples of this invaluable material that contribute to memory and understanding of the Holocaust in honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2025, the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Evidence of the Nazi Atrocities in Lund

In the spring and summer of 1945, the Swedish public came face to face with the horrors of the Nazi atrocities when around 30,000 survivors of Nazi persecution – around one-third of whom were Jewish – were brought to Sweden via two "rescue and relief" operations, both popularly referred to by the mode of transport: the White Buses, organized by the Swedish Red Cross, and the White Boats, conducted in coordination with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Between March and early May, the White Buses mission evacuated as many as 21,000 prisoners from still-functioning Nazi concentration camps and brought them across the Oresund strait by ferries to Malmö. The White Boats carried nearly 10,000 extremely ill displaced persons from Lübeck in Germany to various Swedish ports during July 1945, including Malmö.[6] On arrival in Sweden, they were initially placed in either hospitals or reception centers where they were subject to a mandatory quarantine period before ultimately being transferred to various facilities arranged to receive them, mostly in the south of Sweden. In Lund, six large buildings used as quarantine facilities as well as field hospitals and spaces allocated in other buildings accommodated around 2,700 of the former prisoners who arrived in the spring.[7] The intention was that these so-called "repatriates" would stay in the country long enough to recover their health and then return to their homes or migrate elsewhere.

After Scandinavians, the second largest group of liberated prisoners brought to Sweden in mid-1945 were Poles, who numbered around 13,000, of whom between 4,000 and 7,000 were Jewish. Dr. Zygmunt Łakociński, a Polish academic working as a foreign language assistant at Lund University, began working as an interpreter for the many Polish survivors. Recognizing that the former prisoners' belongings were being burned for sanitation purposes and that many important objects and much potential evidence were being destroyed as a result, Łakociński intervened with the local authorities and managed to have the practice stopped.[8] Recognizing the importance of this material as objects of memory and evidence of the Nazi's crimes, Łakociński began collecting these items. Soon, he was being helped by around forty Jewish and non-Jewish female Polish survivors who, even while still in quarantine camps, gathered artifacts and testimonies from other survivors as part of volunteer documentation commissions. At the same time, they and other women coordinated with Łakociński to establish a formal working group to conduct detailed interviews with Jewish and non-Jewish former prisoners and continue gathering materials brought from the camps that could serve as evidence in postwar war crimes trials. Łakociński's wife, Carola von Gegerfeldt, helped gain the support of Swedish historian Sture Bolin at Lund University, which contributed to the group known today as The Polish Research Institute in Lund receive funding from the Swedish government between October 1945 and November 1946.[9] Seven women and two men – all Polish survivors of Nazi persecution, only one of whom, Luba Melchior, was Jewish – were formally employed to conduct this and other work, although many other survivors were involved in a variety of ways.[10] Perhaps the most well-known aspect of their work is the collection of 512 witness testimonies given by Jewish and non-Jewish Polish survivors of Nazi persecution who came to Sweden. The testimonies were the result of interviews and correspondence between the survivor-employees of the institutes and other Jewish and non-Jewish Polish survivors. Among the 512 so-called "complete" witness testimonies in the PIZ collection, 61 were given by Jewish former prisoners.[11]

After government funding for the institute ended at the end of November 1946, most of the repatriates involved moved on with their lives, some in Sweden. By 1949, only one former institute employee, non-Jewish Polish survivor Ludwika Broel-Plater, and Zygmunt Łakociński

were left to continue the work of PIZ. Concerns over the safety of the collected material led to the decision to transfer the witness testimonies to the United States for safekeeping. The rest of the collection contained material only marginally less vulnerable, including transport lists, maps of concentration camps, lists of names of the murdered, information about the Ravensbrück 'Rabbits' (women subjected to Nazi medical experiments), and poetry, art, and handmade objects made in the concentration camps. Broel-Plater, who became a Swedish citizen in 1957, safeguarded this material in her apartment until 1964, when it was placed in the Lund University Library. Subsequently, many of the objects in the Polish Research Institute collection were loaned to the local history museum *Kulturen* in Lund, where they were displayed for the first time in 1966 in a temporary exhibition.[12] Soon after Broel-Plater's death, the testimonies that had been sent in the United States were returned to Sweden, reuniting the entire collection in Sweden.

