inside the gas chambers eight months in sonderkommando of auschwitz shlomo venezia

Inside the Gas Chambers - Eight Months in the Sonderkommando of Auschwitz

This is a unique, eye-witness account of everyday life right at the heart of the Nazi extermination machine. Slomo Venezia was born into a poor Jewish-Italian community living in Thessaloniki, Greece. At first, the occupying Italians protected his family; but when the Germans invaded, the Venezias were deported to Auschwitz. His mother and sisters disappeared on arrival, and he learned, at first with disbelief, that they had almost certainly been gassed. Given the chance to earn a little extra bread, he agreed to become a ‘Sonderkommando’, without realising what this entailed. He soon found himself a member of the ‘special unit’ responsible for removing the corpses from the gas chambers and burning their bodies. Dispassionately, he details the grim round of daily tasks, evokes the terror inspired by the man in charge of the crematoria, ‘Angel of Death’ Otto Moll, and recounts the attempts made by some of the prisoners to escape, including the revolt of October 1944. It is usual to imagine that none of those who went into the gas chambers at Auschwitz ever emerged to tell their tale - but, as a member of a ‘Sonderkommando’, Shlomo Venezia was given this horrific privilege. He knew that, having witnessed the unspeakable, he in turn would probably be eliminated by the SS in case he ever told his tale. He survived: this is his story. Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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Eyewitness Auschwitz - Three Years in the Gas Chambers

Filip Müller came to Auschwitz with one of the earliest transports from Slovakia in April 1942 and began working in the gassing installations and crematoria in May. He was still alive when the gassings ceased in November 1944. He saw millions come and disappear; by sheer luck he survived. Müller is neither a historian nor a psychologist; he is a source—one of the few prisoners who saw the Jewish people die and lived to tell about it. Eyewitness Auschwitz is one of the key documents of the Holocaust.

We Wept Without Tears - Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz

The "Sonderkommando of "Auschwitz-Birkenau consisted primarily of Jewish prisoners forced by the Germans to facilitate the mass extermination. Though never involved in the killing itself, they were compelled to be "members of staff" of the Nazi death-factory. This book, translated for the first time into English from its original Hebrew, consists of interviews with the very few surviving men who witnessed at first hand the unparalleled horror of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. Some of these men had never spoken of their experiences before.

Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp

An authoritative account of the operation of the Auschwitz death camp.Ö . . a comprehensive work that is unlikely to be overtaken for many years. This learnedvolume is about as chilling as historiography gets.Ö ÑWalter Laqueur, The New RepublicÖ . . a vital contribution to Holocaust
studies and a bulwark against forgetting.Ó Publishers WeeklyÒRigorously documented, brilliantly written, organized, and edited . . . the most authoritativebook about a place of unsurpassed importance in human history.Ó ÒJohn K. RothÓNever before has knowledge concerning every aspect of Auschwitz . . . been made available in such authority, depth, and comprehensiveness.Ó ÒRichard L. RubensteinLeading scholars from the United States, Israel, Poland, and other European countries provide the first comprehensive account of what took place at the Auschwitz death camp. Principal sections of the book address the institutional history of the camp, the technology and dimensions of the genocide carried out there, the profiles of the perpetrators and the lives of the inmates, underground resistance and escapes, and what the outside world knew about Auschwitz and when. Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

The Operation Reinhard Death Camps, Revised and Expanded Edition - Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka

Under the code name Operation Reinhard, more than one and a half million Jews were murdered between 1942 and 1943 in the concentration camps of Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, located in Nazi-occupied Poland. Unlike more well-known camps, which were used both for slave labor and extermination, these camps existed purely to murder Jews. Few victims survived to tell their stories, and the camps were largely forgotten after they were dismantled in 1943. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps bears eloquent witness to this horrific tragedy. This newly revised and expanded edition includes new material on the history of the Jews under German occupation in Poland; the execution and timing of Operation Reinhard; information about the ghettos in Lublin, Warsaw, Krakow, Radom, and Galicia; and updated numbers of the victims who were murdered during deportations. In addition to documenting the horror of the camps, Yitzhak Arad recounts the stories of those courageous enough to struggle against the Nazis and their “final solution.” Arad’s work retrieves the experiences of Operation Reinhard’s victims and survivors from obscurity and exposes a terrible chapter in humanity’s history.

The Scrolls of Auschwitz

The Holocaust Odyssey of Daniel Bennahmias, Sonderkommando

Daniel Bennahmias was hardly more than a boy when he and his family were herded onto the death train that would transport them from their home in Greece to the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp, Birkenau. His parents were exterminated immediately upon arrival, but Danny managed to survive. Because of his strength, the youthful prisoner was recruited by the Germans to become a member of a Sonderkommando unit, its horrendous job being to disentangle the bodies of the Jews put to death in the gas chambers in preparation for their subsequent cremation. Rebecca Fromer traces the plight of her friend through every inconceivable, unspeakable ordeal: the bewildering roundup of Greek Jews; the non-familiar, but no more understandable, atrocities of their German captors; Danny’s numbed acceptance of his gruesome assignment as a trade-off for life itself, if only as a temporary measure; an abortive prison rebellion and the resulting punishment; one final freezing march from Auschwitz to Ebensee, as Allied troops approached; and, at last, rescue by the American soldiers and the
tentative readmittance to civilization, changed forever. Daniel Bennahmias is one of the few persons in the Sonderkommando at Auschwitz-Birkenau to have survived the war, and the recounting of his experiences reveals details heretofore unknown about the "inner life" of the Nazi factories of death. Bennahmias supplies missing elements in the story of the revolt of the Sonderkommando in Birkenau, the dismantling of the crematoria, the death march and its aftermath, including the miraculous experience of liberation by the Allies. This is the tragic story of Daniel Bennahmias, a Greek Jew of Italian citizenship, a young man of science and intellect, music and art, who had a family, a culture, and a life that was all but obliterated. He is not a number, but he has become a statistic; he is not a thing, even though he became an object beneath scorn, unworthy of civility or compassion. This memoir provides a fragmented account of Bennahmias's experiences from 1942 to 1945, from his arrest to his liberation by the Allies in 1943. Rebecca Fromer, a specialist on the Holocaust memoirs of Sephardic Jews, worked with Daniel Bennahmias over the course of three years to coax carefully back to the surface these painful and horrifying memories. The result is an important and rare account of one of the eleven Greek Sonderkommando prisoners to have survived routine extermination of the "special" labor group by the Germans.

**Auschwitz and Birkenau**

Auschwitz and Birkenau were separate from each other, by about a 45 minute walk. Auschwitz was adapted to hold political prisoners in 1940 and evolved into a killing machine in 1941. Later that year a new site called Birkenau was found to extend the Auschwitz complex. Here a vast complex of buildings were constructed to hold initially Russian POWs and later Jews as a labour pool for the surrounding industries including IG Farben. Following the January 1943 Wannsee Conference, Birkenau evolved into a murder factory using makeshift houses which were adapted to kill Jews and Russian POWs. Later due to sheer volume Birkenau evolved into a mass killing machine using gas chambers and crematoria, while Auschwitz, which still held prisoners, became the administrative centre. The images show first Auschwitz main camp and then Birkenau and are carefully chosen to illustrate specific areas, like the Womens Camp, Gypsy Camp, SS quarters, Commandants House, railway disembarkation, the sauna, disinfection area and the Crematoria. Maps covering Auschwitz and Birkenau explain the layout. This book is shocking proof of the scale of the Holocaust.