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Last seen

Pictures of Nazi Deportations

An initiative of the
Arolsen Archives & Partners



#last seen

Munich, November 20, 1941

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In focus: moments of deportation

The #LastSeen initiative focuses on pictures of Nazi deportations from the German Reich between 1938 and 1945. As well as targeting the Jewish population, the Nazis also deported Romani people and people with disabilities. The photographs show the last moments before the deportees were removed from society – this was done in full public view and in specific, identifiable locations. The pictures are particularly suitable as a means to explore and understand the mechanisms of Nazism.

About 550 of these photographs from about 50 places are currently known to exist, but they have not yet been brought together and made available as a collection in any systematic way. Nor has there been any concerted effort to search for more pictures. That is where the #LastSeen initiative comes in.

What we want to do:

Let the pictures tell their stories

The pictures that have already been found will be systematically processed and evaluated by researchers. We want to find answers to a number of open questions: Who were the deportees? What do we know about their lives? Who took the pictures? Where were they taken? Who were the perpetrators who appear in the photos? And what do we know about the spectators?

Find more pictures

Before we had even completed our preliminary research, we had already discovered the first previously unknown pictures of deportations. By asking volunteers to help us conduct an intensive search campaign in public and private archives, we want to find more unknown photographic material and add to the body of knowledge in this field.

Provide access to the pictures

Parallel to the ongoing academic work, we will create a website in English and German to bring together all the pictures and the information that we find. We will also develop an interactive educational resource that analyzes particular images and offers a way to approach the history of Nazi deportations.

»The deportations were an act of degradation that was carried out on a public stage. We want to help give people's names and stories back to them – and give them back their dignity too.«

Dr. Alina Bothe
Project Manager #LastSeen

What you can do to support #LastSeen

The results of the #LastSeen initiative will depend on how many people help us to search for pictures and information. The more people join in, the more enlightening the results will be.

This is why we are asking **experts with experience in historical research or knowledge of archives** to get involved in #LastSeen – and **anyone else who is interested** in the topic too.

Please join in

- Search for photographs in public and private archives.
- Help us identify people and places.
- Ask yourself whether you know anyone who might have photos from the Nazi era.
- Share your findings with us.
- Let us know where you have been searching. We will produce a digital map that locates all research efforts.

It is not always easy to tell whether the scene a picture shows really is a deportation. If you share photographs with us, we can look at them together. We will help you to identify the context.

For more information, go to lastseen.org.

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Dortmund



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Dortmund, April 30, 1942

From interviews, we know that survivors or their families sometimes possess or know of photos of deportations. So we are making a special appeal for help to:

Victims of Nazi persecution and their relatives

Do you have any photos of Nazi deportations from Germany or from the occupied territories in Europe? Or do you know of any pictures that have been passed down in your own family or in the family of someone you know? Maybe they have been packed away in old boxes and stored in the garage or the attic? Please send us a copy of any photos you have – we will display them on our website to make them more accessible for use in research and education.

Help us analyze the photos we already have: Look at the pictures we publish on lastseen.org. Do you recognize any of the people, places, or situations they show?

People who work at archives, museums, and memorial sites

Are there any photos of Nazi deportations in your holdings? If so, do you have any information about the people in the pictures? We would like to display copies of the photos on lastseen.org. Then other people can join in and help with identification. By sharing your pictures, you can help us learn more about deportations. **Please get in touch – every piece of information counts!**

#LastSeen in Germany and Europe

At first, the search for photos and information is focused on Germany, but there are plans to extend the campaign to European countries that were occupied by Nazi Germany. As well as creating an important basis for research, #LastSeen can also be used in educational contexts. Because photos have an immediate effect, and they appeal to young people in particular. But to unlock their meaning, the images need to be analyzed, so we are developing participatory digital offerings that will help students to “read” and understand the visual sources.

»We will provide permanent access to the pictures of Nazi deportations. It is immediately obvious to anyone who sees them that the Nazi regime was committing crimes right before people’s eyes. That presents us with a pressing question: What are our own options? What can each and every one of us do when we witness overt injustice today?«

Floriane Azoulay,
Director of the Arolsen Archives

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© City Archive Eisenach

Eisenach, May 9, 1942



Research and remembrance

Researchers from various institutions came up with the idea for #LastSeen at a conference in Germany that was held by the Arolsen Archives. Because of their digital expertise – and at the request of those involved – the Arolsen Archives, the world’s most comprehensive archive on the victims and survivors of National Socialism, took the initiative to collect and identify the last images of the Nazi deportation of Jews, Romani people, and people with disabilities as quickly as possible.

The four partners in the project:

- **House of the Wannsee Conference memorial site,** a memorial and educational site at the historic location of the meeting held at Wannsee on January 20, 1942, in Berlin
- **Institute for Municipal History and Remembrance,** Munich, part of the City of Munich’s Department of Culture
- **USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research,** an interdisciplinary research center in Los Angeles, is working to promote the academic use of 55,000 video interviews with survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides, to mention just one of their projects
- **Center for Research on Antisemitism,** an academic research institute at the TU Berlin, focuses on interdisciplinary research on antisemitism both in the past and in the present

**Arolsen
Archives**

International Center
on Nazi Persecution

MEMORIAL AND
EDUCATIONAL SITE
**HOUSE OF THE
WANNSEE CONFERENCE**

ZfA Zentrum für
Antisemitismusforschung

**USC
Dornsife**
*Center for Advanced
Genocide Research*



City of Munich
**Department of
Arts and Culture**

Arolsen Archives

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Arolsen Archives
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Foundation

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