The material held at both the Lund University Library and *Kulturen* lay dormant until the 1990s, when an awakening of Holocaust memory occurred in Sweden and elsewhere in the world that contributed to activating the documents and objects. While scholars began working with the witness testimonies at the Lund University Library, Kulturen presented the objects in several temporary exhibitions and, ultimately, a permanent exhibition, *Att överleva – Röster från Ravensbrück* (To survive – Voices from Ravensbrück), which opened in 2005. The examples of documentation presented in this paper are all connected with the Polish Research Institute in Lund and the archives and collections associated with it; primarily here at Lund University and at the local museum *Kulturen* in Lund.

Art as Testimony

"In January 1945 came a transport of Hungarian Jewish women who had been herded on foot from Hungary to Ravensbrück," wrote Polish artist Jadwiga Simon-Pietkiewicz in February 1946. "They arrived in a state of utter exhaustion. Many had frostbitten hands and feet; gangrene set in and limbs had to be amputated. Many women died. Many were driven to the chimney for having amputated legs."[13] Simon-Pietkiewicz (1909–1955), a political prisoner of the Ravensbrück concentration camp, was an eyewitness to these women's suffering and deaths while confined in

the infirmary. But her witness testimony, given in Sweden after the war – which is in the Polish Research Institute collection at the Lund University Library – is only one form of testimony she left behind. Beginning with her arrest by the Gestapo in February 1941 for clandestine resistance activities and imprisonment, first in Pawiak Prison in Warsaw and then in the Ravensbrück concentration camp, Simon-Pietkiewicz drew and painted her fellow prisoners.[14]

In Nazi concentration camps, prisoners could simultaneously resist dehumanization and create testimony to the suffering of the victims by painting and drawing what was happening around them. Although it put both the artists and their subjects at risk of severe punishment and even death, the creation of art provided the artists with a creative and mental escape from the terrible circumstances of their imprisonment and the subjects some small hope that they and their suffering might not be forgotten. To artists and subjects alike, the artworks were understood as testimony, and in the creation of that testimony to their suffering, there was a sense of moral and historical responsibility, as well as of agency.[15] Through this "illegal" activity, Simon-Pietkiewicz created a record of life and death through hundreds of works of art that were smuggled out of Pawiak and Ravensbrück, including to Sweden. Polish literary scholar Barbara Czarnecka estimates that over 300 of Simon-Pietkiewicz's paintings and drawings of her fellow prisoners are held in Swedish and Polish collections, including at Lund University and at *Kulturen*.[16] At least two of the works Simon-Pietkiewicz carried with her to Sweden depict Hungarian Jewish women such as those she describes in her witness testimony. The watercolor titled "Hungarian Jewish Woman 'Chinese'," dated February 18, 1945, and painted the Ravensbrück infirmary, is now in the collection of the Malmö Art Museum in Sweden.[17] Although the name of the woman is not clear, contemporary sources tell us that she studied medicine in Hungary and ultimately died in Ravensbrück.[18] Another watercolor titled "Sick Hungarian Jewish Woman" appeared in the Swedish newspaper Expressen in December 1945, which explained that the woman died, presumably in Ravensbrück, when she was 16 years old.[19] These artworks are a testimony to the life and death of these women which would otherwise have gone unrecorded. Both were among the dozens of watercolors and pencil sketches displayed in Lund as early as June 1, 1945 – just one month after Simon-Pietkiewicz came to Sweden as a liberated concentration camp prisoner. Further exhibitions

Figure 1: Pencil drawing depicting Janina Piątek, made by Jadwiga Simon-Pietkiewicz in the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Dated 27 November 1944. The Polish Research Institute Collection, Volume 42:e, Lund University Library (copyright free image).

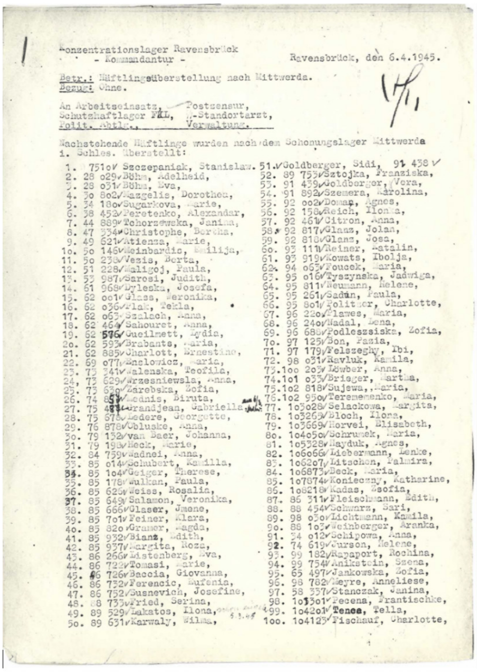
in Sweden, Denmark, and Poland – up to and including the present day – have been integral to enabling the public to bear witness not only to human suffering but also to victims' active resistance to dehumanization in the camps.[20]

