

Lezing

# The Life of Victims and Perpetrators - documented in the two Auschwitz Albums

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Universiteit Antwerpen, Stadscampus | Lokaal R.013  
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Lezing in het Engels

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The two photo collections, which were published under the titles "The First Auschwitz Album" (also known as the "Lili Meier Album") and "The Second Auschwitz Album" (also known as "Karl Höcker Album") attracted much attention. They show the dualistic world of Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the one hand there is the life of the victims, which is shown by the first album. It documents the suffering, the humiliation and the murder of the Hungarian Jews during the mass deportations and gassings in spring and summer 1944. It also depicts the consequent system of lies of the perpetrators, who did not tell their victims until the very end, what was going to happen.



On the other hand the second album shows us the life of the perpetrators, who enjoyed their time at the recreation home at "Solahütte" - without any scruples or feelings of guilt. Solahütte is located only 30 kilometers away from Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Death Machinery. This emphasizes the parallel existence of two totally different worlds in extreme spatial proximity. The two albums help us to better understand the two worlds of the victims and the perpetrators.

The presentation mainly deals with the aspects of humanity, moral values, historical photography and its meaning for Auschwitz as a symbol of evil. All this is presented with the background of the historical dimension of Auschwitz.



**Gideon Greif**, an Israeli historian, educator and pedagogue, has been a Professor for Jewish and Israeli History since August 2011 at the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Texas in Austin. He also is Senior Historian and Researcher at the "Shem Olam" Institute for Education, Documentation and Research on Faith and the Holocaust, Israel, and at the Foundation for Holocaust Education Projects in Miami, Florida. Prof. Greif has been working at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel for more than 30 years. He specializes in the history of the Holocaust, especially the history of the Auschwitz concentration camp and particularly the Sonderkommando in Auschwitz.