Several of Jadwiga Simon-Pietkiewicz's artistic testimonies are held in the Polish Research Institute collection at Lund University Library and are available digitally on the Witnessing Genocide portal, where they can be studied and analyzed alongside the witness testimonies, which address many of the themes depicted in the artworks. On exhibit at *Kulturen* in Lund are Simon-Pietkiewicz's watercolor paints and a paintbrush "made from a stolen shaving brush, attached to a piece of twisted sheet," that she used in Ravensbrück, and which testify to the ingenuity of victims of the Nazis in their quest to document the atrocities as they were happening.[21]

Stolen Evidence

"There is an original document, dated April 6, 1945, which is one of the departure lists for the mythical camp called Mittwerda – perhaps the last such list, but in any case, the only one which, to my knowledge, remains intact. It includes 480 names," explained French survivor of the Ravensbrück concentration camp Germaine Tillion in her 1973 book titled *Ravensbrück*. "The identical meaning of 'Mittwerda' and 'gas chamber' had been obvious from the first to the prisoners who had the responsibility of maintaining the Mittwerda lists, since they recorded the names and numbers of the victims as they were taken away."[22] The existence of this singular document showing the names of individuals sent to the gas chamber, known as the Mittwerda list, is thanks to Polish political prisoner Halina Strzelecka (1907–1968), who was one the repatriates involved in the early collection work in Sweden and later became one of the nine survivor employees of the Polish Research Institute. In her 1945 witness statement in the Polish Research Institute collection, Strzelecka declares, "I took this letter from files in a drawer belonging to SS-Oberscharführer Heintz [sic, Hans] Pflaum. This list is one of many lists under which transports went to the gas chamber and which vanished without a trace."[23] Having risked her life to take the list, Strzelecka brought it with her to Sweden when she arrived there as a repatriate in May 1945. She allowed the group to make a photocopy of the list, thus adding a key piece of evidence to the Polish Research Institute collection.[24]

Perhaps the most important function this copy of the Mittwerda list served was helping to convict Ravensbrück commandant Fritz Suhren, who signed the list. Initially arrested by the British army in 1945, Suhren escaped in November 1946, just before he was to be put on trial as part of the Hamburg Ravensbrück trials, 1946–1948. In 1949, he was arrested in Bavaria by United States soldiers and transferred to French jurisdiction for prosecution. Under interrogation, Suhren denied that he was involved in the murder of prisoners in the gas chamber, a claim the Mittwerda list directly contradicted. It was therefore an essential document to convict Suhren. The problem was that the French prosecutors did not have a copy and could not get one through the usual "hierarchical channel" in time for the trial. Consequently, the French Examining Magistrate asked Germain Tillion to obtain a copy through her own channels. Aware that a copy of the list was held by the Polish Research Institute in Sweden, Tillion contacted former institute employees she had known in



Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück
- Kommandantur -

Ravensbrück, den 6.4.1945.

Betr.: Häftlingsüberstellung nach Mittwerda.
Bezug: Ohne.

An Arbeitseinsatz, Postzensur,
Schutzhaftlager FKL, SS-Standortarzt,
Polit. Abtlg., Verwaltung.

Nachstehende Häftlinge wurden nach dem Schonungslager Mittwerda i. Schles. überstellt:

1. 7510 Szczepaniak, Stanislaw.
2. 28 029 Böhm, Adelheid,
3. 28 031 Böhm, Eva,
4. 30 802 Mazgelis, Dorothea,
5. 34 180 Sugarkova, Marie,
6. 38 452 Peretenko, Alexandar,
7. 44 889 Tchorzewska, Janina,
8. 47 334 Christophe, Bertha,
9. 49 621 Atienza, Marie,
10. 50 146 Meinbardic, Emilija,
11. 50 238 Vezis, Berta,
12. 51 228 Maligoj, Paula,
13. 53 987 Sarosi, Judith,
14. 61 968 Dyleska, Josefa,
15. 62 001 Glass, Veronika,
16. 62 036 Plak, Tekla,
17. 62 063 Szalach, Anna,
18. 62 464 Sahouret, Anna,
19. 62 576 Gueilmett, Lydia,
20. 62 593 Brabants, Maria,
21. 62 885 Charlott, Ernestine,
22. 69 077 Enslowicz, Maria,
23. 73 341 Walenska, Teofila,
24, 73 629 Wrzesniewsla, Anna,
25. 73 630 Zarebska, Zofia,
26. 74 857 Mednis, Biruta,
27. 75 483 Grandjean, Gabriella,
28. 75 678 Ledere, Georgette,
29. 76 878 Obluske, Anna,
30. 79 132 van Baer, Johanna,
31. 79 198 Heck, Marie,
32. 84 759 Wadnei, Anna,
33. 85 014 Schubert, Kamilla,
34. 85 104 Geiger, Therese,
35. 85 178 Wulkan, Paula,
36. 85 626 Weiss, Rosalia,
37. 85 649 Salamon, Veronika,
38. 85 666 Glaser, Jmene,
39. 85 701 Feiner, Klara,
40. 85 820 Gramer, Magda,
41. 85 932 Bianz, Edith,
42. 85 937 Margita, Roza,
43. 86 266 Listenberg, Eva,
44. 86 722 Tomasi, Marie,
45. 86 726 Baccia, Giovanna,
46. 86 732 Ferencic, Eufenia,
47. 86 752 Susnevich, Josefine,
48. 88 733 Fried, Serina,
49. 89 529 Lakatos, Ilona,
50. 89 631 Karwaly, Wilma,
51. Goldberger, Sidi, 91 438
52. 89 753 Sztojka, Franziska,
53. 91 439 Goldberger, Vera,
54. 91 892 Szemera, Karolina,
55. 92 002 Domap, Agnes,
56. 92 158 Reich, Ilonka,
57. 92 461 Citron, Anna,
58. 92 817 Glanz, Jolan,
59. 92 818 Glanz, Josa,
60. 93 111 Reiner, Katalin,
61. 93 919 Kowats, Ibolja,
62. 94 063 Foucek, Maria,
63. 95 016 Tyszynska, Jadwiga,
64. 95 811 Neumann, Helene,
65. 95 261 Sadun, Paula,
66. 95 801 Politzer, Charlotte,
67. 96 220 Plawes, Maria,
68. 96 240 Nadal, Lena,
69. 96 688 Podleszsiska, Zofia,
70. 97 125 Bon, Pazia,
71. 97 179 Felszeghy, Ibi,
72. 98 031 Ravluk, Kamila,
73. 100 203 Löwber, Anna,
74. 101 033 Brieger, Martha,
75. 102 818 Sujewa, Maria,
76. 102 950 Terememenko, Maria,
77. 103028 Selackowa, Margita,
78. 103265 Bloch, Ilona,
79. 103669 Horvei, Elisabeth,
80. 104050 Schrumek, Maria,
81. 105328 Hayduk, Agnes,
82. 106066 Liebermann, Lenke,
83. 106207 Litschon, Palmira,
84. 106873 Beck, Maria,
85. 107874 Konieczny, Katharine,
86. 108218 Kadas, Zsofia,
87. 86 311 Fleischmann, Edith,
88. 88 454 Schwarz, Sari,
89. 98 030 Lichtmann, Kamila,
90. 88 103 Weinberger, Aranka,
91. 34 012 Schipowa, Anna,
92. 74 619 Jurson, Helene,
93. 99 182 Rapaport, Rochina,
94. 99 754 Anikstein, Szena,
95. 65 497 Jankowska, Zofia,
96. 98 782 Meyre, Anneliese,
97. 58 337 Stanczak, Janina,
98. 103301 Pecena, Frantischke,
99. 104201 Tenea, Tella,
100. 104123 Fischauf, Charlotte,

Figure 2: Image of one of the photocopies of the original list of prisoners sent from Ravensbrück CC to death camp "Mittwerda," dated April 6, 1945. In the collection of the Polish Research Institute in Lund, Volume 30. Courtesy Lund University Library.

Ravensbrück, non-Jewish Polish survivor Helena Dziedzicka and Ludwika Broel-Plater in late 1949. "The Mittwerda list is of great importance because it is an irrefutable document proving SUHREN's responsibility for the extermination of the camp," Tillion wrote to Broel-Plater.[25] Broel-Plater fulfilled Tillion's request in time for the list to be used as evidence in Suhren's trial, which ended with a guilty verdict.[26] Had it not been for Halina Strzelecka's courageous act of "stealing" this list and smuggling it out of Ravensbrück, this might not have been possible.

Clandestine Communication

While the Mittwerda list is a rather conventional piece of evidence, the same cannot be said of an otherwise normal-looking envelope in the Polish Research Institute collection. Dated May 6, 1943, the envelope contains a secret message written in urine as a form of invisible ink.[27] It was written by Janina Iwańska (1925–1983), a Polish political prisoner and one of the so-called Ravensbrück "Rabbits," 74 Polish women on whom SS medical doctors performed grisly medical experiments in the

Ravensbrück concentration camp, starting in August 1942.[28] Wounds were inflicted on the women and deliberately infected so the SS doctors could test the efficacy of sulfonamides, or sulfa drugs. Bones were deliberately broken and limbs amputated to test bone-grafting, setting, and transplantation techniques. Those who did not die suffered lifelong damage to their bodies and minds.[29]

Individually and collectively, Iwańska and other women resisted the violence being committed against them. They managed to gather evidence and document what was happening to them, including photographically, and communicate their plight to the outside world with this evidence, at times using urine as invisible ink, as Iwańska did.[30] According to Iwańska, the idea to use urine as invisible ink was just one of the innovations she and others employed in their efforts to communicate with the outside world. As she later explained:

> In light of such a hopeless situation, on 1 January 1943 we decide to communicate through the Underground with the Polish government. On 2 January 1943, [...] we send the first messages written in invisible ink on the regular camp paper, covertly instructing our families to heat the letter with an electric iron. This is how the information about the executions and surgeries got out. After a few months, a thought occurs to me that the inside of the envelope provides more space than a sheet of paper, all the more that we have now received a new batch of writing paper which did not help us at all because it was glossy and, when it was held against the light, the invisible ink could be seen."[31]

Historian of medicine Aleksandra Loewenau describes the professional approach taken to these communications and how they were created to serve as testimony, with the women recognizing their role as witnesses already in the concentration camp:

> The information provided was very precise and included details about operations, including the number performed and the number of subsequent deaths, as well as information regarding executions. In the "Rabbits" opinion, it was absolutely crucial for those letters to be preserved in their original format as testimonies so they could be used as evidence in case none of them survived.[32]

Their efforts were so effective that the Polish government-in-exile used the information it received in a March 1944 report that informed the Allies of what was happening in Ravensbrück and other camps. This

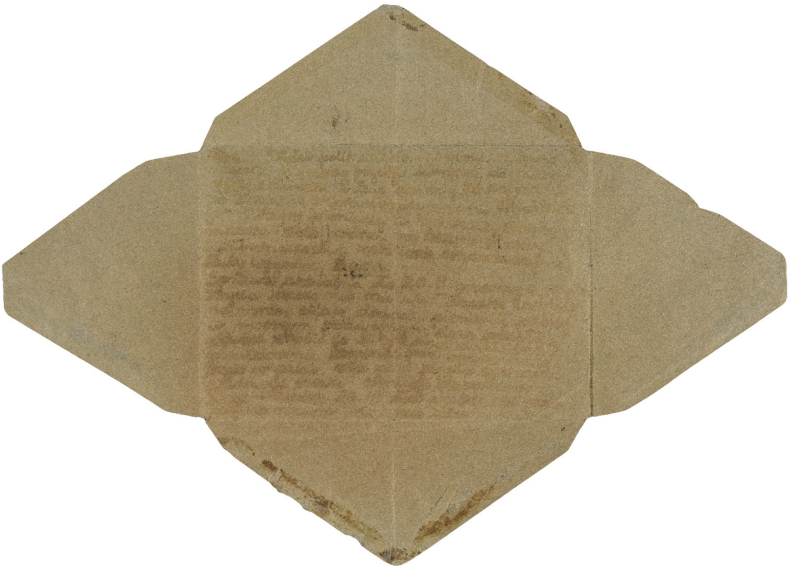


Figure 3: Image of the envelope with a secret message written in urine, sent by Janina Iwańska's to her father in May 1943. In the collection of the Polish Research Institute in Lund, Volume 37. Courtesy Lund University Library.

alleviated the situation of the Rabbits to an extent and prompted Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross to make their release part of his negotiations with Heinrich Himmler in February 1945, though this aspect of the evacuation was largely unsuccessful.[33] Miraculously, Iwańska survived along with more than 60 other Rabbits by hiding among the general Ravensbrück prisoner population with the help and support of other prisoners until their liberation.[34] Iwańska's testimony and evidence were used in the Hamburg Ravensbrück Trials, where another Polish political prisoner, Helena Dziedzicka, who was a repatriate in Sweden, was a key witness. This rare example possibly came into the Lund University Library's collection through contact between the two women.[35]

Conclusion

The quote in the title of this paper comes from a letter written by Luba Melchior in February 1948 to her friend and former Polish Research Institute colleague, Krystyna Karier, in which Melchior writes, "The work

for the institute is our duty to present and future generations. We suffered and can understand and orient the material."[36] Melchior was born in Radom, Poland in 1912, and it was in the Radom Ghetto that her mother was murdered during the liquidation of the large ghetto in August 1942. Her father, husband, and young son all survived the liquidation of the ghetto but were each murdered in Auschwitz. Although some of the victims documenting the Holocaust were professional historians, most – including Melchior – were not. Her commitment to documenting the Holocaust through her work at PIZ and in other capacities was driven by a sense of moral duty that was common among other victims who did this important work.[37] The three examples highlighted here demonstrate that this moral imperative was held by many of the Nazis' victims both during and after the Second World War and the Holocaust.

While historians have tended to prioritize the important collection of testimonies in the Polish Research Institute archive, leaving the objects and other materiality held by the Lund University Library and *Kulturen* to public exhibitions, this paper has endeavored to demonstrate how often-overlooked material in these collections have and continue to inform understandings of the history of the Second World War and the Holocaust. In addition, they provide insight into the Aftermath of these cataclysms – including the actions and experiences of displaced persons, relations between victim groups, and of course, the behind-the-scenes operations of the documentation initiatives themselves. Rather than focus only or mainly on the testimonies, this paper has shown how the materiality in the collections enhances understandings of the events these individuals witnessed and experienced. As historian Leora Auslander has argued:

> Each form of human expression has its unique attributes and capacities; limiting our evidentiary base to one of them—the linguistic—renders us unable to grasp important dimensions of human experience, and our explanations of major historical problems are thereby impoverished.[38]

The examples given here exemplify not only the historical significance of individual objects but also how they have shaped and continue to shape our understanding of Holocaust experience and survival. Researchers have still only just scratched the surface in terms of analyzing and understanding the material contained in these collections, but awareness of the material is increasing and much of it is available online. In whatever form,

the evidence and testimonies created, rescued, collected, and preserved by Łakociński, Simon-Pietkiewicz, Strzelecka, Dziedzicka, Melchior, Iwańska, Karier, Broel-Plater, and many others can be seen as a gift. Not just a gift of empirical material for historians, although they are certainly that. But also, a gift of remembrance. With these gifts, we can remember not just the Nazi atrocities, nor even just the memory of the victims, but also their faces, their names, their handwriting, their struggles, and their sacrifices.

Notes

1. Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press 2002, p. 37.

2. Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War: A Complete History*, rev. ed., New York: Henry Holt and Company 1989, p. 608.

3. Many excellent works traverse these themes, of which the following represent just a selected sample: Janet Blatter & Sybil Milton (eds.), *Art of the Holocaust*, New York: The Rutledge Press 1981; Michael Fleming, "Geographies of obligation and the dissemination of news of the Holocaust", *Holocaust Studies*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1–2, 2017, pp. 59–75; Samuel D. Kassow, *Who will write our history?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*, Bloomington, Illinois: Indiana University Press 2018.

4. See, e.g., Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012; Sharon Geva, "Documenters, Researchers and Commemorators: The Life Stories and Work of Miriam Novitch and Rachel Auerbach in Comparative Perspective", *MORESHET Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism*, Vol. 16, 2019, pp. 56–91; Victoria Van Orden Martínez, *Afterlives: Jewish and Non-Jewish Polish Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Sweden Documenting Nazi Atrocities, 1945–1946*, PhD diss, Linköping: Linköping University 2023.

5. Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record*, p. 10.

6. E.g., Sune Persson, "*Vi åker till Sverige*": *de vita bussarna 1945*, Stockholm: Fischer & Co 2005; Ingrid Lomfors, *Blind fläck: minne och glömska kring svenska Röda korsets hjälpinsats i Nazityskland 1945*, Stockholm: Atlantis 2005; Sune Birke, "De vita skeppen – en svensk humanitär operation 1945", *Forum navale*, Vol. 58, 2002, pp. 9–37; Terje W. Fredh, *Vita fartyg med röda kors*, Lysekil: Terje W. Fredh 1998; Britta Zetterström Geschwind, Markus Idvall & Fredrik Nilsson, *Den medicinska spärren. Smitta och gränsarbete i skuggan av Förintelsen*, Göteborg & Stockholm: Makadam Förlag 2023. Sources vary on how many liberated concentration camp prisoners and displaced persons came to Sweden via the two initiatives and on exactly how those figures broke down into specific nationalities and religion, with most giving a figure in the range of 25,000 to 31,000.

7. Zygmunt Łakociński, "Folke Bernadotte i akcja Szwedzkiego Czerwonego Krzyża" [Folke Bernadotte and the action of the Swedish Red Cross], *Przeglad Lekarski*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 1968, pp. 145–152. Translated from Polish by the author. All translations are my own unless noted otherwise.

8. Izabela A. Dahl, "'...This is material arousing interest in common history...': Zygmunt Łakociński and Polish Survivors' Protocols", *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, Vol. 223, 2007, pp. 325–326.

9. Victoria Van Orden Martínez, *Afterlives*, pp. 63–83.

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13. "Record of Witness Testimony No. 183, Jadwiga Simon, February 8, 1946, 5", The Polish Research Institute in Lund archive, http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:alvin:portal:record-101874.

14. Victoria Van Orden Martínez, "Witnessing the Suffering of Others in Watercolor and Pencil: Jadwiga Simon-Pietkiewicz's Holocaust Art Exhibited in Sweden, 1945–46", *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2023, pp. 273–293; Janina Jaworska, "'Nie wszystek umrę…' Twórczość plastyczna Polaków w hitlerowskich więzieniach i obozach koncentracyjnych 1939–1945", Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1975, p. 93; Agata Pietrasik, *Art in a Disrupted World: Poland 1939–1949,* Warsaw: Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw; Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2021, pp. 63–64.

15. See, e.g., Arturo Benvenuti, *Imprisoned: Drawings from Nazi Concentration Camps,* New York: Skyhorse Publishing Company 2017, pp. 26–30; Janet Blatter, "Art from the Whirlwind", in Janet Blatter & Sybil Milton (eds.), *Art of the Holocaust*, New York: The Rutledge Press 1981, pp. 21–35; Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz, *Resistance in the Nazi Concentration Camps 1933–1945,* Warsaw: PWN –

Polish Scientific Publishers 1982, pp. 298–304; Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007, pp. 19–51; Miriam Novitch, "The Art Collection of the Ghetto Fighters' Museum", in *Spiritual Resistance: Art from Concentration Camps 1940–1945. A selection of drawings and paintings from the collection of Kibbutz Lohamei Haghetaot, Israel,* New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregation 1981, pp. 11–22; Mor Presiado, "A new perspective on Holocaust art: women's artistic expression of the female Holocaust experience (1939–49)", *Holocaust Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 2016, pp. 421–422.

16. Barbara Czarnecka, "Twórczość plastyczna Jadwigi Simon-Pietkiewicz w obozie koncentracyjnym w Ravensbrück. Personalizm somatyczny", *Bibliotekarz Podlaski*, Vol. 48, No. 3, 2020, pp. 69–91, 75.

17. (In Swedish: "Ungersk judinna 'Kinesen'") *Ravensbrück: Bilder från fångenskapsåren*, Malmö: Tr.-A,-B, Framtiden 1946, p. 7.

18. *Polsk Konst från Ravensbrück och Sverige*, Stockholm: ÅETÅ Tryck 1945, p. 4; Gustaf von Platen, "Från Ravensbrück och Sverige", *Expressen*, December 8 1945; "Från ett fånglager", *Norrköpings Tidningar*, January 24 1946.

19. (In Swedish: "Sjuk ungersk judinna"), *Ravensbrück: Bilder från fångenskapsåren*, p. 8; Gustaf von Platen 1945

20. On the exhibitions in 1945 and 1946, see Victoria Van Orden Martínez 2023 Some of the works were displayed at the 1966 *Kulturen* exhibition. Contemporary exhibitions in Sweden include, e.g., Malmö Museum's *Välkommen till Sverige* (Welcome to Sweden) exhibition, May 8, 2015–April 17, 2016; Malmö Art Museum's *Migration: Spår i en konstsamling* (Migration: Traces in an Art Collection) exhibition, October 11, 2019–February 23, 2020; Living History Forum's (*Forum för levande historia*) "Not the End" exhibition, summer 2019; Kulturen's *Women's Concentration Camp Experience* exhibition, January 24–November 17, 2024.

21. See: Kringla, "Pensel," accessed March 10, 2025, https://www.kringla.nu/kringla/objekt?referens=Kulturen/objekt/186647.

22. Germaine Tillion, *Ravensbrück*, Gerald Satterwhite (trans.), Garden City, New York: Anchor Press 1975 [1973], p. 147.

23. Record of Witness Testimony No. 192, Helena [Halina] Strzelecka, November 19, 1946, 7, The Polish Research Institute in Lund archive, http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:alvin:portal:record-102717. Bracketed information in original.

24. ibid; "The Polish Research Institute in Lund (PIZ) archive" (Lund University Library, Sweden), Vol. 30: 5. "Mittwerda".

25. Zygmunt Łakocińskis arkiv (ZL) (Lund University Library, Sweden), volume 41, letter from Germaine Tillion to Ludwika Broel-Plater, in French, datelined Paris, December 31, 1949. Capitalizations in original. Translated from French by this author.

26. Tillion describes this episode and mentions Dziedzicka and Broel-Plater in Germaine Tillion 1975, pp. 147–152.

27. The Polish Research Institute in Lund (PIZ) archive, volume 37. See also the envelope on the Alvin platform, "Envelope used for Janina Iwańska's letter…," http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:alvin:portal:record-157004.

28. See, e.g., Helena Klimek, Wanda Kiedrzyńska & Doris Ronowicz, *Beyond Human Endurance: The Ravensbrück Women Tell Their Stories*, Warsaw: Interpress 1970); Aleksandra Loewenau, "The story of how the Ravensbrück 'Rabbits' were captured in photos", in Paul Weindling (ed.), *From Clinic to Concentration Camp: Reassessing Nazi Medical and Racial Research, 1933–1945,* The History of Medicine in Context; London: Routledge 2017, pp. 221–256.

29. Aleksandra Loewenau 2017, pp. 222–223.

30. Ibid, pp. 225–26.

31. Archive of the Pilecki Institute, Chronicles of Terror, Janina Iwańska, Testimony from court/criminal proceedings from 06.11.1945, https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/show-content?id=1424 (accessed March 14 2025), original: Institute of National Remembrance, GK 182/164

32. Aleksandra Loewenau 2017, p. 225.

33. Himmler resisted liberating the 'Rabbits' and few were liberated with the White Buses mission as a result. Aleksandra Loewenau 2017, pp. 228–229.

34. Helena Klimek, Wanda Kiedrzyńska & Doris Ronowicz 1970, p. 20; Aleksandra Loewenau 2017, p. 227.

35. See Alvin platform, "Envelope used for Janina Iwańska's letter…", http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:alvin:portal:record-157004.

36. Letter written by Luba Melchior to Krystyna Karier, dated February 27, 1948. Translated by Roman Wroblewski. "The Polish Research Institute in Lund (PIZ) archive" (Lund University Library, Sweden), Vol. 49.

37. Victoria Van Orden Martínez, "Documenting the Documenter: Piecing together the history of Polish Holocaust survivor-historian Luba Melchior", *EHRI Document* Blog, December 12, 2022, accessed February 6 2025, https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2022/12/12/luba-melchior/.

38. Leora Auslander, "Beyond Words", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 110, No. 4, 2005, pp. 1015–1045, quotation p. 1015.